

# The Mehweb language

Essays on phonology, morphology  
and syntax

Edited by

Michael Daniel

Nina Dobrushina

Dmitry Ganenkov

Studies in Diversity Linguistics 99



## Studies in Diversity Linguistics

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## Preface

This volume presents several papers on Mehweb, a one-village language spoken in the central part of Daghestan, a republic of the Russian Federation. The language has a relatively low number of speakers (about 800) but is not immediately endangered, as shown in the first contribution by Nina Dobrushina which is an introduction to the sociolinguistic situation of Mehweb. The contribution covers the geographical position of Mehweb and its economic situation, the official status of the language, the ethnic affiliation of the villagers, recent history of Mehweb, its neighbors and the patterns of multilingualism. While there are no visible signs of first language loss, the paper shows that there is a strong tendency towards the loss of traditional patterns of multilingualism, with Russian substituting all other languages for interethnic communication.

Mehweb belongs to the Dargwa branch of the East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) language family. It is often considered as a dialect of Dargwa (Magometov 1982), along with many other lects within the Dargwa branch. A different tradition treats Mehweb as a separate language (Khajdakov 1985; Koryakov & Sumbatova 2007). The survey of Dargwa idioms in Sumbatova & Lander (2014) indicates that Mehweb is most often classified as belonging to the northern group of Dargwa dialects. Although the residents of Mehweb presently consider themselves to be descendants of re-settlers coming from the village of Mugi, where Akusha dialect of Dargwa is spoken (Uslar 1892; see also Dobrushina 2018, in this volume), there is no linguistic analysis that shows special affinity between Mehweb and Mugi. According to lexicostatistic analysis, Mehweb is a member of the north-central group of Dargwa and shows more similarities to Murego-Gubden than to Mugi (Koryakov 2013).

The first linguistic source on Mehweb is a reference by Uslar (1892). This short grammar describes another dialect of Dargwa, but starts with a brief survey of different Dargwa languages and dialects. Among these dialects Uslar also mentions Mehweb, qualifying it as a dialect spoken in Mugi, but “notably degraded”. Two descriptions of Mehweb appeared in the 1980s, both in Russian. The first one is a grammar of Mehweb which describes its phonology and morphology but not syntax (Magometov 1982). This description, extremely clear and explicit, considers only main morphological forms but not some less frequent ones, and

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does not provide a detailed analysis of their semantics. The second one, a book by Khaidakov, was written almost at the same time as Magometov's grammar. It compares formal morphology of several Dargwa languages and dialects, including Mehweb.

In the 1990, a field team from the Moscow State University came to work on Mehweb, but no publications followed. In the aftermath of this trip, in the 2000s, Nina Sumbatova started to work on Mehweb and, among other things, compiled a list of glosses and suggested an analysis of verbal inflection, some elements of which are integrated into this volume (Sumbatova manuscript).

The only dictionary of Mehweb which exists to date is a small vocabulary supplement in [Magometov \(1982\)](#). One of the aims of our study was to compile a dictionary and document the main inflectional forms. The dictionary is being developed by Michael Daniel with participation of many members of the field team, especially George Moroz, and implemented as a web page by Aleksandra Kozhukhar. The current version of the dictionary is available online – <http://mehwebdict.wc.lt>.

Mehweb texts were first published by Magometov (*ibid.*) with translation, but without morphological glossing; they were relatively few. New texts were recorded and glossed during this project by Michael Daniel, including a sample of Pear Stories (currently transcribed but not yet glossed). The corpus includes 35 texts (including 13 from [Magometov 1982](#)) of about 1,000 sentences and 10,000 tokens and is also being prepared for open access.

The following brief overview is intended for the reader who is not familiar with East Caucasian languages. It provides background on most important features of the language.

The consonant inventory includes voiced and voiceless consonants. Stops (but not other consonants) also have the ejective series. Unlike some other Dargwa dialects, Mehweb lacks phonologically distinctive geminate stops. The vocalic system has four members with a gap in the mid back position [i, e, a, u]; [o<sup>ʰ</sup>] only appears as a realization of [u] with pharyngeal feature. Velar, uvular and radical consonants may be labialized. In addition to [ʔ, h, h], Mehweb also has less common [ɰ, ʔ] which seem to be phonologically secondary, appearing only as pharyngealized counterparts of [h, ʔ], respectively. Pharyngealization is strongly – but not exclusively – associated with uvulars, pharyngeal and laryngeal consonants. For further details on phonetic inventories and pharyngealization see the contribution by George Moroz, who discusses details of the inventory, syllable structure, stress placement, morphophonological alternations and pharyngealization.



Mehweb morphology is agglutinative. Mehweb is ergative both in terms of agreement and case marking. To start with the latter, the case inventory includes the nominative (absolutive), the ergative, the genitive, the dative, the comitative and some peripheral case forms. Note that some authors of the volume follow Kibrik (1997) in the use of the term nominative for ergative alignment. Spatial forms are bimorphemic, as typical of East Caucasian. The first category is that of localization, defining a spatial domain with respect to the ground (in Mehweb: ‘on’, ‘near’, ‘at’, ‘in(side)’, ‘among’). The second category is that of orientation, defining the figure’s motion with respect to this domain (Goal, Source, Path) or absence thereof (Location). Unlike other branches of East Caucasian – but similar to the other lects of the Dargwa branch – the lative form (Goal) is zero marked and the essive form (location) is marked by a presence of a gender agreement slot controlled by the nominative argument of the clause. Plural is expressed by a number of suffixes, sometimes accompanied by alternations. For more on nominal morphology, see the contribution by Ilya Chechuro, dealing with plural formation, the oblique stem, case formation and formation of irregular locatives. There is also a brief discussion of the use of the case forms.

The verb inflection is by and large similar to that of other Dargwa languages. It resides upon the fundamental distinction of two stems, perfective and imperfective, from which all other forms are derived. The formal relation between the stems is irregular and involves alternations, infixation, loss of agreement slots and other. Most forms are derived from both perfective and imperfective stems, except the prohibitive and the presence/habitual, only available in the imperfective. The combination of irregular relation between perfective and imperfective stems and the almost perfectly parallel inflection based on the two stems partly assimilates the Mehweb (and generally Dargwa) aspectual system to that of derivational aspect. Irregular verbs include verbs of motion, the verb ‘give’, the verb ‘say’ and some other. For more on verbal morphology, see the contribution by Michael Daniel.

Zooming in on one fragment of the verb morphology, Nina Dobrushina provides a detailed analysis of both form and meaning in the irrealis domain. Several features are typologically infrequent, although common for East Caucasian languages: the formal split between transitive and intransitive imperatives, the expression of negative imperative by a dedicated inflectional form (prohibitive), the presence of a dedicated inflectional optative used in blessings and curses. Presence of a dedicated apprehensive is rare even among East Caucasian. The jussive and the hortative are expressed periphrastically. A detailed analysis of another fragment of verbal morphosyntax is the contribution by Daria Baryl-nikova. She provides a survey of periphrastic constructions based on ‘drive’ and

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‘let’ and explains the ways in which these constructions show incipient signs of grammaticalization into factitive and permissive causation, respectively.

Gender agreement in Mehweb follows strict semantic assignment: in the vast majority of cases, it is enough to know the semantics of the noun to determine its agreement pattern. Mehweb gender agreement distinguishes masculine, feminine and neuter in the singular and human and non-human in the plural. One complication is connected to mass nouns; although morphologically singular (and capable of forming morphological plurals), these nouns control non-human plural agreement. While this behavior of mass nouns is typical of Dargwa languages, the next twist is an innovation and probably results from contact with Lak. The majority of feminine nouns have moved from the original Dargwa feminine (*r*-, glossed as F in the book) gender to the gender identical to non-human plural (*d*-, glossed as F1). The distribution is roughly between married/old (F) and unmarried/young (F1) women. The choice between the two agreement patterns is still partly flexible and may become a tool of language game or insult. One could speculate that the source of this development is some kind of indirect reference motivated by politeness. Another development in agreement is that personal agreement on the verb, well attested in Dargwa languages, developed into the typologically rare phenomenon of egophoric agreement; the suffix *-ra* (glossed EGO) appears with the first person subject in the affirmative and with the second person subject in the interrogative. Unlike gender, personal agreement works on the accusative rather than ergative basis.

Clause subordination is based on dependent verb forms, including action nominals, infinitives, participles and converbs rather than on finite predication introduced by conjunctions. Converbs include two general converbs (perfective and imperfective) whose relation to the main clause is context-determined and special converbs that specify this relation (in Mehweb, immediate anteriority, gradual accumulation, cause, concession etc. – see the contribution by Maria Sheyanova). Some aspects of the syntax of general converbs are presented in the contribution by Marina Kustova who covers periphrastic converbs, independent uses of converbs and their use in imperative contexts, and different strategies of how the converb clause may share its arguments with the main clause. In the absence of true clause co-ordination, the respective discourse/narrative function is performed by chains of general converbs. The contribution attempts to address this issue by considering several tests on subordination – co-ordination distinction.

One apparent exception to the non-use of finite predication in subordination are reported speech constructions. Reported speech in Mehweb, as generally in East Caucasian, is structurally similar to direct reporting and typologically

distant from true subordination. Mehweb has a pronominal stem *sa<CL>i*, used in wide range of contexts from logophoric in reported speech to resumptives to reflexives, considered in the contribution by Aleksandra Kozhukhar. The author suggests that, in Mehweb, there is neither morphological nor (sharp) syntactic distinction between logophoric and long-distance uses of the pronoun.

The three other contributions on syntax are the chapters by Dmitry Ganenkov (syntax – case assignment and personal agreement – of the simple clause), Yuri Lander and Aleksandra Kozhukhar (relative clause) and Yuri Lander (a survey of the use of the focus particle). Ganenkov shows how distribution of personal and gender agreement classifies Mehweb verbs into several morphosyntactic classes, non-trivially connected to their transitivity, and demonstrates how this distribution is linked to conventional subject properties such as control of reflexivization. Lander and Kozhukhar argue that the use of the reflexive pronoun has been specialized as resumptive in relative clauses, taking as evidence the restrictions on its use as compared to the use of simple reflexives. Finally, Lander argues that the focus particle *g<sup>w</sup>a*, formally identical to the imperative of ‘see’, surprisingly does not have to be adjacent to the constituent in the scope of the focus.

\* \* \*

This volume is a result of a collective field research run by the linguists from the School of linguistics of the National Research University Higher School of Economics. Part of the team were bachelor students who conducted their research under the supervision of the more experienced members of the team. Collective field research is a practice developed by Aleksandr Kibrik, an eminent Russian typologist who organized more than 40 field trips involving hundreds of young people into description of minority languages. Kibrik edited numerous grammars where chapters were contributed by all team participants, including students in their early years at the university.

In 1990, Aleksandr Kibrik brought to Mehweb a large group of students which included, among others, Michael Daniel and Nina Dobrushina. Not much was left from this specific field trip, a most important result being a three-pages sketch of Mehweb morphology (the list of main forms and morphemes) by Nina Sumbatova.

The human gain of the 1990 expedition were Anvar Musaev and Maisarat Muslimova (now Musaeva), Mehweb teachers who took active part in the organization of the life of the expedition and with whom a long-lasting human bonds were established. In 2010, Michael Daniel and Nina Dobrushina decided to pass by Mehweb on their way from Archib to Makhachkala. Anvar and Maisarat, this time a married couple with grown-up children, were so open and hospitable, and

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so full of memories of the 1990 visit, that the idea of working on Mehweb came very naturally. In 2013, five students from the Higher School of Economics accompanied by Michael Daniel, Nina Dobrushina, Dmitry Ganenkov, Yuri Lander and George Moroz came to Mehweb to start working on a description of Mehweb. During four fieldtrips in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, each lasting about two weeks, we recorded texts, collected a small dictionary, and wrote several papers. The student team was not always the same. Some of them do not (directly) participate in this volume, but everyone made a contribution to the analysis of the data. It is thus our pleasure to list the participants of all field trips over these four years: Ekaterina Ageeva, Darya Barylnikova, Ilya Chechuro, Violetta Ivanova, Aleksandra Khadzhinskaya, Aleksandra Kozhukhar, Marina Kustova, Yevgeniy Mozhaev, Olga Shapovalova, Semen Sheshenin, Aleksandra Sheshenina, Mariya Sheyanova.

Anvar and Maisarat and their family invariably provided us with housing and logistic support and never grew tired of being our primary native consultants, including over email, skype and now, in the last days of the work on the book, also over WhatsApp, a very useful tool for instant proofreading of examples. We are also infinitely grateful to our friends and consultants Abakar and Zalmu Sharbuzovy, to their daughters Patimat and Kamila, so intelligent and helpful, to the indefatigable Kazim, foe of all tea parties, his wife Munira and his sister Bulbul; to Patimat Tagirovna, deserving to become the first dictator of Mehweb radio, if it is ever to be established; to Khavsarat, Magomedzagid, Mariam and many other Mehweb people whose limits of patience we have been stretching for so many years. We remember the touch of the hand of Aminat, Maisarat's mother.

The authors are very grateful to Samira (Helena) Verhees who proofread most papers, and to the reviewers of the drafts of individual chapters of the volume: Aleksandr Arkhipov, Gilles Authier, Oleg Belyaev, Denis Creissels, Francesca Di Garbo, Diana Forker, Martin Haspelmath, Olesya Khanina, Timur Maisak, Nina Sumbatova, Yakov Testelet, as well as to the anonymous reviewers of Language Science Press.

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*Michael Daniel and Nina Dobrushina*

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# Предисловие

Настоящий сборник – результат многолетней работы исследовательской группы Школы лингвистики Национального исследовательского университета Высшая школа экономики. В проекте приняли участие студенты бакалавриата, которыми руководили более опытные исследователи. Коллективная полевая работа – практика, введенная Александром Евгеньевичем Кибриком, выдающимся советским российским типологом, организовавшим более сорока лингвистических экспедиций, в ходе которых в полевых исследованиях малых языков приняли участие сотни студентов. А.Е. Кибрик выпустил большое число грамматик, главы которых писались в том числе студентами, лишь недавно начавшими учебу в университете.

В 1990 г. А.Е. Кибрик привез в селение Мегеб (Гунибский район Республики Дагестан) большую группу студентов, участниками которой были, в том числе, М. Даниэль и Н. Добрушина. От этой поездки сохранилось не так много материалов. Важным результатом стал краткий обзор мегебской морфологии (список основных форм и морфем), составленный Н. Сумбатовой.

С точки зрения человеческих отношений самым главным приобретением экспедиции 1990 г. стало знакомство с Анваром Мусаевым и Майсарат Муслимовой (ныне Мусаевой), молодыми учителями мегебской школы, которые приняли активное участие в жизни экспедиции. В 2010 г. мы (Н. Добрушина и М. Даниэль) решили заехать в Мегеб на обратной дороге из Чародинского района в Махачкалу. Майсарат и Анвар, к этому времени – семейная пара с двумя взрослыми детьми, приняли нас настолько радостно и тепло, были так полны воспоминаниями о той давней поездке, что идея возобновить работу над мегебским языком показалась совершенно естественной и даже неизбежной. В 2013 г. пять студентов ВШЭ под руководством М. Даниэля, Н. Добрушиной, Д. Ганенкова, Ю. Ландера и Г. Мороза приехали в Мегеб для работы над грамматикой этого языка. В результате четырех поездок (2013–2016 гг.), каждая продолжительностью около двух недель, мы записали некоторое количество текстов, собрали небольшой словарь и написали несколько черновых статей. Студенческий состав

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не оставался постоянным. Некоторые из участников этих экспедиций не приняли участие в написании настоящего очерка, но каждый из них внес тот или иной вклад в сбор и анализ данных. Мы приводим полный список участников всех экспедиций: Екатерина Агеева, Дарья Барыльникова, Виолетта Иванова, Александра Кожухарь, Марина Кустова, Евгений Можаяев, Александра Хаджийская, Илья Чечуро, Ольга Шаповалова, Семен Шешенин, Александра Шешенина, Мария Шеянова.

Нашими неизменными хозяевами и главными переводчиками были Майсарат и Анвар. Они и их сыновья обустроивали нашу жизнь и неутомимо отвечали на наши вопросы о мегебском языке, в том числе по электронной почте, скайпу, а в последнее время – по WhatsApp’у, совершенно незаменимому инструменту для того, чтобы в последний момент вносить правку в корректуру статей по малым языкам. Кроме того, мы бесконечно благодарны нашим друзьям и переводчикам – Абакару и Залму Шарбузовым, их дочерям Патимат и Камиле, таким умным и всегда готовым поделиться своим временем, неутомимому чаененавистнику Казиму, его жене Мунире и его сестре Булбул; Патимат Тагировне, которая несомненно заслуживала бы роли первого диктора мегебского радио, если таковое когда-нибудь начнет вещание; Исрапилу, Кавсарат, Магомедзагиду, Марьям, Саиде и многим другим мегебцам, границы терпения которых мы испытывали в течение стольких лет. Мы помним рукопожатие Аминат, мамы Майсарат Мусаевой. Всем им мы желаем долгих лет жизни и здоровья.

Авторы сборника очень признательны Самире (Хелене) Ферхеес, которая вычитала многие из статей, и рецензентам первых версий статей – Александру Архипову, Жилью Отье, Олегу Беляеву, Дени Кресселю, Франческе Ди Гарбо, Диане Форкер, Мартину Хаспельмату, Олесе Ханиной, Тимур Майсаку, Нине Сумбатовой, Якову Тестельцу, а также анонимным рецензентам издательства Language Science Press.

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*Михаил Даниэль и Нина Добрушина*



## List of abbreviations

ABS	absolute
AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
ALL	motion directed towards a spatial domain
ANTE	anteriority converb
AOR	aorist
APPR	apprehensive
APUD	spatial domain near the landmark
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CARD	cardinal numeral
CAUS	causative
CAUSAL	causal (case form)
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
COMIT	comitative
COMP	complementizer
CONC	concessive
CONC2	concessive
COND	conditional
CTRF	counterfactual
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
EMPH	emphasis (particle)
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GRAD	gradual converb
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IMM	immediate converb

*List of abbreviations*

IMP	imperative
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INCP	inceptive converb
INDEF	indefinite particle
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
INTJ	interjection
INTR	intransitive
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
IRR	irrealis (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LOC	locative converb
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NEGVOL	negation in volitional forms (negative imperative and negative optative)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
OPT	optative
ORD	ordinal numeral
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PROH	prohibitive
PST	past
PSTR	posterior converb
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PURP	purposive converb
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question (interrogative particle)
QUOT	quotative (particle)
REPL	replicative (nominal case)
SG	singular
SMLT	simultaneous converb
SUBST	substitutive (nominal case)

*List of abbreviations*

SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
TRANS	motion through a spatial domain
VERIF	verificative
VOC	form of address



## Chapter 1

# The language and people of Mehweb

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This paper describes the sociolinguistic situation of Mehweb, a lect of the Dargwa branch of East Caucasian, spoken in the Republic of Daghestan. In the course of several field trips to the village of Mehweb, sociolinguistic interviews were conducted in Mehweb and four neighbouring Avar- and Lak-speaking villages. The paper describes the demographic situation in Mehweb, the villagers' official status, their social and economic life in the past and at present. The multilingual repertoire of Mehwebs and their neighbours is described in both qualitative and quantitative terms. I conclude that, while there are no signs of language loss, the traditional patterns of multilingualism in Mehweb are highly endangered.

## 1 Introduction

Mehweb belongs to the Dargwa group of the East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) language family. It is sometimes considered a dialect of Dargwa (Magometov 1982), but more often, it is treated as a separate language (Khajdakov 1985; Koryakov & Sumbatova 2007). Mehweb is spoken in a single village called Mehweb<sup>1</sup> which is geographically separated from all other Dargwa languages. While Dargwa languages generally constitute a continuous area, Mehweb is surrounded by speakers of Avar and Lak, which are languages of other branches of the family.

The village of Mehweb is located in Gunibskij region, in the central part of Daghestan about 1800 meters above sea level. The total number of speakers is estimated to be between 800 and 900, 600 to 700 of which live in Mehweb itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Russian *Mezeb* – [megeb], the native term is [meh<sup>w</sup>e], while [meh<sup>w</sup>eb] is the Avar spelling which includes the final -b of the locative form.



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About 100 to 200 live in the so called *kutan*<sup>2</sup> *kolkhoza imeni Gadzhieva* (located 350 km away from Mehweb, four kilometres away from the sea coast, near the village Krainovka). Kutan was not examined from either a linguistic or sociolinguistic point of view. All data in this paper come only from Mehweb. There are also Mehweb families in Makhachkala, Kizlyar, and Bujnaks, and a few elsewhere. All Mehweb-speaking families originate from the village Mehweb.

Like most Daghestanis, Mehwebs are Muslim.

Mehweb has no literacy tradition. The Mehwebs write in Avar or Russian. We have no evidence that Mehweb was ever written in the Arabic or Cyrillic script in the observable past. At least, the residents of Mehweb could not recall any manuscripts in Mehweb (unlike some other minority languages of Daghestan – see [Magomedkhanov \(\)](#) about the Archi manuscript).

So far, there are no indications of language loss in Mehweb. All villagers speak Mehweb, and Mehweb is the first language acquired by children.

The Mehwebs often suggest that their idiom is more conservative than other Dargwa lects and contains some archaic features. This opinion is also expressed in some descriptions of Mehweb ([Magometov 1982](#); [Khajdakov 1985](#)). Recent studies on Dargwa languages show that at least some phenomena (such as various properties of agreement) are innovative in Mehweb compared to other Dargwa lects ([Sumbatova & Lander 2014](#)).

The command of Russian, Avar, and Lak is spread in Mehweb (see §5 for details). The proficiency in standard Dargwa is infrequent. In §2, the official status of the Mehweb language is discussed. §3 and 4 briefly describe social and economic life of the village in the past and at the present time. §5 is devoted to the multilingual repertoire of Mehwebs and the neighbouring villages. A brief conclusion summarizes the paper.

## 2 Mehweb officially

Mehweb is located in a district where Avars are numerically dominant. As a result, Mehwebs are in some respects considered to be Avars ([Tishkov & Kisriev 2007](#): 98).

First, paradoxically, they are taught Avar at school during lessons called *native language* (Russian *родной язык*, lit. ‘native language’), even though Avar belongs to another group of East Caucasian and is genealogically distant from

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<sup>2</sup> Originally, kutans were territories for lowland herding in the winter. At the present time, people often prefer to stay in these lowland settlements for the whole year, thus establishing new villages.

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Mehweb. Mehweb children start learning two foreign languages already in the first grade (at 6–7 years old) – Avar and Russian, which, according to their parents, is not easy for them. Another result of learning Avar as a mother tongue is that Mehwebs are not acquainted with standard Dargwa, unlike most people who speak other lects of Dargwa.

Second, most Mehwebs are registered as Avars in their passports. That continued until the 1990s, when the obligatory indication of ethnicity in passports was cancelled in Russia. The villagers explain that those Mehwebs who got their passports in the village council were registered as Avars, while those who got their passports in the cities were registered as Dargis.

In the 2002 and 2010 censuses of the Russian Federation, Mehwebs are not mentioned. Residents of Mehweb were registered as Dargis or as Avars. In 2002, 747 Dargis and 98 Avars were reported as residents in Mehweb. In 2010 the numbers were 572 Dargis and 124 Avars. The difference between the data of the two censuses has no reasonable explanation. Mehweb is very homogenous both ethnically and linguistically, as are most villages of highland Daghestan. There are no outsiders in the village except for several Avar women taken as wives. Most probably, the ethnic population of Mehweb has not changed in at least the last hundred years, and the census information does not reflect the true ethnic structure of Mehweb in any way.

According to interviews with the villagers, Mehweb residents identify themselves as Dargis. They are well aware of the closeness of their language to Dargwa, and have regular contacts with Dargwa people from the village Mugi (see §3).

Data from the censuses on native language are again controversial. The Mehweb language is not mentioned. It follows from the 2002 census that 792 residents spoke Dargwa as their first language, while 53 spoke Avar. According to the 2007 census, this has changed: 566 spoke Dargwa as first language, and 113 Avar. The mention of Dargwa as a first language is because Mehweb is usually considered a variation of Dargwa, and therefore the residents of Mehweb may have referred to their native language as Dargwa. But there are no reasonable explanations for the mention of Avar as a first language: there is no one in Mehweb who speaks Avar as a first language, apart from the two or three women who married in.

Mehwebs are not officially recognised as an ethnic group, nor is Mehweb officially recognised as a language.

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### 3 The past of Mehweb

There is a common belief that the village of Mehweb was founded by re-settlers from the Dargwa-speaking village of Mugi (Uslar 1892). Mugi is located in the Akushinskij district (in the central part of Daghestan, about 70 km from Mehweb; it takes two to three hours by car). As far as I know, there is no tangible historical evidence for the connections between Mehweb and Mugi, apart from oral testimony. Mehwebs are convinced that Mugi is their ancestral homeland, and have several versions of how they left it. One of the local stories reports that there was an isolated part of Mugi which was in the way of Timur's (Tamerlane's) army. When they understood they could not resist Tamerlane, the residents fled and settled higher in the mountains. According to this version, Mehweb was founded in the 14th century. Khajdakov (1985: 101) dates the migration of Mehwebs to somewhere in the 8–9th centuries, reporting the opinion of a respected Mehweb resident. An early report by Komarov says that Mehweb people are (descendants of) refugees from another village, but Mugi is not mentioned (Komarov 1868)<sup>3</sup>.

According to lexicostatistical analysis, Mehweb belongs to the Northern-central group of Dargwa languages, and is closer to Murego-Gubden lects than to the dialect of Mugi (Koryakov 2013).

Although it is not clear whether this view on the origin of Mehwebs has historical grounds, the residents of Mehweb and Mugi are quite positive. They have established intensive contacts: they practice reciprocal group visits, and invite each other to important festivities. Most of the Mehwebs I talked to say that they do not understand the dialect of Mugi and prefer communicating with the Mugis in Russian.

The relations of the Mehwebs with Avars were much more intensive. The main road to Mehweb went through a big Avar village, Chokh, and through another, smaller Avar village, Obokh. In the 19th century, Mehweb was a part of the so-called Andalal free association which mainly consisted of Avar villages. After the revolution of 1917, Mehweb became a part of the Charoda district. In 1928, it was transferred to the Gunib district. Both districts are dominated by Avars. Between 1929 and 1934, it was transferred to the Lak district, and then transferred back to Gunib. Therefore, from the administrative point of view, most of time the Mehwebs were connected with Avars.

Avars were, and still are, the closest neighbours of the Mehwebs – it takes about 40 minutes to walk to Obokh. Although more distant, Lak neighbours were

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<sup>3</sup> «Недалеко от Чоха есть большое селение Меге, по преданию, основанное даргинцами, в разное время искавшими спасения от кровомщения».



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also important for Mehweb, because the Mehwebs regularly used to go to the Kumukh market, where the communication was in Lak. It is about 15 kilometres from Mehweb to Kumukh, and it took four to five hours to get to there on foot. Some women used to go there every Thursday. Visits to the market in Kumukh gradually became less frequent after the 1950–60s.

Mehweb was and still is one of the biggest villages in the neighbourhood. In 1886, there were 727 residents *Svod statističeskix dannyx o naselenii Zakavkazskogo kraja, izvlečennyx iz posemejnyx spiskov 1886 g.* (1893). This number has remained stable over the 20th century: 710 in 1926, 780 in 2007.

The main occupation of Mehwebs was breeding sheep and cattle. They also grew corn and potatoes. The specialty of Mehweb was black peas which yielded a good harvest. There were no fruit trees before the 1950s, although at the present moment Mehwebs grow apples, pears and apricots. Mehwebs were neither rich nor poor in comparison to other settlements of highland Daghestan.

As Mehwebs had enough corn, they did not need to look for jobs outside the village. According to the recollections of local people, seasonal employment outside the village was not customary. Only a few Mehweb people are reported to have practiced tinsmithing, like their Lak neighbours. We were also told by the residents of the neighbouring village of Shangoda that Mehwebs were good stone masons and builders, and were invited to other villages. Another reason for inter-ethnic contact was shepherding on remote pastures (transhumance), which resulted in irregular contact with Avars and Kumyks. In general, Mehweb people did not migrate a lot.

Mehweb people rarely married out. As in all of Daghestan (Comrie 2008; Wixman 1980), a marriage partner from Mehweb was preferable. Often the spouse was chosen from the same patrilineal clan (*tukhum*). In the infrequent cases of mixed marriages the wife was taken from one of the neighbouring Avar villages. The tradition of endogamous marriages started to die away only in the beginning of the 21st century.

## 4 The present of Mehweb

Today, Mehweb has between 600 and 700 residents. The population has not decreased as much as in many other villages around. For example, Avar villages Obokh and Shangoda were twice as big in the past. The Lak villages Mukar and Uri are on the verge of complete abandonment; several families still live in the Lak villages Palisma and Kamakhal, which were recently among the biggest in the neighbourhood. The Avar village of Shitlib (Shitli) has been abandoned. The

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only village in the neighbourhood which did not lose a significant part of its population, apart from Mehweb, is the Avar village Bukhty. Mehweb is the biggest and the most vital village in the vicinity, with a large school and many children living in the village. Still, the locals report a slight population decrease: the school had more pupils in the 1980s than now.

Apart from the regular school, Mehweb has a special boarding school for training boys in freestyle wrestling. There are usually about 10–15 boys from other parts of Daghestan who live in Mehweb and study with local children. These boys have different native languages (most often Avar) and communicate with the locals in Russian.

There is a kindergarten where local teachers communicate with the children in Mehweb and in Russian. The village boasts a large social centre. It has a billiard room and, on occasions, hosts concerts and dances. A small medical centre employs three nurses.

As elsewhere in Daghestan, the Mehwebs complain about local unemployment. Those who are not employed at the school, kindergarten, social centre or the medical centre, can make their living only by going away for construction jobs, or by selling meat and cheese. There are also several small shops run by local families.

People in Mehweb, as in all other villages in the neighbourhood, have had TV since the 1980s. Regular access to broadcasts became possible from the 1990s when a transmission tower was constructed in Sogratl'. The broadcasts are mainly in Russian. Apparently this has influenced the level of bilingualism in Russian.

The Mehwebs take pride in the fact that several of its residents distinguished themselves during WW2. Two men were decorated as Hero of the Soviet Union for their military service during the war. Mehweb has a war memorial, and Victory Day (May 9) is of special importance to the village.

## 5 Neighbours and language contact

The level of multilingualism was studied in Mehweb and in four neighbouring villages: Obokh and Shangoda (Avar) and Uri and Mukar (Lak) – see Figure 1. During fieldtrips in 2012–2015, a series of sociolinguistic surveys was conducted to study the multilingual repertoire of the residents<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Sociolinguistic study of multilingualism in Mehweb and neighbouring villages is a part of a larger project documenting patterns of multilingualism in Daghestan (<https://multidagestan.com/>).

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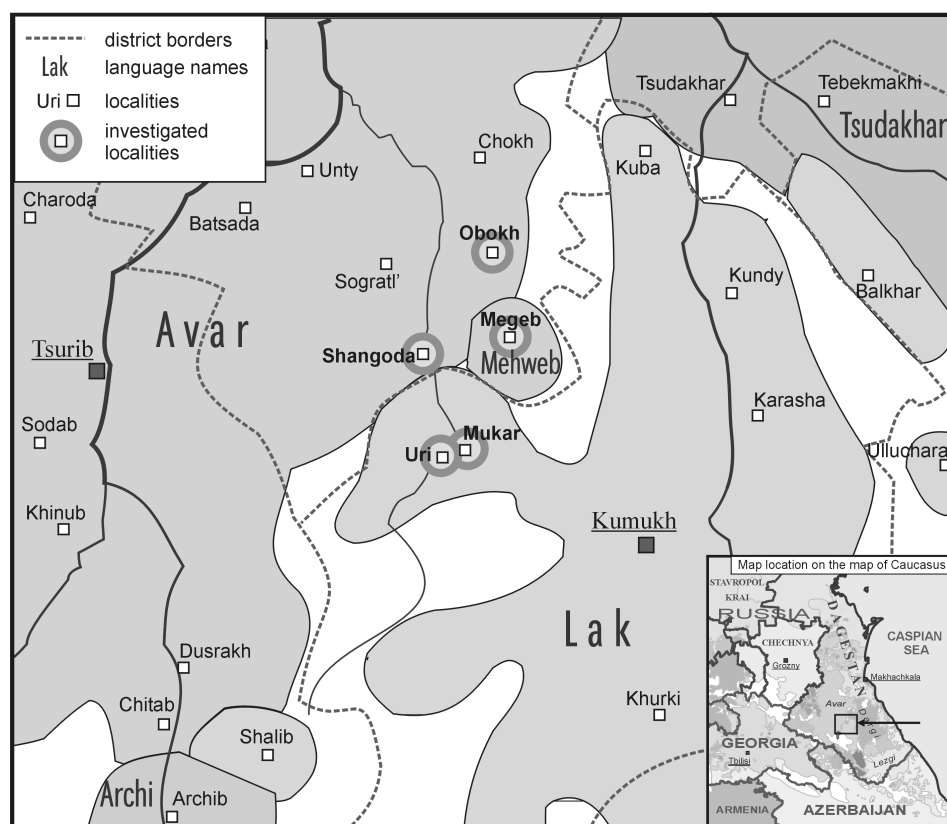


Figure 1: Mehweb and neighbouring villages (map courtesy of Yuri Koryakov)

## 5.1 Data and method

In order to obtain quantitative data about the command of other languages in each of these villages, the method of retrospective family interviews (introduced in Dobrushina 2013) was applied<sup>5</sup>. The dynamics of multilingualism is accessed through and assessed based on short interviews with speakers of different generations, thus resembling apparent time studies<sup>6</sup> (Cukor-Avila & Bailey 2013). The

<sup>5</sup> I am deeply grateful to Darya Barylnikova, Ilja Chechuro, Michael Daniel, Violetta Ivanova, Aleksandra Khadzhiskaya, Marina Korshak, Aleksandra Kozhukhar, Marina Kustova, Yevgenij Mozhaev, Olga Shapovalova, Marija Shejanova, Semen Sheshenin, Aleksandra Sheshenina who ran the interviews on multilingualism in Mehweb together with me.

<sup>6</sup> Apparent time studies of language change use surveys of people of different ages, with an assumption that the speaker's speech reflects the speech patterns acquired in the childhood.

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important difference from the apparent time method is that data are obtained not only about the respondents themselves, but also about their older deceased relatives.

The method aims at capturing multilingual repertoires of the speakers of the recoverable past in order to reconstruct traditional (i.e. pre-Soviet) patterns of language contact. It was typical for highland Daghestani to have large families where parents lived together with their youngest son and communicated with other children on a daily basis, looked after their grandchildren and helped to run the household. The younger generation was usually well acquainted with their grandparents. By asking 60 to 80 year old villagers about language repertoires of their grandparents, the data collected sometimes dates back to the end of the 19th century, and even to the mid-19th century. Table 1 provides an example of a questionnaire filled in for one person.

Table 1: Example of a filled in sociolinguistic questionnaire

Questions	Answers
<i>name</i>	Amin
<i>year of birth</i>	1908
<i>year of death</i>	1985
<i>is a relative of</i>	father of Muhammad, father-in-law of Mariam
<i>information was given by</i>	Muhammad (son of Amin)
<i>education and occupation</i>	studied in madrasah, was a shepherd, a foremen in kolkhoz
<i>command of Quranian Arabic</i>	could read the Arabic script, but did not understand the text
<i>Lak</i>	yes
<i>Avar</i>	yes
<i>Russian</i>	no
<i>other languages</i>	Akusha dialect of Dargwa

The choice of respondents was more or less random. The aim of the study is to reconstruct the multilingualism of the past; so the eldest possible respondents were preferred, and younger generations were included for the sake of comparison. The controlled parameters of the sample were thus the respondents' age and gender.

The shortcomings of this method include, first of all, the subjective character of judgments about language proficiency. No test of proficiency of the respondent was used (and obviously no such test was possible for his or her late relatives).

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Estimations of the level of bilingualism were based on the respondents' judgments. The second shortcoming is the fact that the respondent's memories of e.g. his mother and father are limited to their adult or older period of life. Third and probably most importantly, judgments may reflect stereotyped notions about past multilingualism widespread in the village, rather than be based on personal memories of individual linguistic repertoires. For a further discussion, see [Dobrushina \(2013\)](#).

Multilingualism is a social behaviour developed through interaction. Hence sociolinguistic surveys were conducted not only in the village of Mehweb but also in four neighbouring villages. The data from retrospective family interviews in neighbouring villages helped us to better understand how the communication between neighbouring villages was performed. Were both languages used for communication or was one of them preferred? For example, if we only find that most Mehwebs spoke Avar and Lak, we still do not know whether Avar and Lak neighbours of Mehwebs could speak Mehweb or not, and cannot estimate the role of the Mehweb language in the area.

The closest neighbours of Mehweb are the Avar villages Obokh and Shangoda (Figure 1).

Obokh villagers speak a dialect of Avar. In their opinion, this variety differs from the dialects of other villages in the area. At school, the Obokhs learn standard Avar. There is an opinion among them that their village is the oldest in the neighbourhood. They support this idea by the size of the cemetery. Another fact which might prove that Mehweb is younger than Obokh is that Obokh possesses more land than Mehweb, although the village itself is smaller.

Shangoda, another Avar village, is further away from Mehweb than Obokh. The track goes up and down, and it takes about 90 minutes to reach Shangoda. Slightly closer than Shangoda was the Avar village Shitlib, which is now abandoned. After Shangoda, there are the Lak villages Palisma and Kamakhal (about 30 minutes walk from Shangoda), which are also abandoned now. In the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, Shangoda belonged to the Kazikumukh district dominated by Laks. It was connected to Kumukh by a mountain path. Until the 1930s, when Shangoda was transferred to the Gunib district, the inhabitants of Shangoda had their administrative centre in the village of Palisma. Therefore, relations with Laks were more important for Shangoda than relations with Mehwebs or with Avar villages.

Lak villages are further away from Mehweb than Obokh or Shangoda, but the contacts with them were essential for Mehwebs, because of their regular visits to the Lak market in Kumukh. In Lak villages, Mehweb people had friends with whom they could stay on their way to the Kumukh market.

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All five villages (Mehweb, Obokh, Shangoda, Mukar, Uri) are located at more or less the same height above sea level (1500–1800 meters). In the observable past, the economic life and the standard of life in all these villages were similar.

In Mehweb, the sociolinguistic survey was the most extensive. Our database contains 240 entries, including 90 people who are deceased. The databases for other villages have less entries: 80 in Shangoda, 80 in Uri, 103 in Obokh, 110 in Mukar. (Note that these villages are presently much less populated than Mehweb).

People were divided in two groups: those who were born before and those who were born after 1919. The reason for establishing 1919 as a cut-off point was that in the 1930s in all villages Soviet schools were opened. The teaching was done in Russian. The generation born after 1919 therefore usually had a secular education, often had some level of literacy, had less opportunities to learn Arabic script (because of the atheistic politics of the USSR), and most often spoke some Russian. The generation born before 1919 was closer to what we consider traditional patterns of multilingualism, as will be shown in the next section.

## 5.2 Multilingualism among the residents born before 1919

According to our study, Mehwebs communicated with Avars and Laks in Avar and Lak respectively. This follows from the level of mutual bilingualism of the Mehwebs and their neighbours. Almost 100% of Mehwebs born before 1919 spoke Avar and Lak (see Table 2). Their neighbours from Avar and Lak villages had no command of Mehweb at all. Only 8% of the people from Obokh, the closest Avar village, were reported to speak Mehweb (Table 2).

Mehwebs acquired Avar through the communication with the neighbouring Avar villages, Obokh and Shangoda, and bigger villages which were more distant but important economically and socially, including Sogratl', Chokh, and Gunib. There were no Lak villages located as close as Obokh and Shangoda to Mehweb and the main source of knowledge of Lak was the market in Kumukh. The role of this market in the area was important enough for the Mehwebs to acquire Lak.

Occasionally, Mehwebs also mention the command of Kumyk. Kumyk was acquired by those who brought sheep to the lowlands where Kumyks lived. This practice was apparently not very common – only 2–3% of people born before 1919 spoke Kumyk.

About 45–50% of the Mehwebs born before 1919 could read the *Quran*<sup>7</sup>. Note that the reported ability to read does not imply ability to understand Arabic,

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<sup>7</sup> See also [Kozhukhar & Barylnikova \(2013\)](#) about the dynamics of literacy in Mehweb.

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but only to recite the text. The knowledge of Arabic was usually limited to the knowledge of the phonetic meaning of letters. If a person was reported to be able to read Arabic, the researchers asked more specific questions about the ability to translate (understand) Arabic text. According to our study, only 6% of Mehwebs could understand and translate the Quran.

About 20% of Mehwebs of this generation spoke Russian. The command of Russian was much more common among men who travelled in order to earn money.

As for the residents of Avar villages, the knowledge of Lak was reported significantly more often in Shangoda (93%), than in Obokh (22%). This is not surprising. Lak villages were very close to Shangoda (30 minutes walk), and the residents of Shangoda and the Lak villages were socially and economically connected. For both Shangoda and Obokh, the market in Kumukh was very important, but Kumukh was much closer to Shangoda. There was a striking difference between Obokh and Mehweb. The villages were almost at the same walking distance from Lak villages, but the difference in the level of Lak is huge: 95% in Mehweb and 22% in Obokh. There is only one plausible explanation for this discrepancy. Mehwebs as speakers of a minor language were disposed to speak other languages, while Avars, being the majority in the district, were in general oriented to use their own language in all circumstances.

The residents of Lak villages also had some command of Avar, but the level of their bilingualism was lower than in Avar villages (Table 2).

Table 2: The level of multilingualism in five villages: generations born before 1919.

	Mehweb	Avar	Lak	Russian
Mehweb	native	97%	95%	21%
Obokh	8%	native	22%	22%
Shangoda	0%	native	93%	50%
Uri	0%	78%	native	40%
Mukar	0%	40%	native	50%

Mehwebs were the most multilingual people of the villages in the area. The language contact between Mehwebs and their neighbours was asymmetrical. They spoke the languages of their neighbours, while the neighbours did not speak Mehweb. Presumably, Mehweb was never used as a second language (we cannot be positive because we have no information about the more distant past). The reason for this asymmetry in the linguistic relations between neighbours

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was obviously the fact that Mehweb was spoken only in one village and had no importance at the supralocal level.

### 5.3 Multilingualism among the residents born after 1920

In the second half of the 20th century, knowledge of local languages decreased, while knowledge of Russian increased significantly. People in Mehweb and Obokh spoke virtually no Lak (Table 3). In Shangoda, the command of Lak persisted longer, but it was almost lost in the generation born after 1960. The command of Avar in Lak villages Uri and Mukar was also practically lost.

Table 3: The level of multilingualism in the generation born after 1920.

	Mehweb	Avar	Lak	Russian
Mehweb	native	85%	17%	91%
Obokh	4%	native	6%	83%
Shangoda	0%	native	42%	86%
Uri	0%	37%	native	96%
Mukar	0%	17%	native	88%

There are several factors which triggered the drastic changes in local multilingualism. First reason is the spread of Russian as lingua franca across Dagestan. The command of Russian substituted local bilingualism. Second, the relations within the neighbourhood started to lose their economic significance, being substituted by connections with bigger towns. At present, the Mehwebs prefer shopping in Makhachkala rather than in Kumukh. Villagers also ceased cultivating fields, the borders with the neighbours have lost their significance, and communication became rarer.

There are rare cases of some Obokhs speaking Mehweb among those born in 1960s. This is because until the 2000s there was no senior school in Obokh, and some children continued their education in Mehweb. Several people reported the ability to understand Mehweb, acquired during their school years.

In Mehweb, people born after the 1950s speak almost no Lak, but the command of Avar is still very high. Avar was supported by schooling and communication with neighbours and with the Avar administration. Mehwebs born after 1990, however, do not speak Avar. This might be a manifestation of the same process of the loss of local multilingualism as in other villages, but it could also be a pattern of age-based multilingualism, when a neighbouring language is acquired when people start to work. In the latter case, this generation will speak Avar



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after their professional socialization, at the age of 30–40. Only later research will show what pattern the now young Mehwebs will follow.

Some Mehwebs report a command of the Akusha dialect of Dargwa. In the 1950–1970s, Mehweb did not have enough shepherds, and the Dargis from Akushinskij district worked in the Mehweb kolkhoz as shepherders. The Mehwebs remember communicating with these shepherds and with their wives, who came to see their husbands when they returned to Mehweb with the sheep. As a result, some of the Mehwebs acquired the Akusha dialect, which is otherwise not intelligible for them.

Another change concerned literacy. The atheistic politics of the USSR resulted in a dramatic loss of Arabic literacy. Only 5% of Mehwebs born after 1920 knew the Arabic script (as compared to the 48% in the generation born before 1919). A similar change happened in other villages. At the same time, most villagers became literate in Cyrillic and could read and write Russian and Avar.

## 6 Summary

Mehweb is a minority language, spoken in only one village. As mentioned in the introduction, there are no signs of language shift in Mehweb. In the village, everybody speaks Mehweb, and since the 19th century the number of speakers has not decreased. There is, however, a strong tendency towards the loss of traditional patterns of multilingualism. Over the 20th century, knowledge of neighbouring languages in highland villages was substituted by knowledge of Russian, because Russian spread all over Daghestan and started to serve as the lingua franca (the level of bilingualism is shown in Figure 2 below). A good command of Russian was supported by the arrival of television and by intensive migration to towns: almost every family has relatives who live elsewhere and come to the village for vacations or on some special occasions (such as weddings and funerals). Children who were born in cities usually only speak Russian, and pass Russian to their peers who live in the village (Daniel et al. 2011). Therefore, until recently the languages that could influence the vocabulary and the grammar of Mehweb were Avar and Lak. This role has now been assumed by Russian. In spite of the changes in the multilingualism patterns, the Mehweb community still remains, comparatively, more multilingual than other neighbouring communities.

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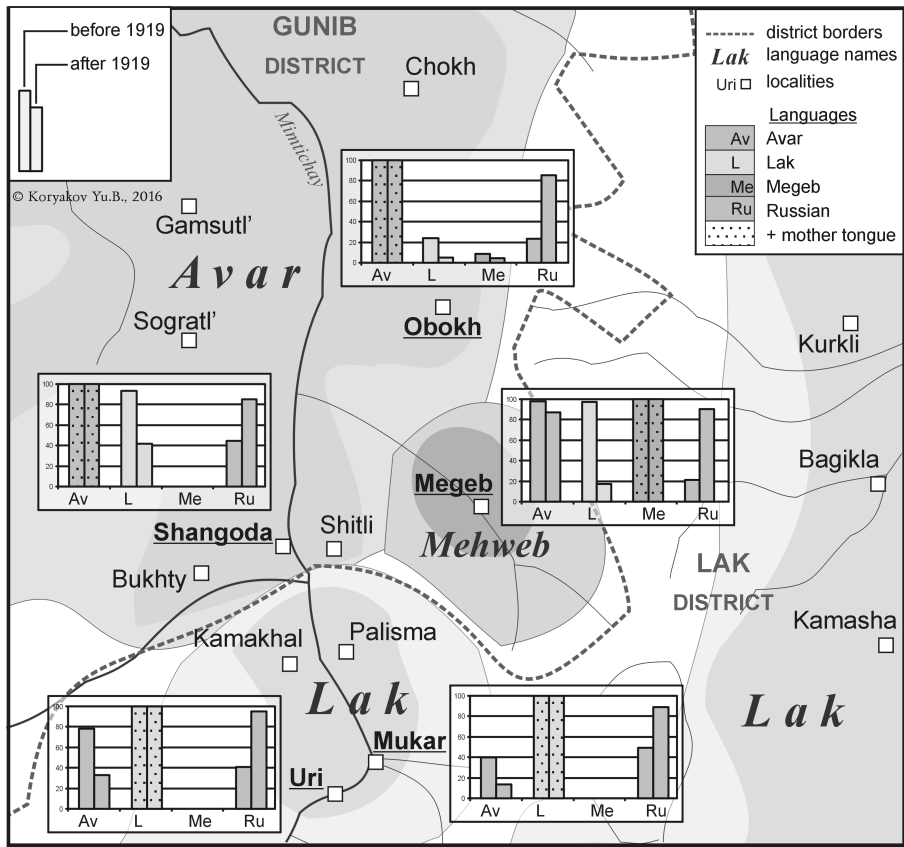


Figure 2: Multilingualism in five villages: before 1919 and after 1920 (map courtesy Yuri Koryakov)

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## Chapter 2

# Phonology of Mehweb

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In this paper, I describe the phonetic inventory of Mehweb, consonants and vowels, as well as the main productive alternations. Two separate sections treat the rules of syllable placement and give a preliminary treatment of pharyngealization. In Mehweb, pharyngealization is a feature which extends the basic vowel inventory (*i*, *e*, *a*, *u*) to include *o*<sup>ʕ</sup> (the pharyngealized variant of *u*, along with pharyngealized *i*<sup>ʕ</sup>, *e*<sup>ʕ</sup>, *a*<sup>ʕ</sup>, *u*<sup>ʕ</sup>) and the inventory of radical and laryngeal consonants by the process of epiglottalization (where *ʔ* is a pharyngealized variant of *ʔ* and *ħ* is a pharyngealized variant of *ħ*).

**Keywords:** syllabification, stress, vowels, consonants, pharyngealization, alternations.

## 1 Introduction

This paper is an overview of the phonology of Mehweb. It is primarily descriptive and is intended to make phonological aspects of Mehweb clear to the reader. The paper is organized as follows. In §2 and 3 I describe consonant and vowel systems. §4 is dedicated to syllable and word structure of Mehweb. §5 deals with stress. In §6 I introduce basic phonological and morphophonological alternations. In the last section I describe pharyngealization and how it affects segments.

## 2 Consonants

The inventory of consonants is given in Table 1. Sounds provided in parentheses are allophones, distributed either contextually or socially, as described below.



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Table 1: Mehweb consonant phonemes<sup>1</sup>

		labial	dental	alveolar	palatal	velar		uvular		pharyngeal		epiglottal		glottal	
						-lab	+lab	-lab	+lab	-lab	+lab	-lab	+lab	-lab	+lab
plosive	+v	b	d			g	g <sup>w</sup>								
	-v	p	t			k	k <sup>w</sup>	q	q <sup>w</sup>			(ʔ)	(ʔ <sup>w</sup> )	ʔ	ʔ <sup>w</sup>
	ej	p'	t'			k'	k' <sup>w</sup>	q'	q' <sup>w</sup>						
fricative	+v		z	ž		(ɣ)		ʁ	ʁ <sup>w</sup>					(ħ)	
	-v		s	š		x	x <sup>w</sup>	χ	χ <sup>w</sup>	h	h <sup>w</sup>	(ħ)	(ħ <sup>w</sup> )	h	h <sup>w</sup>
affricate	+v		(ʒ)	(ž)											
	-v		c	č											
	ej		c'	č'											
sonorant		m, w		n, l, r		j									

There are 41 consonants phonemes in Mehweb, which are listed in Table 1. Most plosives and affricates form three-way oppositions (voiced vs. voiceless vs. ejective), but there are no radical<sup>2</sup> voiced segments except some rare realizations of *h* as *ħ*. I don't mark concrete place of articulation for sonorants *n*, *l* and *r*, since they have both realizations. All postvelar consonants and velar plosives have labialized counterparts, which occur in word-initial, medial intervocalic, medial preconsonantal and final position. Some Dargwa languages have voiceless geminate consonants. They correspond to voiced consonants in Dargwa languages lacking geminates. There are no geminates in Mehweb (contra Magometov 1982: 8). Sequences of homorganic consonants, however, become geminate (cf. example (1)):

- (1) *it-di-ni* > *it:ini*  
this-PL-ERG

The voiced velar fricative *ɣ* is attested only word initially in a few roots and only in the speech of older consultants (cf. example (2–4)). Younger consultants use the velar stop *g* instead.

- (2) *ɣan*  
'snake'

<sup>1</sup>In the table, +v stands for voiced, -v stands for voiceless, ej stands for ejective, lab stands for labialization. Some allophones are presented in brackets. To be consistent with the transcription system used in the other contributions to this collection, I use the following transcription:

CT    g    ž    š    č    c    ʒ    ž  
IPA    g    ʒ    ʃ    tʃ    ts    dz    dʒ

<sup>2</sup> I use *radical* after Ladefoged & Maddieson (1996) denoting pharyngeal and epiglottal sounds.

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- (3) *yuli*  
‘hide’
- (4) *yala*  
‘pitchfork’

The voiced affricates *ʒ* and *ʒ̣* are allophones of the voiced fricatives *z* and *ʒ̣*. They are attested only in the speech of older consultants (cf. example (5a–b)):

- (5) a. *ʒe* (older speakers)      b. *ze* (younger speakers)  
‘salt’                                      ‘salt’

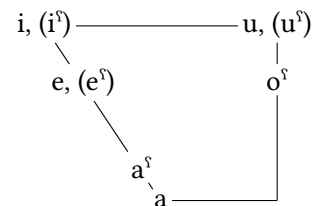
Some realizations of *s* in intervocalic position seems geminate and are perceived as such some of our consultants, including *is:es* ‘take (IPFV)’, *CL-is:es* ‘weep (IPFV)’, *us:es* ‘grind’. These are the only three verbal roots with intervocalic *s* known to us, and we have no comparable evidence for nouns. There is thus no clear evidence that geminate *s* is phonologically distinct from simple *s*. The issue requires further investigation.

The glottal stop *ʔ* is usually deleted in initial and intervocalic position. Some older speakers occasionally produce the voiced glottal fricative *ɦ* instead of voiceless *h* in intervocalic position.

In non-final position epiglottal *ʔ* and *ɦ* are in most cases followed and/or preceded by a pharyngealized vowel<sup>3</sup>. The segments *ʔ* and *ɦ* are never followed or preceded by a pharyngealized vowel. In §7 I will discuss some examples of *ʔ/ʔ̣*- and *ɦ/H*-alternations triggered by pharyngealization, where I will also consider evidence for the independent and suprasegmental nature of the pharyngeal feature.

## 3 Vowels

There are four plain vowels and five pharyngealized vowels. Length is not distinctive. Some pharyngealized vowels such as *iʕ*, *eʕ*, *uʕ* are really rare, the phonological status of that sounds thus is not clear, so they are written in brackets. Pharyngealized vowels occur most often adjacent to, or in forms containing,



<sup>3</sup> In some loan words epiglottal *ʔ* can be followed by non-pharyngealized vowels: *ʔat* ‘dough, flour’ (cf. Avar *ʕat* ‘flour’), *ʔaraq* ‘haystack’ (cf. Avar *ʕaraqχ* ‘haystack’), *ʔamal* ‘temper’ (cf. Avar *ʕamal* ‘temper’), *ʔarʕal* ‘long’, *ʔabat* ‘behind’, *maʔna* ‘sense’, *ʔarʕa* ‘last’, *beʔʔes* ‘seed’. This gives us pseudo minimal pairs: *ʔat* ‘dough’ (Avar loan) vs. and *ʔaʔʔa* ‘frog’.

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epiglottals ( $\text{ʔ}$ ,  $\text{h}$ ) or uvulars ( $\text{q}$ ,  $\text{x}$ ,  $\text{ʁ}$ ). However,  $\text{a}^\text{ʕ}$  is also attested in some stems without those segments:

- (6)  $\text{la}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʒi}$   
‘cheek’
- (7)  $\text{k}^\text{w}\text{a}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʒ}$   
‘handful’
- (8)  $\text{ta}^\text{ʕ}\text{j}$   
‘foal’

Pharyngealized vowels are not common in Mehweb, and some are rarer than others. For example, pharyngealized  $\text{i}^\text{ʕ}$  and  $\text{e}^\text{ʕ}$  are only attested in very few words. Pharyngealized  $\text{o}^\text{ʕ}$  seems to be a realization of  $\text{u}$  in pharyngealized syllables; however, while in some roots only  $\text{o}^\text{ʕ}$  is attested (9a), in other forms  $\text{u}^\text{ʕ}$  occurs as a variant (9b), and in some cases only  $\text{u}^\text{ʕ}$  is available (9c). This distribution may also depend on individual speakers.

- (9) a.  $\text{do}^\text{ʕ}\text{r}\text{ho}^\text{ʕ}$     b.  $\text{mal}\text{ʔ}\text{u}^\text{ʕ}\text{n}$ ,  $\text{mal}\text{ʔ}\text{o}^\text{ʕ}\text{n}$     c.  $\text{Hu}^\text{ʕ}\text{li}$   
‘cub’                      ‘wolf’                      ‘eye’

Vowels, as well as pharyngeal and epiglottal consonants, rarely show clear evidence of independent behavior of the pharyngeal feature (as in autosegmental phonology). Pharyngealized vowels show alternations in e.g. plural stem formation, as shown in examples (10–15); see also [Chechuro \(2018\)](#).

- (10) a.  $\text{ja}^\text{ʕ}\text{bu}$                       b.  $\text{ja}^\text{ʕ}\text{b-ne}$   
horse                              horse-PL  
‘horse’                              ‘horses’
- (11) a.  $\text{ta}^\text{ʕ}\text{j}$                         b.  $\text{tu}^\text{ʕ}\text{j-re}$   
foal                                foal-PL  
‘foal’                                ‘foals’
- (12) a.  $\text{č}^\text{ʔ}\text{a}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʔ}\text{a}^\text{ʕ}$                       b.  $\text{č}^\text{ʔ}\text{a}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʔ}\text{u}^\text{ʕ}-\text{be}$ ,  $\text{č}^\text{ʔ}\text{a}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʔ}\text{o}^\text{ʕ}-\text{be}$   
cane                                cane-PL  
‘cane’                                ‘canes’
- (13) a.  $\text{č}^\text{ʔ}\text{u}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʔ}\text{a}^\text{ʕ}$                       b.  $\text{č}^\text{ʔ}\text{u}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʔ}\text{-ne}$ ,  $\text{č}^\text{ʔ}\text{o}^\text{ʕ}\text{ʔ}\text{-ne}$   
straw                                straw-PL  
‘straw’                                ‘straws’



- (14) a. *uʔaʳ*      b. *ʔaʳʔ-ne, ʔuʳʔ-ne, ʔoʳʔ-ne*  
          cheese      cheese-PL  
          ‘cheese’      ‘cheeses’
- (15) a. *Huʳli*      b. *Haʳl-me*  
          fat      fat-PL  
          ‘fat’      ‘fats’

Table 2 sums up the vowel alternation patterns shown in (10) to (15). Pharyngealization-related processes are explained at the end of §7.

Table 2: Examples of alternation patterns

SG	<i>aʳ</i> (10a)	<i>aʳ</i> (11a)	<i>aʳ</i> (12a)	<i>u</i> (13a)	<i>u</i> (14a)	<i>uʳ</i> (15a)
PL	<i>aʳ</i> (10b)	<i>uʳ</i> (11b)	<i>uʳ, oʳ</i> (12b)	<i>uʳ, oʳ</i> (13b)	<i>aʳ, uʳ, oʳ</i> (14b)	<i>aʳ</i> (15b)

Vowel frequencies in 596 noun root list are as follows: *a* – 38%, *i* – 27%, *u* – 23%, *e* – 6%, *aʳ* – 6%, other vowels less than 2%. The most frequent vowel structure in bisyllabic words is *a–a*.

The most complex phenomenon in Mehweb phonology is pharyngealization. Pharyngealization seems to be associated with uvular, pharyngeal and epiglottal consonants, but there are some cases where it is not; cf. (6–8). Pharyngealized vowels typically appear after radical or uvular consonants, e.g. (13a–15a); but sometimes they may precede them, e.g. (13b–15b); or occur both preceding and following them; e.g. (12a) and (12b). For a discussion of an approach to pharyngealization as a suprasegmental feature, see §7.

## 4 Syllable and word structure

Except in some borrowings, the syllable structure of most words can be described as (C)V(C)(C). In other words, possible syllables are: CV, CVC, CVCC, VC, VCC, and V (cf. (26–21)). If the coda is complex, the first consonant is most frequently either a liquid or a nasal, as in examples (16) and (18). Clusters of sonorants in the same syllable are not attested. Consonant sequence cannot be longer than three segments, as in (21), and appear only at morphological boundaries. I treat such sequences as divided between two syllables. All native words can be divided into syllables according to the above schemata, but no experiments with speakers’ judgments on the location of syllable boundaries have been conducted.

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- (16) *ner?*  
‘louse’
- (17) *bec’*  
‘wolf’
- (18) *ims*  
‘moth’
- (19) *u*  
‘bottom’
- (20) *qi*  
‘horn’
- (21) *ims-la*  
moth-GEN

The two action nominals *w-ilsk’-ri* (M-look:IPFV-NMLZ) and *w-ebk’-ri* (M-die:PFV-NMLZ) are the only examples known so far to show a deviant syllable structure. Note that there is some evidence from nominal inflection (Chechuro 2018) that *b* may be treated as a sonorant.

In Mehweb, the sonority sequencing principle<sup>4</sup> is thus rarely violated: codas are predominantly sequences of a sonorant and an obstruent. Sequences of sonorants or vowels are not allowed.

Noun stems can have from one to five syllables (cf. (22–26)). Most common are one- and two-syllable roots. Table 3 shows the proportion of one-, two-, three-, four- and five-syllable noun stems, based on a list of over 500 noun entries:

Table 3: Distribution of one-, two-, three-, four- and five-syllable noun stems

one-syllable	two-syllable	three-syllable	four-syllable	five-syllable	Total
132	284	65	22	1	504
26%	56%	13%	4%	<1%	100%

<sup>4</sup> This principle can be formulated as follows: the overall acoustic energy of segments should increase from the beginning of the syllable towards the syllable nucleus, and decrease from the nucleus toward the end of the syllable. I use a shortened version of the Sonority Hierarchy: obstruents < sonorants < vowels.

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- (22) *bec'*  
'wolf'
- (23) *darša*  
'thread'
- (24) *urculi*  
'wood'
- (25) *pušduk'ani*  
'sledgehammer'
- (26) *urbaʔdiq'aʔni*  
'fat tail'

Most verbal stems are monosyllabic. Out of 150 verbs collected so far, only five are disyllabic (cf. (27)).

- (27) *usaʔ<sup>w</sup>-as*  
M.sleep:PFV-INF  
'sleep'

There are also five irregular verbal stems (cf. (28–32)) which, in some word forms, only consist of one consonant or, in the case of 'say' (cf. (29)), may be considered to be realized as zero morphs. The vast majority of Mehweb verbs have two stems, a perfective stem and an imperfective stem. It is worth pointing out that all irregular mono-consonantal stems are perfective.

- (28) *k-ib*  
bring.to:PFV-AOR  
's/he brought (smth to smb)'
- (29) *ib*  
say:PFV.AOR  
's/he said'
- (30) *g-ub*  
see:PFV-AOR  
's/he saw'
- (31) *g-ib*  
give:PFV-AOR  
's/he gave'

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- (32) *χ-ib*  
bring:PFV-AOR  
's/he brought'

These examples show difference in number of syllables in nominal and verbal stems: nominal stems tend to be two-syllabic, while verbal stems are mostly monosyllabic. This type of asymmetry is typical for the other Dargwa varieties.

## 5 Stress

As compared with different Dargwa varieties, Mehweb has more or less fixed stress system (cf. [Moroz 2014](#)). In nearly all polysyllabic forms the stress is on the second syllable.

- (33) a. *uq'láha*<sup>5</sup>      b. *uq'láha-jni*      c. *uq'láha-li-če-r*  
window      window-ERG      window-OBL-SUPER-F[ESS]  
'window'      'on the window'
- (34) a. *w-ak'-íb*      b. *w-ak'-íša*      c. *w-ak'-ás*  
M-come:PFV-AOR      M-come:PFV-FUT.EGO      M-come:PFV-FUT  
'he came'      'I (male) will come'      'he will come'

There are however some exceptions and even some minimal pairs distinguished by the position of the stress (cf. (35–38)).

- (35) *bek'á*  
hill  
'hill'
- (36) *b-ék'-a*  
HPL-choose:PFV-IMP.TR  
'choose (them)!'
- (37) *dužé*  
night  
'night'

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<sup>5</sup>The nucleus of the stressed syllable is marked by acute.

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- (38) *d-úž-e*  
 NPL-drink:IPFV-IMP  
 ‘drink (it)!’

With monosyllabic roots, when a suffix is added the stress is placed on the second syllable, as shown in (39–40).

- |      |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|
| (39) | a. <i>béč’</i><br>head<br>‘head’             | b. <i>beč’-lá</i><br>head-GEN<br>‘(e.g. part) of a head’       | c. <i>buč’-ré</i><br>head-PL<br>‘heads’                    |
| (40) | a. <i>g-úb</i><br>see:PFV-AOR<br>‘(s)he saw’ | b. <i>g<sup>w</sup>-išá</i><br>see:PFV-FUT.EGO<br>‘I will see’ | c. <i>g<sup>w</sup>-és</i><br>see:PFV-FUT<br>‘he will see’ |

Some verbal forms are more complex. In (41b) and (41c), as compared to (41a), the stress is on the second syllable, as expected. Example (41d), the only type of structure where two initial syllables are added in inflection, shows that the stress may not leave the verbal stem:

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (41) | a. <i>b-ík-ib</i><br>N-become:PFV-AOR<br>‘he became’   | b. <i>ħa-b-ík-ib</i><br>NEG-N-become:PFV-AOR<br>‘he didn’t become’   |
|      | c. <i>ar-b-ík-ib</i><br>PV-N-fall:PFV-AOR<br>‘he fell’ | d. <i>ar-ħa-b-ík-ib</i><br>PV-NEG-N-fall:PFV-AOR<br>‘he didn’t fall’ |

A form that goes against the second-syllable stress generalization is the vocative. A special vocative form only exists for two-syllable stems which denote humans. These forms are treated as a special stress pattern, with the stress on the first syllable. An acoustic study is however necessary to find out whether this salience should be treated as stress or, alternatively, as a special vocative intonation. In this forms stress always on the first syllable (cf. (42–43)).

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| (42) | a. <i>adáj</i><br>father<br>‘father’   | b. <i>ádaj</i><br>father[voc]<br>‘father!’   |
| (43) | a. <i>urší</i><br>brother<br>‘brother’ | b. <i>úrši</i><br>brother[voc]<br>‘brother!’ |

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Another exception is the optative form: the optative marker is never stressed (cf. (44–45)):

- (44) *lúč'-ab*  
read:IPFV-OPT  
'if only he would read'
- (45) *úrc-ab*  
fly:IPFV-OPT  
'if only he would fly'

Imperative forms never have the stress in the final position – as in the optative, in the imperative the stem is stressed. Plural forms, however, where the imperative is suffixed with the plural-of-addressee marker *-na*, have the common second stressed pattern.

- (46) *árc-e*  
fly:PFV-IMP  
'fly!'
- (47) *arc-é-na*  
fly:PFV-IMP-IMP.PL  
'fly! (to a group of people)'

There are numerous Arabic borrowings and proper names which are stressed mostly as in Arabic (cf. (48–51)):

- (48) *amanát*  
'assignment'
- (49) *paraq'át*  
'calm'
- (50) *žá<sup>°</sup>q'lu*  
'wit'
- (51) *másala*  
'for example'

## 6 Some phonological and morphophonological alternations

In Mehweb hiatus is not allowed, and the underlying forms are changed in various ways whenever such configurations arise. If the verb stem is *iC* or *uC*, *i* becomes *j* (as in (52) and (53)) and vowel *u* (*u<sup>ɪ</sup>*, *o<sup>ɪ</sup>*) becomes *w* (as in (54) and (55)).

- (52) *ħajhub* /ħa-*ih*-ub/  
NEG-throw:PFV-AOR  
'(he) didn't throw'
- (53) *ħajg<sup>w</sup>an* /ħa-*ig<sup>w</sup>*-an/  
NEG-burn:IPFV-HAB  
'(it) doesn't burn'
- (54) *ħawcib* /ħa-*uc*-ib/  
NEG-M.catch:PFV-AOR  
'(he) didn't catch him'
- (55) *ħawrib* /ħa-*ur*-ib/  
NEG-rain:IPFV-IPFT  
'it didn't rain'

Whenever the verbal stem consists of two consonants, the root-initial vowel deletes after the negation marker (as in (56)).

- (56) *ħalʔun* /ħa-*elʔ*-un/  
NEG-count:PFV-AOR  
'he didn't count'

The vowel *u*, when followed by a consonant cluster, is deleted and triggers the labialization of its final consonant (compare (54–55) and (57–59)). Most labialized consonants that appear as a result of that rule also occur as independent phoneme (see Table 1), but some labialized consonants, e.g. *z<sup>w</sup>* only appears as a result of this process.

- (57) *ħa<sup>ɾ</sup>rχ<sup>w</sup>ib* /ħa-*u<sup>ɾ</sup>rχ*-ib/  
NEG-M.touch:PFV-AOR  
'didn't touch him'

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- (58) *ħabk<sup>w</sup>an /ħa-ubk'-an/*  
 NEG-M.die:IPFV-HAB  
 'he doesn't die'  
 (59) *ħarz<sup>w</sup>an /ħa-urz-an/*  
 NEG-M.praise:IPFV-HAB  
 'didn't praise him'

The alternation from the examples above can be generalized as follows:

- (60) a. */a-uC/ → [a<sup>w</sup>C]*  
 b. */a-uCC/ → [aCC<sup>w</sup>]*

The behavior of the labialization feature can be explained by phonotactic constraints. As stated in §4, if the coda is complex, the first consonant is most frequently is a sonorant, no complex onsets are allowed, and clusters of sonorants in the same syllable are not attested. The rule (60b) provide a resolution of a unacceptable consonant cluster (*w*-sonorant-plosive).

The marker of the prohibitive and the negative optative (NEGVOL) *m(V)-* has an unspecified vowel that, when appearing before CVC or CL-VC roots, copies the vowel of the root (cf. (61–63)):

- (61) *mu-luč-adi*  
 NEGVOL-read:IPFV-PROH  
 'don't read'  
 (62) *mi-d-ic'-adi*  
 NEGVOL-NPL-thaw:IPFV-PROH  
 'don't thaw it'  
 (63) *ma-m-aš-adi-na /mV-b-aš-adi-na/*  
 NEGVOL-M-walk:IPFV-PROH-PL  
 'don't go (to several people)'

Gender marker *b-* assimilates to the nasality of the preceding NEGVOL marker *mV-*; cf. (64).

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>(64) a. <i>mi-d-ilc-adi</i><br/>         NEGVOL-NPL-sell:IPFV-PROH<br/>         'don't sell them (non-humans)'</p> | <p>b. <i>mi-m-ilc-adi /mV-b-ilc-adi/</i><br/>         NEGVOL-HPL-sell:IPFV-PROH<br/>         'don't sell them (humans)'</p> |
|---|---|



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The same segment in the verb root does not undergo the assimilation:

- (65) *m-ib-adi* (\**m-im-adi*)  
 NEGVOL-sew:IPFV-OPT  
 ‘don’t sew’

There are some assimilations triggered by *l* and involving *n* and *l*. The sequences *nIV* or *llV* in final position can become *w* or *jj* after *u* (66, 67) and *jj* elsewhere (68, 69).

- (66) *xunuwa*, *xunujja* /*xunul-la*/  
 female-GEN  
 (67) *buk’uwa*, *buk’ujja* /*buk’un-la*/  
 shepherd-GEN  
 (68) *t’ajja* /*t’al-la*/  
 pillar-GEN  
 (69) *ša<sup>h</sup>ba<sup>j</sup>ja* /*ša<sup>h</sup>ban-la*/  
 filbert-GEN

There is a correlation between the age of the speaker and the preferred type of the alternation in nouns: older speakers tend to use the *w*-variant of the genitive, middle-aged speakers consider both *w*-variants and *jj*-variants as well-formed, and young speakers tend to use the *jj*-variant only. In the imperfective converb, only *w* is available for all speakers.

- (70) *wik’uwe* /*w-ik’-ul-le*/  
 M-come:IPFV-PTCP.CVB  
 ‘coming (M)’  
 (71) *luč’uwe* /*luč’-ul-le*/  
 read:IPFV-PTCP.CVB  
 ‘reading’

In medial position, the sequences *nli* or *lli* become *j* and cause vowel deletion (cf. (72–75)):

- (72) *xunujze* /*xunul-li-ze*/  
 female-OBL-INTER[LAT]  
 (73) *buk’ujze* /*buk’un-li-ze*/  
 shepherd-OBL-INTER[LAT]

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- (74) *t'ajze* /*t'al-li-ze*/  
pillar-OBL-INTER[LAT]
- (75) *ša<sup>h</sup>hajze* /*ša<sup>h</sup>han-li-ze*/  
filbert-OBL-INTER[LAT]

Sequences *nVl* or *IVl* after *u* show deletion of a medial vowel, and that feeds the *nl/ll* alternations above; cf. (76):

- (76a) *huni*  
road
- (76b) *hujzé* /*hun-li-ze* ← *huní-li-ze*/  
road-OBL-INTER[LAT]
- (76c) *huwá* /*hun-la* ← *huní-la*/  
road-GEN

When clusters *nVl* or *IVl* follow any other vowel, only an unstressed vowel can be deleted, and this deletion also feeds the *nl/ll/jj* alternation described above – (cf. (77–80)):

- (77) *qarč'ájja* /*qarč'al-la* ← *qarč'ála-la*/  
shoulder-GEN
- (78) *qarč'ájze* /*qarč'al-li-ze* ← *qarč'ála-li-ze*/  
shoulder-OBL-INTER[LAT]
- (79) *balá-la* (\**bajja*)  
wool-GEN
- (80) *čaná-la* (\**čajja*)  
sledge-GEN

There are some exceptions to the vowel deletion rule illustrated in (76). While (81) shows non-deletion of a stressed vowel, in (82–83) the stressed vowel is deleted:

- (81) *culála*  
tooth-GEN
- (82) a. *šajjá* /*šal-la* ← *šalí-la*/      b. *šajzé* /*šal-li-ze* ← *šalí-li-ze*/  
side-GEN      side-OBL-INTER[LAT]
- (83) a. *ejjá* /*el-la* ← *elí-la*/      b. *ejzé* /*el-li-ze* ← *elí-li-ze*/  
child-GEN      child-OBL-INTER[LAT]

## 2 Phonology of Mehweb

Finally, *r* can assimilate to *n* and *l* (cf. (84–88)), including after applying vowel deletion (cf. (97) and (98)), which then feeds the *r*-assimilation.

- (84) *qallize* /*qar-li-ze*/  
sheepskin.coat-OBL-INTER[LAT]
- (85) *belč'unna* /*b-elč'-un-ra*/  
M-read:PFV-AOR-EGO  
'I've read'
- (86) *aħinna* /*aħin-ra*/  
be:NEG-EGO
- (87) *batalla* /*batari-la*/  
wing-GEN
- (88) *batallize* /*batari-li-ze*/  
wing-OBL-INTER[LAT]

In some cases, this assimilation is optional (cf. (89–91)):

- (89) *qarlá, qalla* /*qar-la*/  
sheepskin.coat-GEN
- (90) *šinná, šinrá* /*šin-ra*/  
water=ADD
- (91) *t'ulla, t'ulra* /*t'ul-ra*/  
finger=ADD

The *r*-assimilation would increase the number of forms to which *nl*- and *ll*-mutations would apply. This does not happen, however, so I can postulate that the *r*-assimilation applies after *nl*-/*ll*-mutations (counterfeeding order, see [Kiparsky 1968](#)):

Table 4: Interaction of the *nl*-/*ll*- mutation rule and the *r*- assimilation rule

	(85) / <i>belč'un-ra</i> /	(67) / <i>buk'un-la</i> /
<i>nl</i> - and <i>ll</i> -mutation	not applied	<i>buk'uwa, buk'ujja</i>
<i>r</i> -assimilation	<i>belč'unna</i>	not applied

The rules for vowel deletion between consonants *r*, *l* or *n* can be generalized as follows:

**vowel deletion rule:**  $V \rightarrow \emptyset / [+cons; +son; DORSAL] \_\_ [+cons; +son; DORSAL]$

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Table 5 summarises the rules discussed in this section.

Table 5: Interaction of the *nl-/ll-* mutation rule, the *r-* assimilation rule and the vowel deletion rule

	(85) / <i>belč'un-ra</i> /	(67) / <i>buk'un-la</i> /	(87) / <i>batari-la</i> /	(76c) / <i>huni-la</i> /
vowel deletion	not applied	not applied	<i>batarla</i>	<i>hunla</i>
<i>nl-</i> and <i>ll-</i> mutation	not applied	<i>buk'uwa</i> , <i>buk'ujja</i>	not applied	<i>huwa</i>
<i>r</i> -assimilation	<i>belč'unna</i>	not applied	<i>batalla</i>	not applied

## 7 Pharyngealization

I suggest that pharyngealization is a suprasegmental feature. By this I mean that the pharyngealization is not associated with a specific consonant or vowel but with a whole syllable; under certain conditions, it may spread to other syllables. I will mark the presence of the pharyngeal feature on the nucleus of the syllable by <sup>ʕ</sup>. Phonetically, pharyngealization causes centering of vowels and epiglottalization of the consonants *ʔ* and *ħ*:

Table 6: Influence of pharyngeal feature on vowels and consonants

underlying segments	/i <sup>ʕ</sup> /	/e <sup>ʕ</sup> /	/a <sup>ʕ</sup> /	/u <sup>ʕ</sup> /	/ʔ <sup>ʕ</sup> /	/ħ <sup>ʕ</sup> /
surface segments	[e <sup>ʕ</sup> ]	[ɛ <sup>ʕ</sup> ]	[æ <sup>ʕ</sup> ]	[u <sup>ʕ</sup> ], [o <sup>ʕ</sup> ]	[ʔ]	[ħ]

The evidence that the surface segment *ʔ* and *ħ* are underlyingly *ʔ* and *ħ* comes not only from the fact that the latter segments do not co-occur with pharyngealization (except in Avar loanwords – see note 2 above) but also from different realizations of the same morphological segments in inflection and derivation. Consider the following examples:

- (92) a. *uʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>* < /*ʔuʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>*/      b. *ʔu<sup>ʕ</sup>ʔ-ne* < /*ʔuʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>-ne*/  
           cheese                                      cheese-PL  
           ‘cheese’                                    ‘cheese (plural)’

- (93) *ar-b-uχ-ib*  
       away-N-bring:PFV-AOR  
       ‘took it away’

- (94) *ʔaʳr-d-aʳqʷ-un* < */ʔar-d-aʳqʷ-un/*  
 away-F1-go:PFV-AOR  
 ‘she is gone’

As stated in §2, the glottal stop *ʔ* in intervocalic and initial position is often deleted. Glottal stops in initial and intervocalic position can be deleted and appear only in the accurate speech. I stipulate that at the underlying level vowel initial morphemes have the initial glottal stop. Examples (92–93) show that the pharyngeal feature can spread backward, under which condition an underlying *ʔ* and *ħ* become epiglottal and cease to be affected by the deletion rule. This provides a uniform underlying representation of the prefix, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Pharyngealization of underlying initial glottal stop

	<i>/ʔar-b-uχ-ib/</i>	<i>/ʔar-d-aʳqʷ-un/</i>
pharyngealization SPREAD	not applied	<i>ʔaʳr-d-aʳqʷ-un</i>
deletion of initial <i>ʔ</i>	<i>ar-b-uχ-un</i>	not applied
	<i>ar-b-uχ-un</i>	<i>ʔaʳr-d-aʳqʷ-un</i>

In the first wordform, there is no lexical pharyngeal feature on the root. Pharyngealization does not spread leftward and does not change the underlying glottal stop to *ʔ*; it can then be deleted. On the contrary, in the second wordform, the lexical pharyngeal feature of the root spreads leftwards and changes the glottal stop to epiglottal, which cannot be dropped.

There is another argument for the *ʔ*-to-*ʔ* pharyngealization hypothesis. Examples of the sequences of the epiglottal *ʔ* and plain vowels are rare and seem to be detectable as Avar borrowings. This interpretation creates some minimal pairs distinguished by the pharyngeal feature alone (cf. (95–98)):

- (95) *ʔe*  
 winter
- (96) *ʔeʳ* < */ʔeʳ/*  
 summer
- (97) *d-irʔ-an*  
 NPL-gather:IPFV-HAB  
 ‘gathers them’

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- (98) *d-irʔ-a<sup>ɛ</sup>n* < /*d-irʔ<sup>ɛ</sup>-an*/  
 NPL-freeze:IPFV-HAB  
 ‘they are freezing’

Pharyngealization in (98) may be explained as floating feature (similarly to floating tone in Goldsmith 1976) that attaches to the post-root syllable of *-irʔ*; the ending *-an* becomes pharyngealized.

Evidence for *ħ* becoming *Ɂ* in a syllable with the pharyngeal feature is provided by the negation prefix *ħa-* in contexts of the pharyngeal feature spreading backward (cf. (99–100)):

- (99) *ħa-d-irʔ-an*  
 NEG-NPL-gather:IPFV-HAB  
 ‘does not gather them’
- (100) *ħa<sup>ɛ</sup>-d-irʔ-a<sup>ɛ</sup>n*  
 NEG-NPL-freeze:IPFV-HAB  
 ‘they are not freezing’

In nouns, some of the plural CV-morphemes may delete the stem-final vowel. If the deleted vowel is pharyngealized, the pharyngeal feature moves to the previous syllable (101–103):

- |       |    |                          |    |                            |
|-------|----|--------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| (101) | a. | <i>čʰuʔa<sup>ɛ</sup></i> | b. | <i>čʰu<sup>ɛ</sup>ʔ-ne</i> |
|       |    | straw                    |    | straw:PL-PL                |
|       |    | ‘straw’                  |    | ‘straws’                   |
- 
- |       |    |                        |    |  |
|-------|----|------------------------|----|--|
| (102) | a. | <i>uʔa<sup>ɛ</sup></i> | b. | <i>ʔu<sup>ɛ</sup>ʔ-ne</i> / <i>ʔuʔa<sup>ɛ</sup>-ne</i> |
|       |    | cheese                 |    | cheese:PL-PL   |
|       |    | ‘cheese’               |    | ‘cheese (plural)’                                      |
- 
- |       |    |                                     |    |                                       |
|-------|----|-------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| (103) | a. | <i>čiq<sup>w</sup>a<sup>ɛ</sup></i> | b. | <i>či<sup>ɛ</sup>q<sup>w</sup>-ne</i> |
|       |    | bird                                |    | bird:PL-PL                            |
|       |    | ‘bird’                              |    | ‘birds’                               |

I suggest that, in examples (101a), (102a) and (103a), only the second syllable of the underlying form is pharyngealized. In examples (101b), (102b) and (103b), the plural morpheme deletes the nucleus of the pharyngealized syllable, and the feature spreads to the previous syllable. We thus observe *ʔ* in the examples (101b) and (102b).

## 2 Phonology of Mehweb

Pharyngealization rules in Mehweb represent a complex phonological phenomenon that requires a further study. I will summarize its most prominent properties:

- 1) the pharyngeal feature shows a strong association with uvular, epiglottal consonants, but also appears in some stems lacking these segments
- 2) acoustically, it is most visible on vowels adjacent to these consonants, but may spread backward as far as to the verbal prefixes (as in (92), (94) and (100))
- 3) all vowels can be pharyngealized, but  $i^{\text{f}}$  and  $e^{\text{f}}$  are extremely rare, and  $a^{\text{f}}$  is the most frequent
- 4) I treat  $\text{ʔ}$  and  $h$  as realizations of  $\text{ʔ}$  and  $h$  in syllables with the pharyngeal feature

## 8 Conclusion

This paper explored phononological characteristics of Mehweb. The main generalizations are as follows. Most plosives and affricates form three-way oppositions (voiced vs. voiceless vs. ejective). There are epiglottal consonants and pharyngealized vowels that can be described as a result of the realization of the suprasegmental pharyngeal feature. The of the majority of native Mehweb words can be described as (C)V(C)(C). Nearly all polysyllabic forms have the stress on the second syllable. To describe alternations (including vowel deletion, *nl*- and *ll*-mutation rules and *r*-assimilation), I stipulate that vowel deletion feeds all other rules, and *r*-assimilation counterfeeds *nl*-/*ll*-mutations.

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## List of abbreviations

ADD	additive particle
AOR	aorist
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
CVB	converb

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EGO	egophoric
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NEGVOL	negation in volitional forms (negative imperative and negative optative)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
OPT	optative
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PROH	prohibitive
PTCP	participle
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
SG	singular
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
VOC	form of address

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## Chapter 3

# Nominal morphology of Mehweb

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This paper describes the nominal morphology of Mehweb. It deals with the following issues: nominal paradigm, plural formation, the oblique stem, case formation and use, and irregular locatives. In this paper I analyze both the structure and the semantics of these forms.

*Keywords:* nominal inflection, case, number, locative.

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, I consider the following aspects of Mehweb grammar:

1. Nominal paradigm structure
2. Formation of plural
3. Oblique stem formation
4. Grammatical cases
5. Irregular locatives
6. Inflection of place names

Since gender is not marked on nouns and is only reflected in verb agreement, this aspect of the grammar is discussed in the chapter on verbal morphology (Daniel 2018).

## 2 Structure of the nominal paradigm

The form of the nominative singular is identical to the nominal root. Mehweb also has two intermediate derivational stems, the oblique stem and the plural stem. The oblique stem is derived from the root by an affix or, much more rarely, through a non-segmental operation, and further derives all inflectional forms



other than the nominative case in the singular, including the ergative case. The rules of oblique stem formation are described in §4. The plural stem is derived from the root and attaches plural suffixes. The rules of plural stem formation are specific to each of the plural suffixes and are discussed in the sections dealing with the corresponding suffixes. In the plural, case suffixes follow the plural suffix. Figure 1 describes the general mechanism of the formation of the plural and oblique stems, starting from the root of a noun:

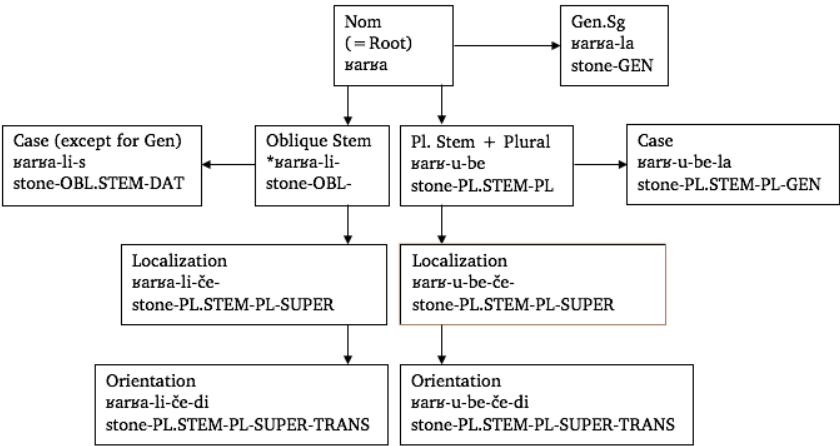


Figure 1: Plural and oblique stem formation

Or, in a tabular form:

Table 1: Possible noun forms

Stem	Slot 1	Slot 2
Nominative stem	(NOM)	
Nominative stem	GEN	
Oblique stem	DAT/GEN/ERG/COMIT/REPL/SUBST	
Oblique stem	localization suffix (see 5)	orientation suffix (see 5)
Plural stem+PL	(NOM)	
Plural stem+PL	DAT/GEN/ERG/COMIT/REPL/SUBST	
Plural stem+PL	localization suffix (see 5)	orientation suffix (see 5)

As one can see from Table 1, the first slot is occupied by case or localization markers, while the second slot is restricted to the orientation markers and can be filled only if there is a localization marker in the first slot.

### 3 Nominal morphology of Mehweb

Hence and forth I distinguish between the *stem* and the *root* of a word. The root of a word is the deepest level of underlying representation of the unchangeable part of a noun, which usually coincides with the nominative. The only exception is overt gender marking, only characteristic of some nouns of adjectival origin, as *uqna* ‘old man’ (plural *b-uqna-r-t* ‘old men’). Here the gender markers, which are not part of the root, are present in both singular and plural forms (*w-* ‘masculine singular’ is assimilated with the [u] in the beginning of the word, *b-* marks the ‘human plural’ gender). In this and similar cases I consider the gender (also called *class*) agreement slot a part of the root and mark it as CL. This definition is slightly different from the canonical one given in Haspelmath & Sims (2010: 19) where the root is defined as the part of a lexeme that remains after removing all affixes. I assume the agreement slot (but not the marker itself) to be part of the nominal root.

The stem is a representation of a root, including intermediate phonological and morphological representations. Thus, the root is an abstraction that can correspond to a number of different stems, as in the two forms in Table 1: *ɤarɤa* ‘stone-NOM.SG’ and *ɤarɤ-u-be* ‘stone-PL.STEM-PL’. In this example the root is *ɤarɤa*, while the stems are *ɤarɤa* and *ɤarɤ-u*. Stems are never used without case suffixes (assuming zero affix in the nominative) and thus are also an abstraction.

The nominal paradigm of Mehweb consists of two parts (or sub-paradigms): *grammatical*, or *functional*, cases and *locative forms*. The two types differ in their morphology: functional case markers consist of one inflectional morpheme; locative forms include two inflectional slots: *localization* (LOC) and *orientation* (OR).

There are a number of nominal inflectional forms that can be historically analyzed as former locatives but synchronically are monomorphemic. These are: *causal*, *substitutive*, *replicative* and probably *comitative*.

## 3 Plural

The description of plural formation in this chapter is based on wordlists presented in Magometov (1982) and lexical data collected by George Moroz during the 2013–2016 fieldtrips (Moroz 2018) (this volume).

The category of number distinguishes three values: singular, plural and associative. The singular is not marked. The plural is marked with the following suffixes: *-t*, *-be*, *-me*, *-ne*, *-e*, *-le*, *-he*, *-re*, *-še*, *-nube*, *-tune*, *-urbe*, *-lume*. The associative plural suffix is *-qale*.

The suffixes *-t*, *-be*, *-me*, *-ne*, *-e* are frequent. The suffixes *-le*, *-he*, *-re*, *-še*, *-nube*, *-tune*, *-urbe*, and *-lume* are limited to small classes of nominal stems.

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Strictly speaking, the choice of the plural suffix is lexical. In most cases, it cannot be predicted from either the formal properties of the stem or from the semantics of the noun. The plural stem formation is not always predictable, either.

On the other hand, each plural suffix has certain – and sometimes quite strong – constraints on the phonotactic structure of the stems to which it can attach. There are different rules of plural stem formation for different affixes, which, however, involve partially similar patterns. For instance, the suffix *-e* only attaches to one-syllable stems (3.8) and the suffix *-re* usually changes the root vowel of one-syllable nominative stems to [u] (3.9). Another almost universal process is final vowel syncope, which happens in all stems except monosyllabic words and borrowings. However, though the processes discussed in this chapter often apply to most of the formally eligible nouns, almost none of them is truly obligatory.

Below, I attempt to formalize (to some extent) the rules of plural formation. Each of the subsections deals with a particular suffix. In each subsection, I describe the restrictions observed, based on the dictionary data and the data from [Magometov \(1982\)](#). For the suffixes *-ne*, *-e*, *-le*, *-he*, *-re*, *-še*, *-nube*, *-tune*, *-urbe*, *-lume*, and partly also for the suffix *-me*, I was able to specify the classes of nouns that attach these suffixes. For the other suffixes, I was only able to specify the stem changes they cause.

I will use the following abbreviations: C for consonants, V for vowels, R for sonorants.

### 3.1 The plural suffix *-t*

The plural suffix *-t* is one of the most productive suffixes. With this suffix, the stem undergoes the following changes:

- 1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped. The [a] of the penultimate syllable changes to [u]<sup>1</sup>. The rule does not apply to borrowed stems.
- 2) If a stem ends in a sonorant or [b], including after (1) is applied, the plural suffix *-t* can be attached directly to it.
- 3) If a stem is borrowed (or contains a borrowed morpheme), the plural stem is formed by inserting the element *-r-* (unless it ends in a sonorant).
- 4) The word *uqna* ‘old man’ forms the plural stem by inserting *-r-* even though it is not borrowed.

The rough generalization is that the suffix *-t* attaches to stems ending in sonorants.

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<sup>1</sup> If a vowel is pharyngealized, it changes into [o<sup>ɣ</sup>], the phonetic realization of /u<sup>ɣ</sup>/.

## 3 Nominal morphology of Mehweb

Table 2 illustrates vowel drop and vowel change (Rule 1):

Table 2: Rule 1

	SG	PL
‘a piece of firewood’	<i>urculi</i>	<i>urcul-t</i>
‘broom’	<i>buškala</i>	<i>buškul-t</i>
‘flue’	<i>zamari</i>	<i>zamura-t</i>
‘border’	<i>durʔaʳri</i>	<i>durʔoʳr-t</i>
‘mountain’	<i>dubura</i>	<i>dubur-t</i>
‘sunny hillside’	<i>burhala</i>	<i>burhul-t</i>

Table 3 illustrates the second rule:

Table 3: Rule 2

	SG	PL
‘blacksmith’	<i>ustar</i>	<i>ustar-t</i>
‘spoon’	<i>kʰucʰul</i>	<i>kʰucʰul-t</i>
‘bridle’	<i>hurhur</i>	<i>hurhur-t</i>
‘horse’	<i>ʔaʰbul</i>	<i>ʔaʰbul-t</i>
‘a piece of dry dung’	<i>kupar</i>	<i>kupar-t</i>
‘cauldron’	<i>qazam</i>	<i>qazam-t</i>
‘sack’	<i>halban</i>	<i>halban-t</i>
‘hand mill’	<i>ulχab</i>	<i>ulχab-t</i>
‘waterfall’	<i>rurqaʳni</i>	<i>rurqoʳn-t</i>
‘fairytale’	<i>χabar</i>	<i>χabar-t</i>
‘dream’	<i>muʔer</i>	<i>muʔer-t</i>

Table 4 shows how the *-t* suffix interacts with borrowed stems ending in a vowel: the vowel drop does not apply.

Table 4: Rules 3 and 4

	SG	PL	Source
‘reaper’	<i>irχʰanči</i>	<i>irχʰanči-r-t</i>	Turkic suffix <i>-či</i>
‘hunter’	<i>awči</i>	<i>awči-r-t</i>	Turkic <i>avči</i> ‘hunter’

Table 4: Rules 3 and 4 (continued)

	SG	PL	Source
‘old man’	<i>uqna</i>	<i>b-uqna-r-t</i> <sup>2</sup>	
‘time’	<i>zamana</i>	<i>zamana-r-t</i>	Arabic <i>zama:n</i> ‘time’
‘sign’	<i>išara</i>	<i>išara-r-t</i>	Arabic <i>ʔišaara</i> ‘sign’
‘mine’	<i>šaχta</i>	<i>šaχta-r-t</i>	Russian <i>šaχta</i> ( <i>шахта</i> ) ‘mine’
‘car’	<i>mašina</i>	<i>mašina-r-t</i>	Russian <i>mašina</i> ( <i>машина</i> ) ‘car’
‘oppression’	<i>zulmu</i>	<i>zulmu-r-t</i>	Arabic <i>ḍulm</i> ‘injustice’
‘carriage’	<i>ʔaʔraba</i>	<i>ʔaʔraba-r-t</i>	Arabic <i>ʔaraba</i> ‘car’

Borrowed stems that end in a sonorant attach the *-t* suffix directly, as illustrated in Table 5:

Table 5: Borrowed stems that attach the suffix *-t* directly

	SG	PL
‘sugar’	<i>čakar</i>	<i>čakar-t</i>
‘paper’	<i>kaʔar</i>	<i>kaʔar-t</i>
‘town’	<i>šahar</i>	<i>šahar-t</i>
‘soap’	<i>sapun</i>	<i>sapun-t</i>
‘person’	<i>insan</i>	<i>insan-t</i>
‘cure’	<i>darman</i>	<i>darman-t</i>
‘regent’	<i>ħakim</i>	<i>ħakim-t</i>
‘agronomist’	<i>agranum</i>	<i>agranum-t</i>
‘member’	<i>čilen</i>	<i>čilen-t</i>
‘table’	<i>ustul</i>	<i>ustul-t</i>
‘sack’	<i>čantaj</i>	<i>čantaj-t</i>

The plural suffix *-t* also forms plurals of the words that denote inhabitants of Mehweb and neighboring villages. In Magometov (1982) this use of the suffix *-t* is described as a separate suffix *-n-t*. However, forms such as *meh<sup>w</sup>an* ‘a Mehweb person’ and *surʔatla-n* ‘a person from the village of Sogratl’ suggest that *-n* is a nominalizer and therefore not part of the plural morpheme (see Table 38 in §6).

<sup>2</sup>The word *uqna* also contains a gender marker, which expressed the number and the gender of this word. Thus, in the singular the marker is ‘masculine singular’ *w-* (dropped before the [u] of the stem), while in the plural the ‘human plural’ marker *b-* occurs. Several other nouns in Mehweb and other Dargwa dialects also include a gender marker.



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3.2 The plural suffix *-ne*

With the suffix *-ne*, the stem undergoes the following changes:

- 1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
- 2) One-syllable words form the plural stem by attaching the morpheme *-a-*.
- 3) If the stem has two or more syllables and ends in a consonant, including after Rule (1) has been applied, the plural stem is derived by attaching the morpheme *-u-*.

Table 6 illustrates the first rule:

Table 6: Rule 1

	SG	PL
‘axe’	<i>barda</i>	<i>bard-ne</i>
‘spring’	<i>derga</i>	<i>derg-ne</i>
‘dew’	<i>marka</i>	<i>mark-ne</i>
‘honey’	<i>warʔa</i>	<i>warʔ-ne</i>
‘stain’	<i>dabʁa</i>	<i>dabʁ-ne</i>
‘pile’	<i>bek’a</i>	<i>bek’-ne</i>
‘mosquito’	<i>k’ara</i>	<i>k’ar-ne</i>
‘place’	<i>musa</i>	<i>mus-ne</i>
‘cover’	<i>q’ap’a</i>	<i>q’ap’-ne</i>
‘mouse’	<i>waca</i>	<i>wac-ne</i>
‘voice’	<i>t’ama</i>	<i>t’am-ne</i>
‘bird’	<i>čiq<sup>w</sup>a<sup>s</sup></i>	<i>či<sup>s</sup>q<sup>w</sup>-ne</i>
‘hedgehog’	<i>satk<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>satk<sup>w</sup>-ne</i>

Table 7 illustrates the mechanism of the plural formation of one-syllable stems attaching the suffix *-ne* (2):

Table 7: Rule 2

	SG	PL
‘load’	<i>dex</i>	<i>dex-a-ne</i>
‘herd’	<i>ħanq’</i>	<i>ħanq’-a-ne</i>
‘manure’	<i>dek<sup>w</sup></i>	<i>dek<sup>w</sup>-a-ne</i>
‘wedge’	<i>č’ut’</i>	<i>č’ut’-a-ne</i>
‘fist’	<i>χunk’</i>	<i>χunk’-a-ne</i>
‘pupil (of the eye)’	<i>nur</i>	<i>nur-a-ne</i>

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Table 7: Rule 2 (continued)

	SG	PL
‘place’	<i>merʔ</i>	<i>merʔ-a-ne</i>
‘liver’	<i>kʼacʼ</i>	<i>kʼacʼ-a-ne</i>
‘lightning’	<i>parχ</i>	<i>parχ-a-ne</i>
‘shelter (of branches)’	<i>paž</i>	<i>paž-a-ne</i>
‘yoke’	<i>dukʼ</i>	<i>dukʼ-a-ne</i>
‘strut’	<i>tʼal</i>	<i>tʼal-a-ne</i>
‘month’	<i>baz</i>	<i>baz-a-ne</i>
‘drop’, ‘point’	<i>tʼankʼ</i>	<i>tʼankʼ-a-ne</i>

Table 8 illustrates (3):

Table 8: Rule 3

	SG	PL
‘scythe’	<i>čʼinikʼ</i>	<i>čʼinikʼ-u-ne</i>
‘shock/stook’	<i>bizaqʼ</i>	<i>bizaqʼ-u-ne</i>
‘chain’	<i>raχas</i>	<i>raχas-u-ne</i>
‘kidney’	<i>urcec</i>	<i>urcec-u-ne</i>
‘ploughshare’	<i>uʔab</i>	<i>uʔab-u-ne</i>
‘glue’	<i>luʔmes</i>	<i>luʔmes-u-ne</i>
‘trousers’	<i>waxčag</i>	<i>waxčag-u-ne</i>
‘fork’	<i>χinčʼultʼ</i>	<i>χinčʼultʼ-u-ne</i>
‘metal tray’	<i>sarβas</i>	<i>sarβas-u-ne</i>
‘needle’	<i>bureba</i>	<i>bureb-u-ne</i>
‘corpse’	<i>žanaza</i>	<i>žanaz-u-ne</i>
‘pound’	<i>qilawka</i>	<i>qilawk-u-ne</i>
‘alms’	<i>sadaqʼa</i>	<i>sadaqʼ-u-ne</i>
‘swallow’	<i>určuti</i>	<i>určut-u-ne</i>
‘nose’	<i>šumšutʼi</i>	<i>šumšutʼ-u-ne</i>
‘whirligig’	<i>cʼalači</i>	<i>cʼalač-u-ne</i>
‘jug’	<i>burbutʼi</i>	<i>burbutʼ-u-ne</i>
‘button’	<i>mičawi</i>	<i>mičaw-u-ne</i>

Rule 3 has one exception: the plural stem of the word *βamas* ‘box’ is formed by syncope of the last vowel of the root:

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Table 9: Exception (Rule 1)

	SG	PL
‘box’	<i>Ɂamas</i>	<i>Ɂams-ne</i>

The nouns given in Table 10 undergo haplology:

Table 10: Haplology

	SG	PL
‘omelet’	<i>χajqane</i>	<i>χajq-u-ne</i>
‘moustache’	<i>sersit’ane</i>	<i>sersit’-u-ne</i>
‘lizard’	<i>šuršut’ani</i>	<i>šuršut’-u-ne</i>
‘fat tail’	<i>urɁaʔdiq’aʔni</i>	<i>urɁaʔdiq’-uʔ-ne</i>
‘bellows’	<i>pušduk’ani</i>	<i>pušduk’-u-ne</i>

The haplology here applies to the contiguous VR syllables: when after a derivation there are two VR syllables with the same R next to each other, the first one is dropped, e.g. *urɁadiq’aʔn-u-ne* → *urɁadiq-uʔ-ne*. These words can also be analyzed as attaching the suffix *-e* after dropping the final vowel. However, since the suffix *-e* prefers one-syllable stems, my analysis seems more feasible<sup>3</sup>.

Several words form plural stems by changing the vowel in the first syllable (which is also the penultimate) into *-u-*:

Table 11: Vowel change in the root

	SG	PL
‘stomach’	<i>Ɂaga</i>	<i>Ɂug-ne</i>
‘frog’	<i>ʔaʔt’a</i>	<i>ʔoʔt’-ne</i>

### 3.3 The plural suffix *-tune*

The words *qašqar* ‘bald man’, *wakil* ‘lawyer’, *arab* ‘Arab’ and *sabab* ‘reason’ attach the plural suffix *-tune*. Diachronically, these words employed the suffix *-t(e)*,

<sup>3</sup> Magometov (1982: 36) treats these cases as apophony, not as haplology. He analyzes the forms *χajqune* and *sersit’une* as follows: “There are cases, even though they are rare, when a word ending with *-e* in the plural differs [from singular] only by a vowel change in the stem. This vowel change, therefore, acquires a morphological meaning”.

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as in some other Dargwa dialects, e.g. Kubachi. Presumably, this plural marking was then reinforced by *-ne*, which required the change of the final vowel to *-u*. Together, these suffixes formed the structure *-tune*, which is synchronically monomorphemic (Table 12):

Table 12: The plural suffix *-tune*

	Mehweb SG	Mehweb PL	Kubachi SG	Kubachi PL
‘bald’	<i>qašqar</i>	<i>qašqar-tune</i>	<i>qʼaʼšqʼaʼr</i>	<i>qʼaʼšqʼaʼr-te</i>
‘lawyer’	<i>wakil</i>	<i>wakil-tune</i>	<i>wakil</i>	<i>wakil-te</i>
‘Arab’	<i>arab</i>	<i>arab-tune</i>	<i>warab</i>	<i>warab-te</i>
‘reason’	<i>sabab</i>	<i>sabab-tune</i>	<i>sabab</i>	<i>sabab-te</i>

**3.4 The plural suffix *-be***

With the suffix *-be*, the stem undergoes the following changes:

- 1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
- 2) After dropping the final vowel, originally two-syllable words with [a] in the first syllable often add *-u-* to form their plural stems.

Table 13 illustrates (1):

Table 13: Rule 1

	SG	PL
‘bear’	<i>sinka</i>	<i>sink-be</i>
‘crust’	<i>wank’a</i>	<i>wank’-be</i>
‘tooth’	<i>cula</i>	<i>cul-be</i>
‘mill’	<i>šinq’a</i>	<i>šinq’-be</i>

Table 14 illustrates (2):

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Table 14: Rule 2

	SG	PL
‘leg’	<i>daga</i>	<i>dag-u-be</i>
‘heel’	<i>qaʰč’a</i>	<i>qaʰč’-u-be</i>
‘bone’	<i>liga</i>	<i>lig-u-be</i>
‘sledge’	<i>čana</i>	<i>čan-u-be</i>
‘stone’	<i>ɁarɁa</i>	<i>ɁarɁ-u-be</i>
‘cheek’	<i>laʰži</i>	<i>laʰž-u-be</i>
‘spike’	<i>canzi</i>	<i>canz-u-be</i>
‘cradle’	<i>kʷahni</i>	<i>kʷahn-u-be</i>

Note that *liga* ‘bone’ also forms the plural stem by attaching *-u-* even though the first syllable is not an [a].

Several nouns form their plural stems by changing the root vowel to [u]. All of these words either have [e] in this syllable or contain a labialized or labial consonant:

Table 15: Vowel change in the root

	SG	PL
‘melted butter’	<i>nerɁ</i>	<i>nurɁ-be</i>
‘cricket’	<i>c’erc’</i>	<i>c’urc’-be</i>
‘tear’	<i>nerɁ</i>	<i>nurɁ-be</i>
‘eyebrow’	<i>ned</i>	<i>nud-be</i>
‘boar’	<i>t’erɁ</i>	<i>t’urɁ-be</i>
‘armful’	<i>kʷec’</i>	<i>kuc’-be</i>
‘lip’	<i>kʷet’</i>	<i>k’ut’-be</i>
‘peach’	<i>qʷarč</i>	<i>q’urč-be</i>
‘cattle-shed’	<i>derqʷ</i>	<i>durq-be</i>

An assimilation occurs in the stems ending with [n]: /n+be/ → [mbe]:

Table 16: /n+be/ → [mbe]

	SG	PL
‘stall’	<i>t’eni</i>	<i>t’um-be</i>
‘cooker’	<i>wana</i>	<i>wum-be</i>

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If a stem ends in a labialized consonant, this consonant is delabialized:

Table 17: Delabialization

	Sg	Pl
‘cattle-shed’	<i>derq<sup>w</sup></i>	<i>durq-be</i>

3.5 The plural suffixes *-nube* and *-urbe*

The plural suffix *-nube* forms plurals of five lexemes. The plural suffix *-urbe* forms plurals of four lexemes. These suffixes are similar to *-tune* in that they may be analyzed as *-ne* and *-re* followed by *-be*. The *-u-* of the suffixes *-nube* and *-urbe* may be considered as resulting from the final vowel change. Synchronically, *-nube* and *-urbe* are monomorphemic suffixes with a very limited lexical distribution (Table 18):

Table 18: The plural suffixes *-nube* and *-urbe*

	SG	PL
‘thief’	<i>curku</i>	<i>curk-nube</i>
‘small stone’	<i>harħa</i>	<i>harħ-nube</i>
‘belt’	<i>irʔi</i>	<i>irʔ-nube</i>
‘onion’	<i>šerši</i>	<i>šerš-nube</i>
‘burned clay’	<i>tʼarħa</i>	<i>tʼarħ-nube</i>
‘door’	<i>unza</i>	<i>unz-urbe</i>
‘swamp’	<i>šinʔa</i>	<i>šinʔ-urbe</i>
‘grapes’	<i>tʼutʼi</i>	<i>tʼutʼ-urbe</i>
‘wheat’	<i>ančʼe</i>	<i>ančʼ-urbe</i>

3.6 The plural suffix *-me*

With the suffix *-me*, the following rules apply:

- 1) One-syllable words with CV structure usually attach the suffix *-me*.
- 2) If a stem consisting of two or more syllables ends in a vowel, this vowel is dropped.
- 3) Some nouns attach *-u-* after dropping the last vowel.

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Table 19 illustrates (1):

Table 19: Rule 1

	SG	PL
‘fire’	<i>c’a</i>	<i>c’a-me</i>
‘nit’	<i>q’i</i>	<i>q’i-me</i>
‘horn’	<i>qi</i>	<i>qi-me</i>
‘village’	<i>ši</i>	<i>ši-me</i>
‘oath’	<i>q<sup>w</sup>e</i>	<i>q<sup>w</sup>e-me</i>
‘blood’	<i>hi</i>	<i>hi-me</i>
‘name’	<i>ʔu</i>	<i>ʔu-me</i>

Table 20 illustrates (2):

Table 20: Rule 2

	SG	PL
‘turnip’	<i>q’aħa</i>	<i>q’aħ-me</i>
‘(female) goat’	<i>q’a<sup>ɕ</sup>ca</i>	<i>q’a<sup>ɕ</sup>c-me</i>
‘bolter’	<i>ʔula</i>	<i>ʔul-me</i>
‘(male) sheep’	<i>k<sup>w</sup>iha</i>	<i>k<sup>w</sup>ih-me</i>
‘light’	<i>šala</i>	<i>šal-me</i>
‘cliff’	<i>šuri</i>	<i>sur-me</i>
‘scythe’	<i>čuri</i>	<i>čur-me</i>
‘the bottom of a dress’	<i>suri</i>	<i>sur-me</i>

Some nouns form plural stems by attaching *-u-* after dropping the last vowel. All of them contain an [u] or a labial/labialized consonant. One may notice that in most cases, after the final vowel drop has been applied, [u] is inserted to avoid a consonant cluster. There is, however, no consonant cluster in *uq’lah-u-me* (cf. *k<sup>w</sup>ih-me* ‘sheep, PL’). Russian loanword *bidra* ‘bucket’ also belongs to this group. Table 21 below illustrates this process.

The words *la<sup>ɕ</sup>wlu* and *waq’lu* are also analyzed as dropping their last vowel and then attaching *-u-*:

$$la^{\mathfrak{c}}wlu + me \rightarrow la^{\mathfrak{c}}wl + me \rightarrow la^{\mathfrak{c}}wl + -u- + -me \rightarrow la^{\mathfrak{c}}wl-u-me$$

Under this analysis, the [u] in the plural is not the same as the [u] in the singular.

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Table 21: Plural stem formation by attaching *-u-*

	SG	PL
‘spoon’	<i>q’usla</i>	<i>q’usl-u-me</i>
‘bullet’	<i>gulla</i>	<i>gull-u-me</i>
‘bucket’	<i>bidra</i>	<i>bidr-u-me</i>
‘window’	<i>uq’laha</i>	<i>uq’lah-u-me</i>
‘shroud’	<i>bišri</i>	<i>bišr-u-me</i>
‘thought’	<i>pikri</i>	<i>pikr-u-me</i>
‘jewel’	<i>la<sup>ʕ</sup>wlu</i>	<i>la<sup>ʕ</sup>wl-u-me</i>
‘mind’	<i>waq’lu</i>	<i>waq’l-u-me</i>

### 3.7 The plural suffix *-lume*

The following words form the plural with the suffix *-lume*, which historically seems to be the plural suffix *-le* with a change of the final vowel before the plural suffix *-me* (Table 22):

Table 22: The plural suffix *-lume*

	SG	PL
‘garden’	<i>baχča</i>	<i>baχč-lume</i>
‘corner’	<i>murʔa</i>	<i>murʔ-lume</i>
‘shadow’	<i>da<sup>ʕ</sup>χc’i</i>	<i>da<sup>ʕ</sup>χc’-lume</i>
‘ceiling’	<i>burχa</i>	<i>burχ-lume</i>

### 3.8 The plural suffix *-e*

The suffix *-e* attaches to one-syllable stems. It can attach directly to CVC(C) stems. In some cases, the rules for the plural stem formation derive one-syllable stem from more-than-one syllable stems and are as follows:

- 1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
- 2) If a stem consists of more than one syllable, all the vowels except first undergo syncope.



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Table 23: The plural suffix *-e*.

	SG	PL
‘root’	<i>maq</i> <sup>w</sup>	<i>maq</i> <sup>w-e</sup>
‘nut’	<i>χih</i> <sup>w</sup>	<i>χih</i> <sup>w-e</sup>
‘finger’	<i>t’ul</i>	<i>t’ul-e</i>
‘bread’	<i>t’ult’</i>	<i>t’ult’-e</i>
‘bull’	<i>unc</i>	<i>unc-e</i>
‘gut’	<i>rud</i>	<i>rud-e</i>
‘khinkal’	<i>χinč’</i>	<i>χinč’-e</i>
‘hand’	<i>na</i> <sup>ʕ</sup> <sub>B</sub>	<i>no</i> <sup>ʕ</sup> <sub>B-e</sub>

Table 24 illustrates (1):

Table 24: Rule 1

	SG	PL
‘horse’	<i>urči</i>	<i>urč-e</i>
‘bee’	<i>mirqi</i>	<i>mirq-e</i>
‘nettle’	<i>nizbi</i>	<i>nizb-e</i>
‘ear’	<i>lugi</i>	<i>lug-e</i>
‘sparkle’	<i>purχi</i>	<i>purχ-e</i>

Table 25 illustrates the vowel syncope described in (2):

Table 25: Rule 2

	SG	PL
‘worm’	<i>mule</i> <sub>B</sub>	<i>mul</i> <sub>B-e</sub>
‘helminth’	<i>šulek</i>	<i>šulk-e</i>
‘bull-calf’	<i>k’umes</i> <sub>B</sub>	<i>k’umš</i> <sub>B-e</sub>
‘toe’	<i>gubul</i>	<i>gubl-e</i>
‘plank’	<i>ulq’uli</i>	<i>ulq’l-e</i>
‘white (of an egg)’	<i>šuhari</i>	<i>šuhr-e</i>
‘egg’	<i>žigari</i>	<i>žigr-e</i>

### 3.9 The plural suffix *-re*

This suffix has a limited lexical distribution. The rules for plural stem formation are similar to the rules of other *Ce* suffixes<sup>4</sup> (see also 3.4):

- 1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
- 2) One-syllable roots tend to form their plural stems by changing the root vowel to [u]. Since, for this suffix, I do not have any examples of words consisting of more than one syllable after dropping the last vowel, I cannot say whether they do or do not undergo this vowel change.

The suffix *-re* prefers one-syllable words and two-syllable stems ending with [i].

Table 26 illustrates (1):

Table 26: Rule 1

	SG	PL
‘leaf’	<i>k’ap’i</i>	<i>k’ap’-re</i>
‘cross-beam’	<i>duk’i</i>	<i>duk’-re</i>
‘mouth’	<i>dubi</i>	<i>dub-re</i>
‘nipple’	<i>ut’i</i>	<i>ut’-re</i>

Table 27 illustrates (2):

Table 27: Rule 2

	SG	PL
‘fly’	<i>t’ant’</i>	<i>t’unt’-re</i>
‘fish’	<i>k’as</i>	<i>k’us-re</i>
‘pocket’	<i>č’ep</i>	<i>č’up-re</i>
‘paw’	<i>k’<sup>w</sup>ac</i>	<i>k’uc-re</i>

However, there are exceptions to Rule 2. Two roots contain [a] but do not undergo vowel change (Table 28):

<sup>4</sup> I do not have a satisfactory explanation for this parallel. It is possible that *-e*, which was originally present in all plural suffixes including *-t*, as confirmed by other Dargwa lects, at some point became associated with expression of plurality, and the consonants started to be interpreted as parts of the plural stem of the noun.

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Table 28: Exceptions (Rule 2)

	SG	PL
‘neck’	<i>qaʳb</i>	<i>qaʳb-re</i>
‘manure’	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a-re</i>

The [r] in the suffix *-re* can assimilate to [l] of the stem (Table 29):

Table 29: Assimilation /r/ → /l/

	SG	PL
‘house’	<i>qali</i>	<i>qul-le/qul-re</i>

3.10 The plural suffix *-le*

The plural suffix *-le* only occurs with four nouns. If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped. The vowel of the stem changes to [u] (Table 30):

Table 30: The plural suffix *-le*

	SG	PL
‘body’	<i>čarχ</i>	<i>čurχ-le</i>
‘handle’	<i>arʔ</i>	<i>urʔ-le</i>
‘worm’	<i>serh<sup>w</sup></i>	<i>surh<sup>w</sup>-le</i>
‘rope’	<i>ʙ<sup>w</sup>aʳʙoʳ</i>	<i>ʙ<sup>w</sup>oʳʙ-le</i>

3.11 The plural suffixes *-he* and *-še*

The suffix *-he* occurs with two nouns. Both have irregular plural stems, so the plural formation may be considered to be weak suppletion (Table 31):

Table 31: The plural suffix *-he*

	SG	PL
‘woman’	<i>xunul</i>	<i>xu-he</i>
‘dog’	<i>χ<sup>w</sup>e</i>	<i>χur-he</i>

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The plural suffix *-še* occurs with one noun, *qu* ‘field’ (Table 32):

Table 32: The plural suffix *-še*

	SG	PL
‘field’	<i>qu</i>	<i>qu-še</i>

3.12 The associative plural suffix *-qale*

The plural suffix *-qale* most probably results from grammaticalization of the noun *qali* ‘house’. In the case of Mehweb, this suffix covers the so-called associative plural meaning ‘X and his or her family’ (in spontaneous texts also ‘X and those with him/her’, ‘X and his/her group’). For Tanti Dargwa, [Lander \(2008\)](#) observes that the suffix *-qale* has developed a regular plural meaning. This evolution has not been reported for standard Dargwa. In Mehweb Dargwa, regular plural uses of *-qale* are attested on nouns for ‘mother’ and ‘father’; for ‘grandmother’ and probably ‘grandfather’, both regular and associative plural reading is attested. Table 33 illustrates the use of this suffix:

Table 33: The associative plural suffix *-qale*

SG		PL	
<i>abaj</i>	‘mom’	<i>abaj-qale</i>	‘mums’
<i>adaj</i>	‘dad’	<i>adaj-qale</i>	‘dads’
<i>baba</i>	‘grandma’	<i>baba-qale</i>	‘grandmas’ or ‘grandma and her family’
<i>Abakar</i>	‘Abakar’ (man’s name)	<i>Abakar-qale</i>	‘Abakar and his family / his group’

4 Oblique stem

The genitive case suffix attaches directly to the nominative stem (in all nouns but not in all pronouns – cf. *dila* I.OBL-GEN ‘my’). All other cases (including ergative) require an oblique stem. In the plural, all case suffixes attach directly to the plural marker.

The oblique stem marker has three allomorphs: *-li*, *-j*, and *-i*. The *-li* marker is the default way to form an oblique stem and is applicable to almost any stem.

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The marker *-i-* may be considered prothetic (to resolve consonant clusters) and is generally not separated nor glossed in this book. The use of the segmental *-li-* marker is a lexical property. With some nouns, the two strategies are in competition:

- (1) *muhammad-li-ni*      *muhammadi-šu*  
‘Muhammad-OBL-ERG’   ‘Muhammad-AD(LAT)’

The oblique stem marker *-li-* may change to *-j-*. The process is not obligatory, so that the oblique stem of the same word may also contain the base form of the suffix (*-li-*). Table 34 shows endings that license the change. The first column shows the vowel preceding the last consonant. The second column shows the consonant and the vowel that can follow it (Table 34):

Table 34: Possible stem endings for the *-li* → *-j* change.

Second last syllable	Last syllable
a	l/li/la/n/ni
i	l/li/la/n/ni
o <sup>s</sup>	l/li/la
u	l/n

Example (2) illustrates the process (see more in [Moroz 2018](#)):

- (2) *rasul*   *rasuj-ni*  
Rasul   Rasul.OBL-ERG

5 Nominal inflection system

The nominal inflection of Mehweb Dargwa consists of two parts (sub-paradigms): *grammatical cases* and *locative forms*. The two types of inflectional forms differ in their morphology: grammatical case forms contain one inflectional morpheme (Table 35); locative forms contain two inflectional morphemes. The first morpheme of a locative form designates the *localization*: the spatial area defined with respect to a landmark (rows in Table 36 below). The second morpheme designates the *orientation* (columns in Table 36 below): the trajectory of the object with respect to the area designated by the localization.

The core function of locative forms is to describe spatial relations between a trajector (figure) and a landmark (ground) ([Langacker 1987](#)). Grammatical cases are primarily used to express grammatical relations and abstract semantic roles.

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However, across East Caucasian, this is only a typical division of labour, and both types of inflection can be used in both functions (Kibrik 2003). In Mehweb, grammatical cases do not have any spatial uses (except the fact that the genitive suffix is identical to the elative suffix) but spatial cases do have (nearly) abstract functions.

In Mehweb, there are five localization morphemes and five orientation morphemes. Each localization can take each of the orientations, forming a system of 25 locative forms. The subsections below are named by the grammatical case labels and localization markers. One localization morpheme can designate several distinct spatial areas. I thus use the labels written in small-caps (e.g. INTER) as a semantic label, not as a gloss of a morphological category (as in the rest of the papers in this collection).

I do not discuss the semantics of the orientation markers in separate subsections. Their spatial functions are introduced in Table 36 and are independent from the semantics of the localization they combine with. In their non-spatial uses, most locative forms cannot be described compositionally by referring separately to the semantics of the localization and orientation markers. I thus discuss these uses among the functions of the individual localization markers in the relevant subsections.

The structure of the case system is shown in the two tables below. Table 35 shows grammatical cases. Table 36 shows locative forms, together with their core meanings. The abbreviations for the morphemes in the orientation slot are as follows: LAT – lative, ESS – essive, EL – elative, TRANS – translative, ALL – allative, CL – gender agreement marker.

Example (3) illustrates how the locative markers function:

- (3) *варва*                      *варва-ли-če*                      *варва-ли-če-w*  
stone(NOM)   stone-OBL-SUPER(LAT)   stone-OBL-SUPER-M(ESS)  
‘(a) stone’   ‘onto the stone’   ‘(he is) on the stone’  
*варва-ли-ze-b*  
stone-OBL-INTER-N(ESS)  
‘(it is) in the stone’

The lative (LAT) is expressed by the absence of an orientation marker. The essive (ESS) is expressed by the presence of the gender agreement slot (shown as -CL in the table). The agreement is controlled by the NP designating the trajector. Since the two markers do not have their own dedicated exponency, their glosses are bracketed.

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Table 35: Mehweb functional sub-paradigm

Case	SG	PL
Nominative	∅	(Plural form)
Ergative	-OBL-∅/?ini/ini/ijni/ni	-PL-?ini/ini/ijni/ni
Genitive	-la/wa/jja	-PL-la
Dative	-OBL-s	-PL-s
Comitative	-OBL-ču	-PL-ču
Causal	-OBL-čebile	-PL-čebile
Substitutive	-OBL-čemadal	-PL-čemadal
Replicative	-OBL-sum	-PL-sum

Table 36: Mehweb locative sub-paradigm

Orientation	Localization				
	LAT 'to the area denoted by the local- ization'	ESS 'no move- ment'	EL 'away from the area denoted by the localization'	TRANS 'through the area denoted by the localization'	ALL 'in the direction of the area denoted by the localization'
SUPER 'on', CONT <sup>5</sup>	če	če-CL	če-la če-CL-ad((-al)-a)	če-di	če-ba <sup>5</sup> H
IN 'in a container'	he / ∅	he-CL / ∅-CL	he-la he-CL-ad((-al)-a) ∅-la ∅-CL-ad((-al)-a)	he-di / ∅-di	he-ba <sup>5</sup> H ∅-ba <sup>5</sup> H
INTER 'in a substance' CONT	ze	ze-CL	ze-la ze-CL-ad((-al)-a)	ze-di	ze-ba <sup>5</sup> H
AD 'near'	šu	šu-CL	šu-la šu-CL-ad((-al)-a)	šu-di	šu-ba <sup>5</sup> H
APUD 'in the functional area of a landmark'	ʔe <sup>5</sup>	ʔe <sup>5</sup> -CL	ʔe <sup>5</sup> -la ʔe <sup>5</sup> -CL-ad((-al)-a)	ʔe <sup>5</sup> -di	ʔe <sup>5</sup> -ba <sup>5</sup> H

<sup>5</sup>CONT is a functional label of a spatial configuration in which the object is located on the surface of a landmark and stays there because of the nature of contact between the object and the landmark, or because it is a part thereof. Typical CONT contexts are: '(a picture) on the wall', '(a ring) on a finger', '(wings) on the back', '(a birthmark) on the face'. Many East Caucasian languages have a separate localization marker for the CONT configuration. In Mehweb, this configuration is divided between -če- (labelled SUPER, discussed in §5.9) and -ze- (labelled INTER, discussed in §5.11)

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## 5.1 Nominative

The nominative case marks the S of an intransitive verb and the P of a transitive verb:

- (4) *ʔali w-ak'-ib*  
 Ali(NOM) M-come:PFV-AOR  
 'Ali came'
- (5) *adaj-ni mašinka-li-ni muc'ur b-erč-ur*  
 father-ERG hair.cutter-OBL-ERG beard(NOM) N-cut.hair:PFV-AOR  
 'The father cut his beard with a hair cutter'

The nominative case is also used when addressing someone:

- (6) *baba nab inc'ul uk-es ħa-d-ig-an*  
 granny I.DAT more M.eat:PFV-INF NEG-NPL-want:IPFV-HAB  
 'Granny, I don't want to eat anymore'

The nominative is also used in constructions like (6):

- (7) *χ<sup>w</sup>e-li-če-la aždā b-uh-ub*  
 dog-OBL-SUPER-EL crocodile N-become:PFV-AOR  
 'The dog has become a crocodile'

## 5.2 Ergative

The ergative case marks the A of a transitive verb and the instrument:

- (8) *adaj-ni mašinka-li-ni muc'ur b-erč-ur*  
 father-ERG hair.cutter-OBL-ERG beard(NOM) N-cut.hair:PFV-AOR  
 'The father cut his beard with a hair cutter'

The ergative case also marks periods of time:

- (9) *k<sup>w</sup>i-jal saʔa<sup>t</sup>-li-ni rasul ħule w-ilz-uwe*  
 two-CARD hour-OBL-ERG Rasul(NOM) look M-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
*le-w-re ši-la surt-me-če*  
 be-M-PST village-GEN picture-PL-SUPER(LAT)  
 'Rasul has been looking at the photos of (his) village for two hours.'



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## 5.3 Genitive

The genitive case marker is *-la*. It can undergo the following processes:

- 1) when attached to words ending in [ul], the marker can change into *-wa*:  
e.g. *rasul* ‘Rasul’ – *rasu-wa* ‘Rasul-GEN’;
- 2) when attached to words ending in [Vl], the marker can change into *-jja*:  
*rasul* ‘Rasul’ – *rasu-jja* ‘Rasul-GEN’. It is the only case where [jj] occurs in Mehweb.
- 3) when attached to words ending in [ala], the suffix *-la* can undergo haplology: the genitive form of *č’imič’ala* ‘eyelash’ can be either *č’imič’ala-la* or *č’imič’a-la*.

The genitive of place names uses *-la* or *-ja* (probably derived from *-n-la*; see below), while their *-la* form serves as elative. Note that place names in Mehweb are a separate part of speech that has morphological and syntactic properties of both nouns and locative adverbs. They lack oblique stem and have an irregular genitive form. They attach orientation markers directly, like spatial adverbs. Their quotation form is also the essive form. Hence, the *-la* marker in Table 37 is not a genitive marker but an elative marker:

Table 37: Genitive of Place Names.

Placename		Genitive	Elative
<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e</i>	‘(in) Mehweb’	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e-la, meħ<sup>w</sup>-aja</i>	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e-la</i>
<i>survatli</i>	‘(in) Sogratl’	<i>survatli-la, survatl-aja</i>	<i>survatli-la</i>
<i>ha<sup>h</sup>nnuqara</i>	‘(in) Keger’	<i>ha<sup>h</sup>nnuqar-aja</i>	<i>ha<sup>h</sup>nnuqara-la</i>
<i>žixatli</i>	‘(in) Rugudzha’	<i>žixatl-aja</i>	<i>žixatli-la</i>

The main function of the genitive case is to mark a noun that is dependent on another noun (possessive construction):

- (10) *rasuj-ni ar-d-uk-ib muħammad-la k<sup>w</sup>ih.me*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG away-NPL-lead:PFV-AOR Muhammad-GEN sheep.PL  
 ‘Rasul took away Muhammad’s sheep.’

In possessive predication, the possessor genitive is “free” in that it does not form one constituent with the possessum.

- (11) *nuša-la le-b varvu-be-la qali*  
 we-GEN be-N stone-PL-GEN house  
 ‘We have a stone house.’

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In predicative possessive construction, Mehweb distinguishes two types of possessors: locative possessor and genitive possessor. Locative possession is only possible in predicative constructions, while genitive possession can be either adnominal or predicative (free genitive). The semantic difference between the two constructions is that the locative possessor has an object with/on her, but this object does not necessarily belong to her. The genitive possessor possesses an object, i.e. it belongs to her:

- (12) *muhammad-la k<sup>wih</sup>.me*  
 Muhammad-GEN sheep.PL  
 ‘Muhammad’s sheep (PL)’
- (13) *musa-la le-b qali*  
 Musa-GEN be-N house  
 ‘Musa has a house’
- (14) *rasuj-ze-b di-la dis le-b*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER-N(ESS) I.OBL-GEN knife be-N  
 ‘Rasul has got my knife’, ‘My knife is with Rasul’.

The difference does not apply to adnominal possessive constructions. It is impossible to use the localization marker *-ze* in an adnominal possessive construction:

- (15) *\*rasuj-ze-b dis*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER-N(ESS) knife  
 ‘(someone else’s) knife that Rasul has got’

## 5.4 Dative

The dative case marker is *-s*. It attaches to the oblique stem. Its basic function is to mark the recipient in ‘give’ construction:

- (16) *abaj-ni gi-b sadaq’ači-li-s t’ult’*  
 mother-ERG give:PFV-AOR pauper-OBL-DAT bread  
 ‘Mother gave bread to a pauper.’

Dative also marks benefactive and several other related roles:

- (17) *har duže rasuj-ni dursi-li-s χabar-t luč’-ib*  
 every night Rasul.OBL-ERG girl-OBL-DAT story-PL read:IPFV-IPFT  
 ‘Every night Rasul read stories to his daughter’

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- (18) *nuša-jni qali b-aq'-ib-i rasuj-s*  
 we-ERG house N-do:PFV-AOR-ATR Rasul.OBL-DAT  
 'We built a house for Rasul'

The two types of predicative possession described in §5.2 are paralleled by different strategies for encoding the recipient, as shown in (18). The two types of transmission are encoded by the dative vs. inter-lative form. If the rights of possession are transmitted together with the object, the recipient is encoded with the dative case. If they are not transmitted, as in (19), the recipient is marked with *-ze*:

- (19) *rasuj-ni gi-b muḥammadi-ze dis*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG give:PFV-AOR Muhammad-INTER(LAT) knife  
 'Rasul lent a knife to Muhammad.'

The dative is also used for some experiencers. Experiential verbs have one of the two case frames: [experiencer = INTER(LAT), stimulus = NOM] and [experiencer = DAT, stimulus = NOM]. The dative experiencer is only possible with the verb *CL-iges* 'love/want' and complex predicates:

- (20) *ḥu nab eba uh-ub*  
 you.sg I.DAT boring M.become:PFV-AOR  
 'You bored me.'
- (21) *jusupi-s d-ig-uwe le-r pat'imat*  
 Jusup-DAT F1-want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV be-F Patimat  
 'Jusup loves Patimat.'

## 5.5 Comitative

The co-participant is expressed by the comitative:

- (22) *rasul urḡes w-ik-ib muḥammadi-ču*  
 Rasul fight:IPFV-INF M- happen:PFV-AOR Muhammad-COMIT  
 'Rasul fought with Muhammad.'

The case is also used for instruments, including consumables:

- (23) *rasuj-ni ulq'uli rasdisi-ču b-elk-un*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG plank saw-COMIT N-cut:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul sawed the plank with a saw'

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- (24) *rasuj-ni hi šin-ču d-urʔun d-aq'-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG blood water-COMIT NPL-clean N-do:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul washed the blood off with water'

## 5.6 Causal

According to [Magometov \(1982\)](#), there is a case that marks the cause of a situation. My consultants did not confirm Magometov's examples and rejected the *-čible/-čible* forms that I constructed. I assume that the case does not exist in Mehweb anymore. Examples 25 and 26 are cited from [Magometov \(1982: 49\)](#):

- (25) *ʔse-li-čible hu tusnaq' w-aq'-ib-i*  
 what-OBL-CAUSAL you.sg arrest M-do:PFV-AOR-ATR  
 'Why did you get arrested?'
- (26) *ʔdi-la χuligan-deši-čible nu tusnaq' w-aq'-ib*  
 I.OBL-GEN hooligan-NMLZ-CAUSAL I arrest M-do:PFV-AOR  
 'Because of my hooliganism, I got arrested'

## 5.7 Substitutive

The morpheme *-čemadal* has substitutive semantics, i.e. it indicates that the actor performs an action instead of someone who was supposed to perform it, the latter being coded by this case form:

- (27) *nu adaj-čemadal tukaj-he w-aʔq'-un-na*  
 I father-SUBST shop.OBL-IN(LAT) M-go:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'I went to the shop instead of father'

Diachronically, this form can be analyzed as *-če-m-ad-al*, in which *-če-* marks SUPER localization, *-m-* is an unknown morpheme that occupies the localization slot and *-adal* is the relative marker (cf. Table 36 above).

## 5.8 Replicative

The last non-spatial case suffix is *-sum*. It conveys the semantics of performing an action in the way similar to how someone or something else performs it, or in a way it is usually done. The form attaches to an irregular oblique stem:

- (28) *dilaj-sum b-aq'-a*  
 I.OBL-REPL N-do:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Do as I do'

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The following sections deal with spatial forms.

5.9 The locative marker *-če-*

The basic semantics of the locative marker *-če-* is SUPER, i.e. by default this marker is used in the contexts like the following:

- (29) *ustuj-če-b*                      *badara le-b*  
 table.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS) plate be-N  
 ‘A plate is on the table.’

The locative marker *-če-* is also used to mark the CONT configuration. It shares this function with the locative marker *-ze-*, whose basic semantics is INTER (§5.11). The CONT contexts seem to be distributed between the two markers, but the rules are difficult to formulate. Examples (31) and (32) show that the two locative markers are not in free distribution in spatial contexts:

- (30) *surat aqi-le le-b ba<sup>ʕ</sup>hi-ze-b* / \**ba<sup>ʕ</sup>hi-če-b*  
 picture up-ADVZ be-N wall-INTER-N(ESS) / \*wall-SUPER-N(ESS)  
 ‘A picture is hanging on the wall.’
- (31) *iḵija b-arš-ib-i t<sup>ʔ</sup>uleka le-b*  
 this.GEN N-become.beautiful:PFV-AOR-ATR ring be-N  
*t<sup>ʔ</sup>uj-če-b* / \**t<sup>ʔ</sup>uj-ze-b*  
 finger.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS) / finger.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)  
 ‘She has a beautiful ring on her finger.’

The locative marker *-če-* can be used in ‘support’ contexts like *put against* (*a tree* etc.):

- (32) *ʔali-ni maʒar ba<sup>ʕ</sup>hi-če b-ix-ib*  
 Ali-ERG rifle wall-SUPER(LAT) N-put:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Ali put the rifle against the wall.’
- (33) *nu ba<sup>ʕ</sup>hi-če-la ʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>q ʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>r-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>-un-na*  
 I wall-SUPER-EL far away-M.go:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘I stepped away from the wall.’

In comparative constructions, the object of comparison is marked with *-če-*:

- (34) *rasul quwati le-w muḥammadi-če-w*  
 Rasul strong be-M Muhammad-SUPER-M(ESS)  
 ‘Rasul is stronger than Muhammad.’

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The morpheme *-če-* is used to mark target of an oriented action, e.g. with the verbs such as ‘hit’, ‘bark’, ‘shout at’, ‘be angry at’, ‘look at’, ‘laugh at’:

- (35) *rasul laχu uk'-uwe le-w muħammadi-če*  
 Rasul scream M.LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV be-M Muhammad-SUPER(LAT)  
 ‘Rasul is shouting at Muhammad.’

The SUPER-ELATIVE *-če-la* is used with verbs of avoidance: ‘run away’, ‘hide’, ‘fear’, etc.:

- (36) *rasul w-a<sup>h</sup>ld-un muħammadi-če-la*  
 Rasul M-hide:PFV-AOR Muhammad-SUPER-EL  
 ‘Rasul hid from Muhammad.’

The marker *-če-* is also used to mark periods of time:

- (37) *k'wi-jal saʒa<sup>h</sup>ti-če rasuj-ni kung b-elč-un*  
 two-CARD hour-SUPER(LAT) Rasul.OBL-ERG book N-read:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul read the book in two hours.’

### 5.10 The locative morpheme *-ħe-*

The locative morpheme *-ħe-* expresses the configuration IN when one object is inside another one. The ground is, or is conceptualized as, a container.

- (38) *ħarši k'unk'ur-le-ħe-r le-r*  
 soup pot-OBL-IN-NPL(ESS) be-NPL  
 ‘The soup is in the pot.’

In (38), the morpheme *-ħe-* causes vowel assimilation (*i* → *e*) in the oblique stem marker. Between two vowels, [h] may be dropped, and the vowels contact. In such cases, the only indication of IN semantics is the vowel change:

- (39) *ħarši k'unk'ur-le-r le-r*  
 soup pot-OBL.IN-NPL(ESS) be-NPL  
 ‘The soup is in the pot.’

This localization does not have any non-locative uses in any of the Dargwa dialects, including Mehweb.

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5.11 The locative morpheme *-ze-*

The morpheme *-ze-* denotes the configuration when an object is within the spatial area of the landmark and the landmark is either a substance or a set of objects (e.g. ‘forest’). This configuration is labelled INTER:

- (40) *k’as ħark’<sup>wi</sup>-ze-b le-b*  
 fish river-INTER-N(ESS) be-N  
 ‘The fish is in the river’

The morpheme *-ze-* is also used in some CONT contexts (also see §5.9):

- (41) *surat aqi-le le-b ba<sup>hi</sup>-ze-b*  
 picture up-ADVZ be-N wall-INTER-N(ESS)  
 ‘A picture is hanging on the wall.’

Forms in *-ze-la* (INTER-EL) express an *involuntary agent* – a participant who becomes the agent or cause of a situation unintentionally. Only the inter-relative forms in *-la* but not its variants are used in this function:

- (42) *di-ze-la / \*di-ze-b-adala mašina b-o<sup>r</sup>ʔ-o<sup>ʃ</sup>b*  
 I.OBL-INTER-EL / \*I.OBL-INTER-N-EL car N-break:PFV-AOR  
 ‘I accidentally broke the car.’

The involuntary agent construction seems to combine only with intransitive (labile in 42) verbs and thus is a means of introducing an agent-like participant rather than decreasing control on behalf of a true agent. The same locative form is also in contexts of participant-internal possibility:

- (43) *rasuj-ze-la aq b-aq’-as b-uh-es ɤarɤa*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL up N-do:PFV-INF N-become:PFV-FUT stone  
 ‘Rasul will be able to lift the stone.’

The morpheme *-ze-* marks a temporary possessor (cf. 5.3), temporary recipient (cf. 5.4) and the addressee with verbs of speech:

- (44) *rasuj-ni gi-b muħammadi-ze dis*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG give:PFV-AOR Muhammad-INTER(LAT) knife  
 ‘Rasul lent Muhammad a knife.’
- (45) *rasuj-ni si-k’al ħa-ib muħammadi-ze*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG what-PTCL NEG-say:PFV.AOR Muhammad-INTER(LAT)  
 ‘Rasul said nothing to Muhammad’

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The functional range of *-ze-* shows that its uses are not always related to its spatial meaning, and that the spatial metaphor, when present, may be weak.

### 5.12 The locative morpheme *-šu-*

The AD *-šu-* localization is used to express the fact that one object is located in close proximity to another object:

- (46) *nuša ustuj-šu-b ka-b-i?-i-ra*  
 we table.OBL-AD-N(ESS) PV-HPL-sit:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘We are sitting near the table.’

It is also used as a personal locative:

- (47) *nu w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-un-na aħmadi-šu*  
 I M-go:PFV-AOR-EGO Ahmad-AD(LAT)  
 ‘I visited Ahmad.’

### 5.13 The locative morpheme *-ʔe<sup>ʕ</sup>-*

The APUD marker *-ʔe<sup>ʕ</sup>-* denotes an area close to an object, in which the figure must be located to interact with the object (functional proximity). This suffix shows a very restricted distribution. It is only compatible with words designating landmarks that have an area associated with them in this way; e.g. *ustul* ‘table’, *iniz* ‘water source’, *qali* ‘house’. In different languages, the same landmark may be conceptualized as having such an area or not. In Mehweb the set of words to which this suffix is attached varies across speakers. The following examples illustrate the difference between the AD *-šu-* and APUD *-ʔe<sup>ʕ</sup>-* localizations:

- (48) *nuša ustuj-ʔe<sup>ʕ</sup>-b ka-b-i?-i-ra*  
 we table.OBL-APUD-N(ESS) PV-HPL-sit:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘We are sitting at the table.’
- (49) *nuša ustuj-šu-b ka-b-i?-i-ra*  
 we table.OBL-AD-N(ESS) PV-HPL-sit:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘We are sitting near the table.’
- (50) *lut'i-le-ʔe<sup>ʕ</sup>-b*  
 bottom-OBL-APUD-N(ESS)  
 ‘on the bottom’ (of a pond etc.)

It also expresses the meaning of an exchange equivalent:



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- (51) *rasuj-ni bars b-aq'-ib q'<sup>w</sup>a<sup>l</sup> šu-wal*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG exchange N-do:PFV-AOR cow five-CARD  
*k<sup>w</sup>iha-le-ʔe<sup>l</sup>-b*  
 sheep-OBL-APUD-N(ESS)  
 'Rasul exchanged the cow for five sheep'

With appropriate grounds, the morpheme *-ʔe<sup>l</sup>-* may be used to designate the area not near to but bound by the landmark:

- (52) *škaf unza-le-ʔe<sup>l</sup>-di b-a<sup>l</sup>q'-un*  
 wardrobe door-OBL-APUD-TRANS N-go:PFV-AOR  
 'The wardrobe went through the door'

It thus becomes semantically similar to *-ħe-*; in (53), *-ħe-* is used in the same context:

- (53) *škaf unza-le-ħe-di b-a<sup>l</sup>q'-un*  
 wardrobe door-OBL-IN-TRANS N-go:PFV-AOR  
 'The wardrobe went through the door'

Similarly to *-ħe-*, *-ʔe<sup>l</sup>-* causes vowel assimilation *i* → *e* in the oblique stem marker (cf. 52 and 53).

## 6 Irregular locatives

A limited number of nouns form locatives in an irregular way. Such irregular locatives usually mark the default location associated with the landmark. Similarly to the locative forms discussed above, presence of a gender agreement slot conveys the meaning of stative location (essive form), and the same form without the slot conveys the meaning of direction (lative). Table 38 shows the irregular locatives attested so far.

## 7 Place names

Names of local villages form a separate morphological class close to adverbs; they lack functional cases and attach orientation markers directly to the stem. Their unmarked locative (i.e. lative) form also serves as quotation form. They are nominalized by adding *-n* (also used in nominalization of adjectives) and form plurals in *-t* to designate the inhabitants of the village. While the genitive in *-la*

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Table 38: Irregular locatives

	Nominative	Locative
‘forest’	<i>duz</i>	<i>duzani</i> -CL
‘grave’	$\chi^w a^{\text{f}} b$ (PL = $\chi^w a^{\text{f}} rbe$ )	$\chi^w a^{\text{f}} re$ -CL ‘in a grave’, cf. $\chi^w a^{\text{f}} rbeze$ -CL ‘at a graveyard’ (lit. ‘between graves’)
‘road’	<i>huni</i>	<i>hunhe</i> -CL
‘village’	<i>ši</i>	<i>ša</i> -CL
‘room’, ‘house’	<i>qali</i>	<i>quli</i> -CL
‘cattle-shed’	<i>derq<sup>w</sup></i>	<i>durqe</i> -CL
‘field’	<i>qu</i>	<i>qu</i> -CL
‘gorge’, ‘street’	<i>q’aq’a</i>	<i>q’aq’a</i> -CL
‘hole’	<i>targi</i>	<i>turqe</i> -CL

Table 39: Place names

	QUOT	ESS	EL
‘Mehweb’	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e</i>	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e</i> -CL	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e</i> -CL- <i>adal</i> , <i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e</i> - <i>la</i>
‘Sogratl’	<i>survatli</i>	<i>survatli</i> -CL	<i>survatli</i> -CL- <i>adal</i> , <i>survatli</i> - <i>la</i>
‘Obokh’	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dulli</i>	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dulli</i> -CL	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dulli</i> -CL- <i>adal</i> , <i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dura</i> - <i>ja</i>
‘Gunib’	<i>ɸuni</i>	<i>ɸuni</i> -CL	<i>ɸuni</i> -CL- <i>adal</i> , <i>ɸuni</i> - <i>la</i>
‘Keger’	<i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara</i>	<i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara</i> -CL	<i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara</i> -CL- <i>adal</i> , <i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara</i> - <i>la</i>
‘Makhachkala’	<i>anži</i>	<i>anži</i> -li-CL	<i>anži</i> -li-CL- <i>adal</i> , <i>anži</i> - <i>la</i>
‘Moscow’	<i>maskaw</i>	<i>maskawi</i> -ze-CL	<i>maskawi</i> -ze- <i>la</i>
	LAT	GEN	PL
‘Mehweb’	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>e</i>	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>-aja</i>	<i>meħ<sup>w</sup>-an-t</i> (the Mehweb people)
‘Sogratl’	<i>survatli</i>	<i>survatl-aja</i>	<i>survatl-an-t</i> (the Sogratl’ people)
‘Obokh’	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dulli</i>	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dur-aja</i>	<i>q<sup>w</sup>a<sup>f</sup>dur-an-t</i> (the Obokh people)
‘Gunib’	<i>ɸuni</i>	<i>ɸuni</i> -CL- <i>adi-ja</i>	<i>ɸuni</i> -CL- <i>adil</i> (the Gunib people)
‘Keger’	<i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara</i>	<i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara-ja</i>	<i>ha<sup>f</sup>nnuqara-n-t</i> (the Keger people)
‘Makhachkala’	<i>anžili</i>	<i>anži</i> - <i>la</i>	?* <i>anžili</i> -CL- <i>adil</i>
‘Moscow’	<i>maskawi</i> -ze	<i>maskaw</i> - <i>la</i>	?* <i>maskawi</i> -ze-CL- <i>adil</i>

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is produced by simple suffixation of the genitive marker, the variant genitive in *-ja* probably derives from the nominalized form in *-n* (*-ja* < *-n-la*, as discussed in Moroz 2018, thus meaning not ‘that of the village of Mehweb’ but ‘that of a Mehweb villager’.

Inflection of local place names is given in Table 39. Declension of *anži* ‘Makhachkala’ and *maskaw* ‘Moscow’, which are not local placenames and behave like regular nouns, is given for the sake of comparison in the last lines of each column.

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The author is grateful to the Mehweb people for being extremely generous in sharing their knowledge of the language, to his fellow fieldworkers, for their support, and to his teachers, for their careful guidance and endless patience.

## List of abbreviations

AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADVZ	adverbializer
ALL	motion directed towards a spatial domain
AOR	aorist
APUD	spatial domain near the landmark
ATR	attributivizer
CARD	cardinal numeral
CAUSAL	causal (case form)
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
COMIT	comitative
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)

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IMP	imperative
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
REPL	replicative (nominal case)
SUBST	substitutive (nominal case)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
TRANS	motion through a spatial domain

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## Chapter 4

# Mehweb verb morphology

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The paper describes the morphology of the verb in Mehweb, a Dargwa lect of central Daghestan, Russia. The description is partly based on previous research ([Magometov 1982](#), [Sumbatova](#) unpublished) and partly on the field data the author has been collecting from 2009 to the present. Mostly, formal morphology of synthetic verb forms and complex verbs are discussed.

**Keywords:** East Caucasian, Dargwa, Mehweb, verb, inflection, perfective, imperfective, transitivity, complex verbs.

## 1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the verb morphology of Mehweb, a lect of the Dargwa branch of East Caucasian languages, spoken in the village of the same name in the Gunib district of the Republic of Daghestan. The paper is mostly focused on formal and synthetic morphology. Periphrastic forms are treated only peripherally, and the semantics of the verbal categories is not discussed at all. As a result, labels provided for different inflectional categories are conventional and to a large extent based on previous research. While formation of deverbal nominal forms – nominalizations and participles – is covered, their further inflection as nominals is also left out. The previous treatment of the Mehweb morphology, [Magometov \(1982\)](#), provided the basis for many analytical solutions.

Mehweb verbs agree in gender (nominal class) with their nominative argument, distinguishing three primary genders – masculine (M), feminine (F) and neuter (N) in the singular, and human plural (HPL) and non-human plural (NPL) in the plural. There is an additional gender of unmarried girls and women. Agreement marking is largely similar to agreement in adjectives, spatial forms, numerals etc., which are not treated in this chapter. Agreement morphology is dis-



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cussed in §2. Additionally, and unlike other parts of speech, some verbal forms show special inflection with first or second person subjects, depending on the illocutionary force (with first person in affirmative utterances and with second person in interrogative ones). These are discussed in §3.

The whole inflectional paradigm of the verb is divided into two parallel sets of forms, based on perfective and imperfective stems, whose relation to each other is complex and follows several different formal patterns with most verbs and is irregular with few irregular verbs. Many forms are formed from both stems. This is discussed in §4.

In Mehweb, there are three distinct verbal inflectional classes, distinguished by the suffix they take in the perfective past (aorist), *-ib* (*-ub*), *-ur* or *-un*. The aorist stem is used in the participle and the forms derived from it. Other forms, including all forms in the imperfective, are however formed in the same way for the verbs of all three classes. This is discussed in §5, which also provides a table showing all inflectional forms known so far.

Verbal negation is discussed in §6. The structure of the verbal paradigm as a whole is discussed in §7. Some of the forms follow specific rules, independent from the classification into three inflectional classes. These include imperatives and infinitives and are described in §8. Inflection of the auxiliary is discussed in §9. Verbs with irregular morphology, including verbs of motion, are discussed in §10. §11 presents data on transitivity, including regular morphological causativization and lexically constrained phenomena such as lability. §12 explains the morphological makeup of complex verbs, including verbs with vestigial prefixes, light verbs and verbalizers and bound verbal roots.

## 2 Gender agreement

Mehweb nouns belong to one of the three primary genders – masculine, feminine and neuter, glossed as M, F and N, respectively. Animate non-human nouns belong to the neuter gender. In the plural, all human nouns behave the same, so that only human plural (HPL) and non-human plural (NPL) are distinguished. Additionally, nouns and pronouns referring to girls or unmarried women (glossed as F1) show a special pattern of agreement – in the singular, they require the same marker as non-human plurals. Many mass nouns and some abstract nouns, in the singular, control NPL agreement.

The morphology of gender markers is shown in the following table and is common to all targets of agreement – adjectives and verbs having a prefix agreement slot, locative nominal forms – a suffix slot, etc. Verbs may only have gender mark-



ers in the prefix position, and not all verbs have this slot (though most do).

Table 1: Gender agreement marking

		SG		PL	
		SG		PL	
M	w				
F	r	b		HPL	
F1	d-r				
N	b	d-r		NPL	

The marker of the masculine *w-* is lost in forms where it is preceded by a prefix, either grammatical (negation) or derivational. There is some evidence that this process is optional, at least with the prefix of negation. Cf.:

- (1) *w-aχ-un* vs. *ħa-χ-un* (< *ħa-w-aχ-un*)  
M-foster:PFV-AOR NEG-M.foster:PFV-AOR

For more information on morphology of negation see §6.

- (2) *w-ik-ib* vs. *ar-ik-ib* (< *ar-w-ik-ib*)  
M-fall:PFV-AOR PV-M.fall:PFV-AOR

Note that, synchronically, most combinations of preverbs with the root are not compositional. Thus, the preverb *ar-* etymologically means ‘away’, while the verb *-ik-* synchronically means ‘happen’ (etymologically most probably ‘fall’).

The masculine marker is also lost in stems with initial *u-*, such as:

- (3) *d-uq-un* vs. *uq-un* (< *w-uq-un*)  
F1-enter:PFV-AOR M.enter:PFV-AOR

For more on preverbs, see §12.

3 Egophoric forms

Some categories of the verb vary depending on whether they have a subject in the first or second person or not. The forms signaling that their subjects are speech act participants will be called egophoric forms below. Unlike gender agreement, subject agreement shows an accusative pattern and is controlled by S/A arguments. The peculiar property of subject agreement in Mehweb as compared to other Dargwa languages is that it is sensitive to the illocutionary type of the

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utterance. The subject suffix appears with first person subjects in declarative utterances but with second person subjects in interrogative utterances. This distribution, known in typological studies as egophoric, is sometimes dubbed disjunct vs. conjunct forms and, of all East Caucasian languages is so far only attested in Akhvakh (Creissels 2008; 2018) and Zakatala Avar (Forker 2018). Below, this inflection will be glossed as EGO.

All TAME categories that have egophoric forms are shown in Table 2, in both egophoric (EGO) and unmarked (3) forms:

Table 2: Egophoric forms and their unmarked counterparts

		‘come’		‘put on’	
		perfective	imperfective	perfective	imperfective
PST	3	=ak’-ib	=ik’-ib	ik’-ub	irk’ <sup>w</sup> -ib
	EGO	=ak’-i-ra	=ik’-i-ra	ik’-ub-ra	irk’ <sup>w</sup> -i-ra
HAB	3	–	=ik’-an	–	irk’ <sup>w</sup> -an
	EGO	–	=ik’-as	–	irk’ <sup>w</sup> -as
FUT	3	=ak’-as	=ik’-es	ik’ <sup>w</sup> -es	irk’ <sup>w</sup> -es
	EGO	=ak’-iša	=ik’-iša	ik’ <sup>w</sup> -iša	irk’ <sup>w</sup> -iša
		‘fly’		‘read’	
		perfective	imperfective	perfective	imperfective
PST	3	arc-ur	urc-ib	=elč’-un	luč’-ib
	EGO	arc-ur-ra	urc-i-ra	=elč’-un-na	luč’-i-ra
HAB	3	–	urc-an	–	luč’-an
	EGO	–	urc-as	–	luč’-as
FUT	3	arc-es	urc-es	=elč’-es	luč’-es
	EGO	arc-iša	urc-iša	=elč’-iša	luč’-iša

In the past, the egophoric forms are marked with the suffix *-ra*, assimilated to *-na* after the nasal auslaut in the aorist. In the imperfective past, the tense suffix *-ib-* irregularly drops its final *-b*. In the future, non-egophoric forms are identical to the infinitive, while the egophoric forms use a special suffix *-iša*. In the present habitual (which also serves as synthetic present for some stative verbs), there is an opposition of two special affixes, *-an* for non-egophoric and *-as* for egophoric forms. Following the idea that the basic distinction is between egophoric forms that are marked and non-egophoric unmarked forms, I gloss *-an* simply as HAB, while *-as* as HAB.EGO (similarly with other forms). Egophoric forms are also present with the present form of the auxiliary *lewra* (M), *lella* (< *ler-*

*ra*, F and NPL), *lebra* (N and HPL) and the negative copula *ahinna* (< *ahin-ra*) – see §9 on inflection of auxiliaries.

4 Aspectual stems

In Mehweb, the vast majority of the verbal categories are formed from two different stems, perfective and imperfective. I will consider verbal inflection as divided into perfective and imperfective paradigms. The two paradigms are largely parallel. Most categories attested both in the perfective and the imperfective paradigms use the same affixes. The exceptions are listed in the following table:

Table 3: Asymmetries between perfective and imperfective paradigms

	perfective	imperfective
past	<i>-ib(-ub)/-ur/-un</i>	<i>-ib</i>
participle	<i>past+-i(l)</i>	<i>-ul</i>
converb	<i>past+-le</i>	<i>-uwe</i> (< PTCP+ <i>-le</i> )
imperative	<i>-e/-a</i>	<i>-e</i>
infinitive	<i>-es/-as</i>	<i>-es</i>
present	–	<i>-an/-as</i>
prohibitive	–	<i>m(V)- ... -di</i>
negative optative	–	<i>m(V)- ... -ab</i>

On the choice of one of the markers in the same category see the relevant sections below. For the different markers of the aorist (perfective past) see §5; for the choice of the vowels in the imperative and the infinitive see §8; the second of the two affixes in the present tense is the egophoric form (see §2 above). For the asymmetries in the system of special converbs see [Sheyanova \(2018\)](#). Other parallel categories in the two paradigms use the same markers.

There are verbs that lack the perfective stem. When asked to produce perfective forms for these verbs, the consultants suggest a combination of the infinitive with perfective verbs, mostly *=aʔes* ‘begin’. These defective verbs denote states and some atelic activities, such as *izes* ‘be ill’, *=iges* ‘want’, *=ukes* ‘itch’, *ures* ‘rain’, *ruʔzes* ‘be shivering’ (also ‘boil’), *ruʔqes* ‘flow’, *=uzes* ‘work’, *urʔes* ‘fight’, *=ulqes* ‘dance’. Note that some of these verbs show a morphological structure similar to one of the models of the imperfective stem derivation – infixation of *-r-* or *-l-* – and may historically go back to a regular two-stem verb. In fact, *=ulqes* ‘dance’ is identical to the imperfective stem of *=uqes* ~ *=ulqes* ‘go, run’. Another defective

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verb is the bound root *\*k'es* (probably related to *uk'es* (IPFV) 'say') that is used in some morphologically complex but unanalyzable verbs.

Some verbs have identical perfective and imperfective stems. These include *umces* 'weight, measure', *irxes* 'reap', *irc'es* 'weed', *=alces* 'spin (thread)', *=urhes* 'tell', *=uhes* 'scold', *=u?es* 'be', *=ises* 'weep', *=a'ldes* 'hide' (tr). Note again that some of these verbs have the -V(l/r)C- structure typical of imperfective stems.

There are also several verbs whose imperfective stem is distinct from the perfective stem in that it does not contain the gender prefix slot: (=) *ižes* 'lick', (=) *išqes* 'mow, peel', (=) *ites* 'beat', (=) *ig<sup>w</sup>es* 'burn'. More generally, there is an asymmetry between perfective and imperfective stem in terms of the presence of the gender agreement slot: imperfective stems may lack it with those verbs whose perfective stems have it, but not vice versa. Cf. the following table:

Table 4: Asymmetries between perfective and imperfective paradigms

		Imperfective	
		+	-
Perfective	+	66	29
	-	(2)	21

The two verbs who exceptionally have gender slots in the imperfective stem but lack it in the perfective stem are *kes* (PFV) ~ *=ukes* (IPFV) 'bring' and *es* (PFV) ~ *=uk'es* (IPFV) 'say, tell', both of which are morphologically irregular. The latter verb may be considered two separate lexical items ('say' and 'tell').

There are several highly irregular verbs, all shown in Table 5. Note that, again, with 'see' and 'give', the imperfective stems show one of the regular patterns of imperfective stem formation (see below) and are similar to their perfective stems, so that they represent a case of weaker suppletion than fully irregular 'say' and 'go'.

Table 5: Aspectual stems of the irregular verbs

	'say'	'see'	'give'	'go'
PFV	<i>i-/e-/bet'-</i>	<i>g<sup>w</sup>-</i>	<i>(=e)g-</i>	<i>=a<sup>ʔ</sup>q'-/u<sup>ʔ</sup>q'-/q'-=eʔ-</i>
IPFV	<i>uk'-</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>-</i>	<i>lug-</i>	<i>=aš-</i>

## 4 Mehweb verb morphology

The attested patterns of the connection between the perfective and the imperfective stems are summarized in Table 6. The choice of the pattern is not fully independent of other formal properties of the verb, first of all the perfective past formation and/or the presence of labialization (labialized final consonant or *u*); see the explanations below the table.

Table 6: Patterns of aspectual stems formation

Model	Subtype	Example	No.	Constraints & tendencies	Exceptions to constraints
infixation in IPFV	<ɭ>	=ic'- ~ =ilc'- 'fill'	18	none	
infixation in IPFV	<r>	ih-(ub) ~ irh <sup>w</sup> - 'throw'	5	labialization	=ix- ~ =irx- 'put'
er- in PFV		=erž- ~ =už- 'drink'	17	none	
VIC ~ luC	alC ~ luC elC ~ luC	=elč'-(un) ~ luč'- 'read'	9	AOR in -un	=a <sup>h</sup> lq'- ~ lu <sup>h</sup> q'- 'rinse'
ablaut	a- ~ i- e- ~ i-	abx- ~ ibx- 'open' =eɟ ~ =iɟ 'be enough'	19	(AOR in -ib)	
ablaut	a- ~ u- e- ~ u-	ar-(un) ~ ur- 'sift' =erg- ~ =urg 'spin tread'	22	labialization AOR in -un or -ur	=arg- ~ =urg- 'find' =ebk'- ~ =ubk'- 'die'

Infixation of *-l-* (18 verbs) is attested in all inflectional classes, while infixation of *-r-* (seven verbs) is present in five simple verbs four of which are labialized (aorist in *-ub*). The model VIC ~ luC is typical specifically of the verbs with aorist in *-un*. Vowel alternation in V(C)C roots is usually *a/-e- ~ i-*, with *i-* changing to *u-* in verbs with the aorist in *-un*, *-ur* or *-ub*.

## 5 Conjugation classes and the issue of labialization

I group Mehweb verbs into three inflectional classes according to the marker of the perfective past they use – *-ib*, *-ur* and *-un*. Most verbs use the *-ib* suffix, which I will consider to be the default; the same suffix is used by verbs of all conjugations with the imperfective stem as the imperfective past, so in fact it may

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be considered to be simply a suffix (of the secondary derivational stem) of the past, perfective or imperfective, the choice between the perfective/imperfective interpretation being, in these forms, fully determined by the aspectual characteristic of the stem. A small additional fourth class is very similar to the ‘default’ conjugation except that all verbs in this class have labialization on the final consonant of the stem and the aorist marker is realized as *-ub*; it is shown as 1a in the following table. However, not all inflectional properties of this 1a class may be explained as being a labialized variety of the first class; see below. Here are some representative forms:

Table 7: Verbal inflectional classes

	PFV	PST	IPFV	PST	
1.	<i>irx-</i>	<i>ib</i>	<i>irx-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘reap’
	<i>=ic-</i>	<i>ib</i>	<i>=ilc-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘sell’
1a	<i>=ig-</i>	<i>ub</i>	<i>=ig<sup>w</sup>-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘burn’
2.	<i>arc-</i>	<i>ur</i>	<i>urc-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘fly’
	<i>=emž-</i>	<i>ur</i>	<i>=umž-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘get warm’
3.	<i>=erg-</i>	<i>un</i>	<i>=ug-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘eat’
	<i>alʔ-</i>	<i>un</i>	<i>ulʔ-</i>	<i>ib</i>	‘cut’

In verbs with lexical pharyngealization, the *-u-* of the aorist marker may be realized as *-o<sup>ʕ</sup>-* (on pharyngealization, see [Moroz 2018](#)). Cf.:

- (4) *=o<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-o<sup>ʕ</sup>b* ‘break’ (variant of *-ub*)
- (5) *=iʔ-o<sup>ʕ</sup>n* ‘steal’ (variant of *-un*).

Labialized stems also exist in the *-un* and *-ur* classes, where the labialization is however lost before (absorbed by) the vowel of the aorist suffix. It is also lost in the imperfective forms if the stem vowel changes to *-u-* – apparently, the root vowel absorbs the labialization of the following consonant, including when there is another consonant that comes between the root vowel and the labialized consonant. Depending on the form and class, labialization of the stem is thus realized as labialization of the last consonant of the stem (e.g. in the imperative), labialization of the stem vowel (in various imperfective forms) or labialization of the suffix vowel (in *-ib* of the aorist).

Most verbs with *-ub* in the aorist also have labialization in other forms, so that one interpretation is that *-ub* results from the *-ib* marker meeting the final

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labialization of the stem. The two verbs that take *-ub* but do not show labialization in other forms – *=o<sup>ɾ</sup>rɿ-* ‘break’ and *=uh-* ‘become’ – both have *-u-* as the underlying vowel of the root (*o<sup>ɾ</sup>* is the result of pharyngealization of *u*). When comparing this to the fact that the *-u-* in the imperfective stem absorbs the labialization of the final consonant, as shown in Table 8, it seems appropriate to posit the deep form of the perfective stem of these two verbs as having the labialized consonant whose labialization changes the aorist marker *-ib* to *-ub* but is itself always absorbed *\*=o<sup>ɾ</sup>rɿ<sup>w</sup>-*, *\*=uh<sup>w</sup>-*. Then, all verbs that take *-ub* in the aorist have final labialization. On the other hand, none of the *-ib* verbs has a labialized final consonant.

Table 8: Labialized stems

	Perfective			Imperfective		
	IMP	INF	PST	IMP	INF	PST
‘dig’	<i>=erɸ<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>=erɸ<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>=erɸub</i>	<i>iɸ<sup>w</sup>e</i>	<i>iɸ<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>iɸ<sup>w</sup>ib</i>
‘slaughter’	<i>=erh<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>=erh<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>=erhun</i>	<i>=urhe</i>	<i>=urhes</i>	<i>=urhib</i>
‘burn’	<i>=alk<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>=alk<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>=alk’un</i>	<i>luk’e</i>	<i>luk’es</i>	<i>luk’ib</i>
‘go down’	<i>=erχ<sup>w</sup>e</i>	<i>=erχ<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>=erχur</i>	<i>=urχe</i>	<i>=urχes</i>	<i>=urχib</i>

Given this evidence, it seems that the *-ub* conjugation should merely be considered a formal subtype of the *-ib* conjugation. However, the conjugation of the *-ub* and *-ib* verbs diverge in two important points. First, both the aorist marker *-ib* and the homophonous imperfective past marker on all verbs lose the final consonant when followed by *-ra* in egophoric forms or the perfective converb marker *-le*. With *-ub*, both forms keep the final *-b*. Second, the *-ib* in the imperfective paradigm does not change to *-ub* after labialized stem – something which we would expect assuming that *-ub* in the perfective paradigm results from ...<sup>w</sup>+*-ib*.

Table 9: Divergence between the default *-ib* and the *-ub* conjugations

		IMP	PST	PST(EGO)	CVB
‘come’	PFV	<i>=ak’e</i>	<i>=ak’ib</i>	<i>=ak’ira</i>	<i>=ak’ile</i>
	IPFV	<i>=ik’e</i>	<i>=ik’ib</i>	<i>=ik’ira</i>	<i>=ak’uwe</i>
‘put on’	PFV	<i>ik<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>ik’ub</i>	<i>ik’ubra</i>	<i>ik’uble</i>
	IPFV	<i>irk<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>irk<sup>w</sup>ib</i>	<i>irk<sup>w</sup>ira</i>	<i>irk’uwe</i>

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In other words, the suffix *-ub* shows morphophonological behavior which is significantly different from *-ib*.

Whatever the ultimate interpretation of the *-ub* aorist should be, it seems that this inflection type shows a position intermediate between a separate conjugation class and a subtype of the default. The full list of the attested labialized stems for all conjugations is as follows (in the aorist form): *=eʔub* ‘seed’, *=erkun* ‘eat’, *gub* ‘see’, *ihub* ‘throw’, *=alk’un* ‘take fire’, *=igub* ‘burn’, *ik’ub* ‘put on’, *=erhun* ‘slaughter’, *=usaʔun* ‘fall asleep’, *=erʔub* ‘dry up’, *=aʰhun* ‘get soaked’, *=erq’ub* ‘become worn’, *=erɬub* ‘dig out’, *=alhun* ‘wake up’, *=erχur* ‘come down’. As explained above, the verbs *=oʰrʔoʰb* ‘break’ and *=uhub* ‘become’ are only labialized in their underlying forms.

## 6 Polarity

Verbal negation is expressed by one of the two prefixes, the standard negation prefix *ħa-* and the volitive negation prefix *mV-*. The latter is only used in volitional moods including prohibitive (negative imperative) and negative optative, and the former is used elsewhere, both on finite and non-finite forms. Some speakers allow using *ħa-* in negative optative forms. The standard negation *ħa-* is however never used in prohibitive (alias negative imperative) forms.

In periphrastic verbal forms, both the lexical and the auxiliary verb may be negated. The standard negation *ħa-* is placed immediately before the verbal stem, thus following the preverb with preverbal verbs. The full pre-root template of the verb is shown in the following example:

- (6) *har-ħa-d-uq-un*  
 PV-NEG-F1-flee:PFV-AOR  
 ‘She did not run away.’

Some of the negative forms of the verb *=ak’-as* ‘come’ are given in Table 10 as an example. As masculine forms morphophonologically interact with the prefix (see below), feminine (more specifically, F1 – girls gender) forms are given instead.

The forms are morphophonologically straightforward except on vowel initial bases, including those resulting from the elision of the masculine prefix *w-*, where the vowel *-a* of the prefix interacts with the initial vowel of the stem. The elision of the masculine prefix *w-* occurs after all prefixal elements including the standard negation prefix itself. After this, the following processes occur:



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Table 10: Some negative forms of =ak'as ~ =ik'es 'come'

stem	=ak'	=ik'
PST	<i>ħadak'ib</i>	<i>ħadik'ib</i>
INF	<i>ħadik'as</i>	<i>ħadik'es</i>
HAB	–	<i>ħadik'an</i>
OPT	–	<i>midik'ab</i> ( <i>ħadik'ab</i> )
PROH	–	<i>midik'ad(i)</i>
COND	<i>ħadak'ak'a</i>	<i>ħadik'ak'a</i>
PTCP	<i>ħadak'ibili</i>	<i>ħadik'uli</i>
CVB	<i>ħadak'ile</i>	<i>ħadik'uwe</i>
NMLZ	<i>ħadak'ri</i>	<i>ħadik'ri</i>

- (7) initial a- or e- of the base is dropped:

 $\text{ħa+aC...} \rightarrow \text{ħa-C...}$  $\text{ħa+eC...} \rightarrow \text{ħa-C...}$ 

- (8) initial i
- $\rightarrow$
- j:

 $\text{ħa+iC...} \rightarrow \text{ħa-jC...}$ 

- (9) ...and then dropped before a consonant cluster:

 $\text{ħa-jCC} \rightarrow \text{ħa-CC...}$ 

- (10) initial u
- $\rightarrow$
- w:

 $\text{ħa+uC...} \rightarrow \text{ħa-wC...}$ 

- (11) ...and then dropped before a consonant cluster leaving (probably optionally) labialization on one of the consonants:

 $\text{ħa-wCC} \rightarrow \text{ħa-C}^{(w)}\text{C}^{(w)}$ 

This labialization may only result from the initial *u-* of the root, not from the masculine prefix *w-*, which is dropped after prefixes leaving no trace. Cf. the following forms with different types of anlaut (masculine forms are given for the verbs with the initial gender agreement slot):

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Table 11: Standard negation on verbal stems with and without gender prefix slot

with gender slot	=uC-	=aC-	=iC-	=uCC-	=aCC-	=iCC-
	‘enter’ (PFV)	‘nurture’ (PFV)	‘come’ (IPFV)	‘send’ (IPFV)	‘nurture’ (IPFV)	‘let go’ (IPFV)
PST NEG (M)	<i>ħa-wq-un</i>	<i>ħa-χ-un</i>	<i>ħa-jk’-ib</i>	<i>ħa-rx<sup>w</sup>-ib</i>	<i>ħa-lχ-ib</i>	<i>ħa-rq’-ib</i>
PST (M)	<i>uq-un</i>	<i>w-aχ-un</i>	<i>w-ik’-ib</i>	<i>urx-ib</i>	<i>w-alχ-ib</i>	<i>w-irq’-ib</i>
without gender slot	#uC	#iC	#uCC-	#aCC-	#iCC-	#eCC-
	‘sift’ (IPFV)	‘take’ (IPFV)	‘pour’ (IPFV)	‘open’ (PFV)	‘open’ (IPFV)	‘count’ (PFV)
PST NEG	<i>ħa-wr-ib</i>	<i>ħa-js-ib</i>	<i>ħa-lq’<sup>w</sup>-ib</i>	<i>ħa-bx-ib</i>	<i>ħa-bx-ib</i>	<i>ħa-lʔ-un</i>
PST	<i>ur-ib</i>	<i>is-ib</i>	<i>ulq’-ib</i>	<i>abx-ib</i>	<i>ibx-ib</i>	<i>ulʔ-ib</i>

The same processes apply to the optative forms when they use the standard negation marker, cf.:

Table 12: Negation on the optative forms

		Optative	Negative Optative
=ik’es	‘come’ (IPFV)	<i>w-ik’-ab</i> (M)	<i>ħa-jk’-ab</i> (M)
ures	‘rain’ (IPFV)	<i>ur-ab</i>	<i>ħa-wr-ab</i>
ises	‘take’ (IPFV)	<i>is-ab</i>	<i>ħa-js-ab</i>
=irqes	‘let go’ (IPFV)	<i>w-irq-ab</i> (M)	<i>ħa-rq-ab</i> (M)
=urxes	‘send’ (IPFV)	<i>urx-ab</i> (M)	<i>ħa-rx<sup>w</sup>-ab</i>

Attested forms of negation in periphrastic forms use the negative auxiliary *ag<sup>w</sup>ara*:

(12) negation in periphrasis:

- a. *luč’-uwe*                      *le-w*                      b. *luč’-uwe*                      *ag<sup>w</sup>ara*  
     read:IPFV-CVB.IPFV    AUX-M                      read:IPFV-CVB.IPFV    AUX:NEG  
     ‘He is reading.’                      ‘He is not reading.’

The morphophonology of the forms with the dedicated volitive negation (NEGVOL) marker is different. The prohibitive and the negative optative forms both take the same consonantal prefix *m-* (*mV-* before consonants) but two different suffixes. The masculine prefix *w-* is lost after the negative volitional *m-*. When followed by consonant, either a gender prefix or the initial conso-

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nant of the stem, the negative volitional copies the stem vowel. Finally, the neuter/human plural prefix *b-* is assimilated by the negative volitional and is represented by *m-*.

(13) morphophonology of the negative volitional prefix:

- a. *m-uz-adi* (< *m-w-uz-adi*)  
 NEGVOL-M.WORK:IPFV-PROH  
 ‘Do not work!’ (to a man)
- b. *mu-d-uz-adi* (< *mV-d-uz-adi*)  
 NEGVOL-F1-WORK:IPFV-PROH  
 ‘Do not work!’ (to a woman)
- c. *buz*                      *mu-m-uz-adi* (< *mV-b-uz-adi*)  
 (stem copy) NEGVOL-N-fry:IPFV-PROH  
 ‘Do not fry (it)!’

As (13c) also shows, the process of stem copy (see below) applies before assimilation in nasality takes place.

As to the suffix position, the negative optative and the prohibitive have different suffixes. The negative optative takes the suffix *-ab*, same as the positive optative; the prohibitive takes a dedicated suffix *-adi*, whose final vowel is optionally dropped. In both cases, the initial *-a-* of the suffix is analyzed below as a marker of a secondary derivational stem termed irrealis (see next section). The following table shows the prohibitive of verbs with different stem structure.

Table 13: Volitional negation with different stem structure

Verb (IPFV)			Negative Optative			Prohibitive		
			M	F1/NPL	N/HPL	M	F1/NPL	N/HPL
=uC...	=uzes	‘work’	<i>uzab</i>	<i>duzab</i>	<i>buzab</i>	<i>muzadi</i>	<i>muduzadi</i>	<i>mumuzadi</i>
=aC...	=alχes	‘treat’	<i>walχab</i>	<i>dalχab</i>	<i>balχab</i>	<i>malχadi</i>	<i>madalχadi</i>	<i>mamalχadi</i>
=eC...	=elk’es	‘choose’	<i>welk’ab</i>	<i>delk’ab</i>	<i>belk’ab</i>	<i>melk’adi</i>	<i>medelk’adi</i>	<i>memelk’adi</i>
=iC...	=ilces	‘sell’	<i>wilc’ab</i>	<i>dilc’ab</i>	<i>bilc’ab</i>	<i>milc’adi</i>	<i>midilc’adi</i>	<i>mimilc’adi</i>
#VC	<i>izes</i>	‘be ill’	<i>mizab</i>	<i>mizadi</i>				
CVC	<i>luč’es</i>	‘read’	<i>muluč’ab</i>	<i>muluč’adi</i>				

The prohibitive show extremely frequent forms with what looks like reduplication reduplication; more specifically, a full copy of the stem together with the gender marker placed to the left of the negative volitional prefix. The process is optional.

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- (14) stem copy in the prohibitive:

*d-iz ~ mi-d-iz-ad*

F1-wash:IPFV ~ NEGVOL-F1-wash:IPFV-PROH

(also *mi-d-iz-ad*)

NEGVOL-F1-wash:IPFV-PROH

‘Do not wash her!’

Outside its use in the prohibitive, stem copy is relatively common in the context of standard negation and elsewhere with a certain added expressive or pragmatic value (cf. Maisak 2012 on similar processes in other East Caucasian languages). Note that the stem copy shows the underlying form containing the masculine prefix, not the copy of the actual realization of the stem in this specific context. This is seen in standard negation involving stem copies; cf. (15) and (16):

- (15) stem copy in standard negation:

*w-ak’ ~ ħa-k’-ib-i*

M-come:PFV ~ NEG-M.come:PFV-AOR-ATR

*d-ak’ ~ ħa-d-ak’-ib-i*

F1-come:PFV ~ NEG-F1-come:PFV-AOR-ATR

‘the one who did not come’

- |      |                     |                            |
|------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| (16) | <i>w-ak’-ib-i</i>   | <i>ħa-k’-ib-i</i>          |
|      | M-come:PFV-AOR-ATR  | NEG-M.come:PFV-AOR-ATR     |
|      | ‘the one who came’  | ‘the one who did not come’ |
|      | <i>d-ak’-ib-i</i>   | <i>ħa-d-ak’-ib-i</i>       |
|      | F1-come:PFV-AOR-ATR | NEG-F1-come:PFV-AOR-ATR    |
|      | ‘the one who came’  | ‘the one who did not come’ |

The process is not reduplication *sensu stricto*. I call it stem copying. Structurally, the copy of the stem may be separated from the verb form by other material, especially by the discourse particle, as in (17) and (18), where it forms a separate wordform.

- (17) stem copy in standard negation (Corpus)

*illi-če-la      iz-uwe      werħ   d-aʔ-i-ra      k’wan*

this-SUPER-EL be.ill:IPFV-CVB.IPFV seven F1-arrive:PFV-AOR-EGO QUOT

*ʔaj   inc’-ul   d-aʔ-ra      ħa-d-aʔ-i-ra      k’wan.*

PTCL more F1-arrive:PFV=ADD NEG-F1-arrive:PFV-AOR-EGO QUOT

‘From this (day) she fell ill, seven days, she said, it took not more than that, she said.’

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- (18) *hanna hete b-aʔ-ib-i-javle d-uc-ib nu*  
 now there(LAT) HPL-arrive:PFV-ATR-CVB.ANTE F1-take:PFV-AOR I  
*buba muḥamma-jni q'uq'u-be-če, d-uc-ra*  
 Buga Muhammad-ERG knee-PL-SUPER(LAT) F1-take:PFV=ADD  
*d-uc-i-le χal b-aq'-ib.*  
 F1-take:PFV-AOR-CVB seek N-do:PFV-AOR  
 ‘When we arrived there, Buga Muhammad took me on his lap; having taken me, he examined (me).’

In all contexts stem copying is optional. However, it is in the prohibitive that these forms are very consistently produced as first translations of the Russian stimuli with the relevant meaning. It seems that expressive pragmatics of stem copying is incipiently grammaticalized in the expression of the prohibitive.

### 7 Synthetic paradigm

This section gives an overview of the synthetic paradigm of the Mehweb verb. A summary table is provided at the end of the section. Polarity, gender and egophoric subject agreement and aspectual stem formation have been discussed above.

The derivation of forms is summarized in the following figure. For some more expceptional patterns, including derivation of special converbs from general converbs or from the infinitive stem, see [Sheyanova \(2018\)](#). (An \* shows morphologically bound bases.)

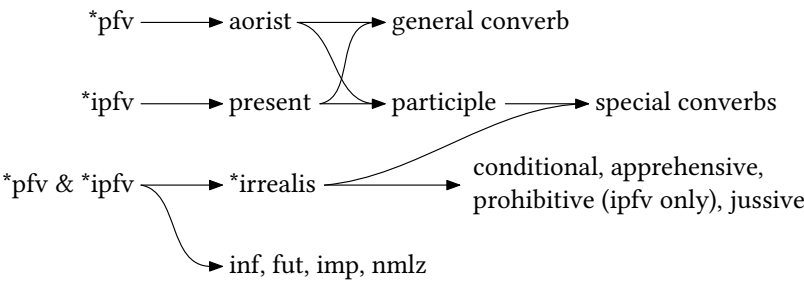


Figure 14: Derivation of verbal forms

The aspectual stem immediately derives the past (aorist in the perfective, imperfective past in the imperfective paradigm; note that the forms further derived from this secondary stem, e.g. converbs or participles, do not necessarily have

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past reference), present habitual (in the imperfective stem only), infinitive, the imperative, the nominalization in *-ri*.

Several other forms are based on a bound (hence \*) base produced by adding *-a-* to the aspectual stem; this base may be considered the base of irrealis (potential in terms of Nina Sumbatova, unpublished), because it produces such forms as optative, conditional, apprehensive, counterfactual and some other (see Dobrushina 2018). Support for this analysis, comes from the counterfactual form in *-are*, one of the irrealis series, segmentable into the irrealis marker *-a-* and the past marker *-re*. The latter is attested elsewhere, including on the auxiliary in the past forms (*lewre* and *ag<sup>w</sup>ire*) and probably elsewhere (= *igibre* from *=igib* ‘want’ lptf) – see Dobrushina (2018). Note the morphophonological difference between counterfactual *-re* and the egophoric *-ra* – the latter causes the past marker *-ib* to drop the final *-b*, while in the counterfactual *=igibre* it is preserved, just as in the egophoric forms of the verbs in the *-ub* subtype.

The general converb and the participle are formed differently in the perfective and the imperfective paradigms. In the perfective, the attributive marker *-i(l)* and the converb marker *-le* are added to the aorist. In the imperfective, the participle marker *-ul* and the converb marker *-uwe* are added directly to the imperfective stem. While the *-l* of the imperfective participle marker *-ul* is always present, that of *-i(l)* is often dropped, and the distribution of the variants is not clear (though it seems that at least in the predicative use of the participle in *-i(l)* the full variant is impossible).

It seems plausible to differentiate between *-ul* as the participle marker proper, used only with the imperfective stem of the verb, and the attributive marker *-i(l)*, attached to the aorist but also used on infinitives (to form future participles, also used finitely), auxiliary (to form periphrastic participles) and adjectives. Note that the imperfective converb ending *-uwe* is more or less straightforwardly analyzable into *-ul-le*, where *-le* is a general converb marker (also in the perfective paradigm) and, more generally, is used as a cross-categorical adverbializer, i.e. in forming adverbs from adjective roots.

Special converbs may be based on the general converb form, as the causal converb *-na*, or on the participle, as anterior converb *-(j)able*; see more on special converb formation in Sheyanova (2018).

Unlike the nominalization in *-ri*, which is formed directly from the aspectual stem, nominalization in *-deš* is formed from many forms, including finite past, future, present (habitual), participles – but not from volitional forms and not from the nominalization in *-ri*. Given that *-deš* is also attached to adjectives and nouns, the generalization seems to be that *-deš* is not a derivational morpheme but a cross-categorical predicate nominalizer. The suffix does not combine with egophoric forms.

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Table 15 summarizes synthetic verbal inflection. Forms are given without gender agreement marking; for gender agreement see §1. All forms in the table

Table 15: Verbal inflection

	<i>=ak'as</i> ‘come’		<i>ik'wes</i> ‘put on’	
stem	<i>=ak'</i>	<i>=ik'</i>	<i>ik'w</i>	<i>irk'w</i>
HAB (3)	–	<i>=ik'an</i>	–	<i>irk'wan</i>
HAB (EGO)	–	<i>=ik'as</i>	–	<i>irk'was</i>
IMP	<i>=ak'e(na)</i>	<i>=ik'e(na)</i>	<i>ik'wa(na)</i>	<i>irk'we(na)</i>
INF/FUT	<i>=ak'as</i>	<i>=ik'es</i>	<i>ik'wes</i>	<i>irk'wes</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>=ak'iša</i>	<i>=ik'iša</i>	<i>ik'wiša</i>	<i>irk'wiša</i>
NMLZ	<i>=ak'ri</i>	<i>=ik'ri</i>	<i>ik'wri</i>	<i>irk'wri</i>
PTCP	<i>=ak'ibi(l)</i>	<i>=ik'ul</i>	<i>ik'ubi(l)</i>	<i>irk'ul</i>
PST (3)	<i>=ak'ib</i>	<i>=ik'ib</i>	<i>ik'ub</i>	<i>irk'wib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>=ak'ira</i>	<i>=ik'ira</i>	<i>ik'ubra</i>	<i>irk'wira</i>
CVB	<i>=ak'ile</i>	<i>=ik'uwe</i>	<i>ik'uble</i>	<i>irk'uwe</i>
PROH	–	<i>mi=ik'adi(na)</i>		<i>mirk'wadi(na)</i>
OPT	<i>=ak'ab</i>	<i>=ik'ab</i>	<i>ik'wab</i>	<i>irk'wab</i>
APPR	<i>=ak'ala</i>	<i>=ik'ala</i>	<i>ik'wala</i>	<i>irk'wala</i>
COND	<i>=ak'ak'a</i>	<i>=ik'ak'a</i>	<i>ik'wak'a</i>	<i>irk'wak'a</i>
	<i>arces</i> ‘fly’		<i>=elč'es</i> ‘read’	
stem	<i>arc</i>	<i>urc</i>	<i>=elč'</i>	<i>luč'</i>
HAB (3)	–	<i>urcan</i>	–	<i>luč'an</i>
HAB (EGO)	–	<i>urcas</i>	–	<i>luč'as</i>
IMP	<i>arce(na)</i>	<i>urce(na)</i>	<i>=elč'a(na)</i>	<i>luč'e(na)</i>
INF/FUT	<i>arces</i>	<i>urces</i>	<i>=elč'es</i>	<i>luč'es</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>arciša</i>	<i>urciša</i>	<i>=elč'iša</i>	<i>luč'iša</i>
NMLZ	<i>arcri</i>	<i>urcri</i>	<i>=elč'ri</i>	<i>luč'ri</i>
PTCP	<i>arcuri(l)</i>	<i>urcul</i>	<i>=elč'uni(l)</i>	<i>luč'ul</i>
PST (3)	<i>arcur</i>	<i>urcib</i>	<i>=elč'un</i>	<i>luč'ib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>arcurra</i>	<i>urcira</i>	<i>=elč'unna</i>	<i>luč'ira</i>
CVB	<i>arculle</i>	<i>urcuwe</i>	<i>=elč'uwe</i>	<i>luč'uwe</i>
PROH	–	<i>murc'adi(na)</i>	–	<i>muluč'adi(na)</i>
OPT	<i>arcab</i>	<i>urcab</i>	<i>=elč'ab</i>	<i>luč'ab</i>
APPR	<i>arcala</i>	<i>urcala</i>	<i>=elč'ala</i>	<i>luč'ala</i>
COND	<i>arcak'a</i>	<i>urcak'a</i>	<i>=elč'ak'a</i>	<i>luč'ak'a</i>

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(except the imperative) may attach the negative prefix; morphology of polarity marking is discussed in §6. The marker *-na* is the marker of the plural of the addressee in volitional forms.

## 8 Imperative and infinitive

Both the imperative and the infinitive are formed from each of the two stems. While in the imperfective paradigm the suffixes are invariably *-e* and *-es*, respectively, the perfective imperative and the perfective infinitive / perfective non-egophoric future both have two markers (*-e* vs. *-a* in the imperative, *-es* vs. *-as* in the infinitive). The choice of the allomorph in the two categories is independent.

Table 16: Imperative and infinitive suffixes

	markers	choice
Perfective imperative	<i>-e/-a</i>	morphosyntactic
Perfective infinitive/future	<i>-es/-as</i>	phonological

The choice of the imperative vowel depends on the transitivity of the verb: transitive verbs take *-a* and intransitive verbs take *-e*. Cf. *=urs-a* ‘pound’, *=iʔ-aʔ* ‘steal’, but *=alh<sup>w</sup>-e* ‘wake up’, *=uq-e* ‘go’. Note that the choice of the marker is primarily based on transitivity rather than control, as e.g. motion verbs all take *-e*.

P-labile verbs (i.e. verbs that are used with and without agentive argument) take *-e* or *-a* depending on the interpretation; cf. *w-aʔld-e* ‘hide (intr)’ (to a man) vs. *w-aʔld-a* ‘hide it’. Other labile verbs also shows similar behavior; cf. *abx-a* ‘open (it)’ vs. *abx-e* ‘open (intr)’; *b-oʔrʔ-a* ‘break (it)’ vs. *b-oʔrʔ-e* ‘break (intr)’. Although in these cases the intransitive imperative might seem unlikely, it is readily interpreted by my consultants as when talking to something that resist acting on it, does not yield, or seems to take too long to achieve the result. There is evidence that A-labile verbs (i.e. verbs that may omit the patientive argument ascribing nominative to the agentive argument) may also take both markers; cf. *=erq-a* ‘suck (e.g. milk)’ vs. *=erq-e* ‘suck’ (implicit, out-of-focus patient).

Experiential verbs do not behave in a unified way. Generally, they prefer the intransitive suffix, but some also allow the transitive one, without a clear meaning shift; cf. *qumart-a* and *qumart-e* ‘forget’, *=ah-e* and *=ah-a* ‘know’. One would expect an interpretation with the imperative subject’s increased control over the situation but this is certainly not consistent through all the experiential verbs;



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though some consultants do report this difference e.g. in the verb *=arg-e* vs. *=arg-a* ‘find’. The verb *g<sup>w</sup>es* ‘see’ does not form a generally accepted imperative, but if it does, the form is *g<sup>w</sup>-a*.

There is no alternation in the imperfective imperative. A possible way to account for this would be to consider all imperfective imperatives as using intransitive imperative suffix, which would amount to transitivity decrease with obligatory promotion of the Agent. Imperfectives are crosslinguistically more Agent-oriented forms. In an ergative language like Mehweb, promoting the Agent would show up as decrease in transitivity. The assumed promotion is, however, internal to verbal morphology and does not change argument marking. P retains nominative case, and A, if present, is marked with ergative.

The imperative of the verb ‘give’ has two perfective stems, *aga* and *=ega*, depending on the person of the recipient. The first stem is used when the recipient is the first person, otherwise the second stem is used. Both stems are suppletive with respect to the non-imperative stems, and the second stem additionally introduces an agreement prefix slot. This pattern of the verb ‘give’ is attested elsewhere in Dargwa and in East Caucasian at large (see Comrie 2003, also Daniel et al. 2010). Another verb with an irregular imperative stem is *es* ‘say’ (inf) – *bet’a* ‘say’ (imperative). The verb *=u<sup>q</sup>’es* ‘go’ has two imperatives, the regular *=u<sup>q</sup>’-e* and the irregular *=e<sup>ʔ</sup>-e*. The semantic distinction is not fully clear but probably has to do with the final point, the first better translated as ‘go there’ and the second as ‘go away, leave’. Irregular imperatives only exist in the perfective paradigm.

The forms *=eg-a* ‘give (away)’ and *=e<sup>ʔ</sup>-e* ‘go (away)’ contain the expected imperative suffixes (transitive and intransitive, respectively). On the other hand, their stems are not present elsewhere in the paradigm of these verbs, neither can they be causativized. The second form is also fully suppletive to all other stems of *=u<sup>q</sup>’es* ‘go’. They are thus close to the status of separate lexical items – imperative interjections. This becomes clear when they are compared to another suppletive imperative stem, *bet’-a* (from *es* ‘say’), which has a clearly different morphological status. First, it is the only imperative available for this verb. Second, the stem *bet’-* is optionally used in other forms (see Table 18), including causatives (see Table 21).

Imperatives show plural marking based on the number of the addressees (thus showing, formally, an accusative pattern of agreement). Unlike in the prefix slot – and, for that matter, anywhere in Mehweb – this marking is independent from the gender. The suffix is *-na* and it is regularly attached to the imperative marker as well as to the irregular imperatives except in the verb *=aš-e* ‘come here’ vs. *=aš-ina* ‘come here’ (plural addressee). Cf.:

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(19) intransitive imperative

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. <i>uz-e</i><br>M.work:IPFV-IMP<br>'Work!' (to one person) | b. <i>b-uz-e-na</i><br>HPL-work:IPFV-IMP-IMP.PL<br>'Work!' (to many) |
|--|--|

(20) transitive imperative

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a. <i>uc-a</i><br>M.catch:PFV-IMP.TR<br>'Catch him!' (to one person)     | b. <i>b-uc-a</i><br>HPL.catch:PFV-IMP.TR<br>'Catch them!' (to one person)     |
| c. <i>uc-a-na</i><br>M.catch:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL<br>'Catch him!' (to many) | d. <i>b-uc-a-na</i><br>HPL.catch:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL<br>'Catch them!' (to many) |

On imperatives in Mehweb, see more in [Dobrushina \(2018\)](#).

The choice of *-es* vs. *-as* in the perfective infinitive/non-egophoric future forms, on the other hand, seems to have a purely formal motivation. The default marker is clearly *-es*, while *-as* is only attested in about twenty verbs who (a) have *-a-* as a stem vowel that is (b) followed by a stem final glottal, pharyngeal, uvular or velar consonant; cf. *=usaʔʔw-as* 'fall asleep', *=aʔ-as* 'begin', *=ah-as* 'know', *=aHʷaʔs* 'get wet', *aqʔ-as* 'pour', *=aχ-as* 'nurture', *=ak-as* 'smear'. Neither of (a) nor (b) alone seem to require *-a-* as the vowel of the infinitive; cf. *=uʔqʔ-es* 'go' (condition b but not a) or *=acʔ-es* 'melt' (condition a but not b).

There is a number of verbs where the consonant of the required place of articulation is separated from the *-a-* of the stem by another consonant. In these cases, the default seems to be *-es*, including *askʔ-es* 'catch on', *=alkʷ-es* 'burn', *abx-es* 'open', *=arx-es* 'send', *=arχ-es* 'touch', *=aʔlqʔ-es* 'rinse', *=alhʷ-es* 'wake up', *=aʔld-es* 'hide'. However, some verbs, including *=aʔlq-aʔs* 'give harvest', *=aʔbʔ-as* 'kill', *=aʔrʔ-as* 'freeze', *=aʔRH-as* 'copulate' do choose *-a-* as the vowel of the infinitive.

## 9 Auxiliary

Mehweb verbal inflection heavily relies on periphrasis. Periphrastic forms are used e.g. to form progressive/durative or resultative/perfective forms (combination of a converb with the auxiliary), future (combination of the infinitive with the auxiliary) and other. There are some periphrastic forms based on auxiliary use of the verb *=uʔes* 'be' (Pfv=Ipfv), but most forms in the periphrastic paradigm use one of the auxiliary. Complex forms (surcomposé) are also attested, using

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the auxiliary, the second auxiliary in a converb form and yet another converb of the lexical verb.

Periphrastic forms are also used to form jussive (combination of the imperative of the lexical verb with the imperative of the verb ‘say’; see Dobrushina 2018) and perfective forms from defective verbs that only have the imperfective stem.

The same verb is also used in locative, existential etc. predications.

Inflection of the auxiliary is presented in the following table:

Table 17: Inflection of the auxiliary

	3	EGO	PST	ATR	PTCP	CVB
M	<i>lew</i>	<i>lewra</i>	<i>lewre</i>	<i>lewi</i>	<i>lewili</i>	<i>lewle</i>
F/NPL	<i>ler</i>	<i>lella</i>	<i>lelle</i>	<i>leri</i>	<i>lerili</i>	<i>lelle</i>
3/HPL	<i>leb</i>	<i>lebra</i>	<i>lebre</i>	<i>lebi</i>	<i>lebili</i>	<i>leble</i>
NEG LOC	<i>ag<sup>w</sup>ara</i>	*	<i>ag<sup>w</sup>ire</i>	<i>ag<sup>w</sup>ari</i>	<i>ag<sup>w</sup>arili</i>	<i>ag<sup>w</sup>alle</i>
NEG EQU	<i>ahin</i>	<i>ahinna</i>	<i>ahinne</i>	<i>ahini</i>	<i>ahinili</i>	<i>ahije</i>
AUX	<i>sabi</i>	? <i>sabi(ra)</i>	? <i>sabire</i>	(=3)	(=3)	(=3)

The form *sabi* is included in the list but has a very marginal status in Mehweb. If used at all, it has the status of a particle rather than of a true auxiliary/copula. It is clear that the *-b-* of the stem, etymologically a gender marker, has been fossilized.

Some forms, such as the converb of imminence, are not attested. Other special converbs are well-formed: *le=ijable*, *sabijable*, *ag<sup>w</sup>irijable* (but apparently not *ahinijable*), causal *le=lena*, *ag<sup>w</sup>arlenna*, concessive *le=leʒur* and *ag<sup>w</sup>arleʒur*, additive *le=lera* and *ag<sup>w</sup>arlera* etc. Nominalizations such as *le=deš*, *le=ideš*, *sabideš*, *ahindeš*, *ag<sup>w</sup>iredeš*, *ag<sup>w</sup>arideš* etc. are easily produced.

10 Irregular verbs

There is a number of irregular verbs, including especially motion and caused motion verbs. Several irregular verbs show irregularly short roots, consisting only of one consonant. In the case of *es* ‘say’ it may be argued that it has a zero stem in the perfective. With the exception of the bound verb \**k’es* (cf. *uruχ k’es* ‘be afraid of’; the verb itself is probably historically a reduced version of the imperfective of =*uk’es* ‘say, tell’ Ipfv), all these verbs are irregular in the perfective stem, while their imperfective stem fits one of the regular patterns of stem formation (cf. *lug-* ‘give’ and *luk-* ‘saw’, *irg<sup>w</sup>-* ‘see’ and *irk<sup>w</sup>-* ‘put on’, *uk’-* ‘say’ and *uk-* ‘eat’).

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Table 18: Inflection of the irregular verbs

stem		<i>*k'ib</i> (bound) IPFV	<i>ib</i> 'say' PFV	<i>uk'</i> 'say' IPFV
HAB (3)		<i>k'an</i>	–	<i>=uk'an</i>
HAB (EGO)		<i>k'as</i>	–	<i>=uk'as</i>
IMP		<i>k'e(na)</i>	<i>bet'a(na)</i>	<i>=uk'e(na)</i>
INF/FUT		<i>k'es</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>=uk'es</i>
FUT (EGO)		<i>k'iša</i>	<i>iša</i>	<i>=uk'iša</i>
NMLZ		<i>k'ari</i>	<i>ari</i>	<i>=uk'ri</i>
PTCP		<i>k'ul</i>	<i>ibi</i>	<i>=uk'ul</i>
PST (3)		<i>k'ib</i>	<i>ib</i>	<i>=uk'ib</i>
PST (EGO)		<i>k'ira</i>	<i>ira</i>	<i>=uk'ira</i>
CVB		<i>k'uwe</i>	<i>ile</i>	<i>=uk'uwe</i>
PROH		–	–	<i>mu=uk'adi</i>
OPT		<i>k'ab</i>	<i>(bet')ab</i>	<i>=uk'ab</i>
APPR		<i>k'ala</i>	<i>(bet')ala</i>	<i>=uk'ala</i>
cond		<i>k'ak'a</i>	<i>(bet')ak'a</i>	<i>=uk'ak'a</i>
stem	<i>gub</i> 'see' PFV	<i>irg<sup>w</sup></i> IPFV	<i>gib</i> 'give' PFV	<i>lug</i> IPFV
HAB (3)	–	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>an</i>	– <i>lugan</i>	
HAB (EGO)	–	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>as</i>	–	<i>lugas</i>
IMP	–	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>e(na)</i>	<i>aga(na) =ega(na)</i>	<i>luge(na)</i>
INF/FUT	<i>g<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>es</i>	<i>ges</i>	<i>luges</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>g<sup>w</sup>iša</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>iša</i>	<i>giša</i>	<i>lugiša</i>
NMLZ	<i>g<sup>w</sup>ari</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>ri</i>	<i>gari</i>	<i>lugri</i>
PTCP	<i>gubi</i>	<i>irgul</i>	<i>gibi</i>	<i>lugul</i>
PST (3)	<i>gub</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>ib</i>	<i>gib</i>	<i>lugib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>gubra</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>ira</i>	<i>gira</i>	<i>lugira</i>
CVB	<i>guble</i>	<i>irguwe</i>	<i>gile</i>	<i>luguwe</i>
PROH	–	<i>mirg<sup>w</sup>adi(na)</i>	–	<i>mulugadi(na)</i>
OPT	<i>g<sup>w</sup>ab</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>ab</i>	<i>gab</i>	<i>lugab</i>
APPR	<i>g<sup>w</sup>ala</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>ala</i>	<i>gala</i>	<i>lugala</i>
COND	<i>g<sup>w</sup>ak'a</i>	<i>irg<sup>w</sup>ak'a</i>	<i>gak'a</i>	<i>lugak'a</i>

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Note that the marker of nominalization, usually *-ri*, is *-ari* on verbs that lack any vowel of the stem (*ari* for ‘say’, *g<sup>w</sup>ari* for ‘see’, *gari* for ‘give’), and the presence of two different imperatives of ‘give’ – ‘give to me’ and ‘give to someone else’. The inclusion of the stem *-uk’-* as the imperfective counterpart to the verb *es* ‘say’ is controversial. The two stems differ in transitivity, the former being intransitive and the latter transitive, so that they may be considered as separate lexical items. However, *=uk’es* is not an equivalent of ‘talk (with/to)’ but is an imperfective counterpart of *es* ‘say’. In the perfective, it lacks any segment at all except in the imperative and irrealis series that share the stem *bet’*, which is however optional in irrealis forms.

Further, there are several highly irregular motion verbs. The first one is the basic verb of motion, *=a<sup>i</sup>q’-(un) ~ =aš-* ‘go’, a non-ventive verb. In both perfective and imperfective subparadigms, two different stems are present. In the perfective, these are *=a<sup>i</sup>q’-* (the participle and forms based on the participle stem, including aorist and general converb) and *=u<sup>i</sup>q’* (imperative, infinitive, future, forms based on irrealis *a*-base and the action nominal). These are stems distributed between different perfective forms.

In the imperfective, in addition to the stem *=aš* that possesses the full range of forms, there are several forms based on the stem *q’<sup>2</sup>-*. Attested are the synthetic present forms, the conditional form, the action nominal, the participle and the general converb; probably, there are other, unelicited forms. Unlike other stems, these forms lack the gender prefix altogether. The regular perfective *=a<sup>i</sup>q’uwe* designates andative situations (‘go away from here’) and implies absence of the subject at the place of speech (‘he is gone’). The converb *q’u<sup>i</sup>we* is imperfective and designates an actual ventive situation (‘he is coming’). The converb *=ašuwe* is also imperfective but conveys multiple or habitual situations. The perfective situation ‘he has come’ is conveyed by the perfective converb of the regular verb *=ak’es*.

A similar meaning (probably implying that the situation of coming is visually attested) is conveyed by the present forms *q’a<sup>i</sup>n* (non-egophoric) and *q’a<sup>s</sup>* (egophoric); unlike other synthetic presents that (at least tend to) have non-episodic (habitual) interpretations, these forms seem to be progressives. The same irregularities are observed in the andative verb *?a<sup>r</sup>r=a<sup>i</sup>q’-(un) (?a<sup>r</sup>r=u<sup>i</sup>q’-, ?a<sup>r</sup>r-q’<sup>2</sup>-) ~ ar=aš-*, which is a derivation of *=a<sup>i</sup>q’-*.

Further, there are two perfective imperatives. The difference between them is not very clear but is probably correlated to telicity (the presence or absence of the final point of motion), as in ‘go away, leave!’ (*=e<sup>i</sup>?e*) and ‘go there!’ (*=u<sup>i</sup>q’e*). The imperfective imperative is interpreted either as a multiple going event (habitual interpretation, as ‘be visiting them!’) or as a single ventive imperative event (as

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Table 19: Inflection of the motion verb *=u<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>es*

	PFV	?	IPFV
HAB 3	–	<i>q<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>n</i>	<i>=ašan</i>
HAB (EGO)	–	<i>q<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>s</i>	<i>=ašas</i>
IMP	<i>=u<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>e(na),</i> <i>=e<sup>ʔ</sup>ʔe(na)</i>		<i>=aše(na)</i>
PROH	–		<i>ma=ašadi</i>
OPT	<i>=uq<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>b</i>		<i>=ašab</i>
APPR	<i>=uq<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>la</i>		<i>=ašala</i>
COND	<i>=uq<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>k<sup>ʔ</sup>a</i>	<i>q<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>k<sup>ʔ</sup>a</i>	<i>=ašak<sup>ʔ</sup>a</i>
INF/FUT	<i>=u<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>es</i>		<i>=ašes</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>=u<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>iša</i>		<i>=ašiša</i>
NMLZ	<i>=u<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>ri</i>	<i>q<sup>ʔ</sup>a<sup>ʔ</sup>ri</i>	<i>=ašri</i>
PTCP	<i>=a<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>uni</i>	<i>q<sup>ʔ</sup>o<sup>ʔ</sup>l</i>	<i>=ašul</i>
PST 3	<i>=a<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>un</i>		<i>=ašib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>=a<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>unna</i>		<i>=ašira</i>
CVB	<i>=a<sup>ʔ</sup>q<sup>ʔ</sup>uwe</i>	<i>q<sup>ʔ</sup>o<sup>ʔ</sup>we</i>	<i>=ašuwe</i>

‘come here!’). Single andative imperative events require the use of the perfective imperative.

As to the caused motion verbs, there are two series of forms, one based on *k-*, the other on *χ-*. To the best of my knowledge, the two series of forms are strictly parallel and designate bringing/fetching events, the difference essentially being between fetching or bringing animate entities (*k-*) vs. bringing inanimate entities (*χ-*). I will further gloss them conventionally as ‘lead’ vs. ‘bring’, though the contrast is not identical to the contrast between *lead* and *bring* in English. In both series, the monoconsonantal base expresses the meaning of ventive (*k-* and *χ-*) and is perfective, the *=uC-* with a gender prefix slot is perfective and elsewhere-oriented (*=uk-*, *=uχ-*), and the *=iC* base with a gender prefix slot is imperfective and orientation neutral (*=ik-*, *=iχ-*). The strictly andative meaning ‘lead/bring away from here’ is expressed by a verb with a prefix (*ar=uk-* ~ *ar=ik-*; *ar=uχ-* ~ *ar=iχ-*).

In a sense, there are two pairs of stems, *C* ~ *=iC* and *uC* ~ *=iC*, with two perfective stems sharing one imperfective counterpart. However, similarly to the ‘plain’ motion verbs (see above), the relation between the stems is probably different from that in other perfective ~ imperfective stems. The *=iC* stem seems to convey the meaning of multiple events while the *C* and *=uC* stems designate single events. As a result, the monoconsonantal verb behaves irregularly in that

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it has two converbs, perfective *kile* and several specifically imperfective forms, including the imperfective converb *kuwe*, general present forms (with actual interpretation) *kas* (non-egophoric) and *kan* (egophoric), and the participle (other parallel forms may be present but unelicited). Unlike the non-causative motion verb described above, the supplementary episodic imperfective forms *kas*, *kan*, *kuwe* (*χas*, *χan*, *χuwe*) in the imperfective share the stem with one of the perfective series. A different look at the paradigm would be to consider each of the verbs of caused motion as including two different verbs, the more or less regular Pfv<sub>2</sub> ~ Ipfv<sub>2</sub> and the highly defective Pfv<sub>1</sub> ~ (Ipfv<sub>1</sub>), probably with the regular verb used as andative and the irregular as ventive – but this needs further research into semantics and usage of motion verbs.

Table 20: Inflection of the caused motion verbs *kes* ‘bring (animate)’ and *χes* ‘bring (inanimate)’

	<i>k-</i> PFV <sub>1</sub>	<i>=uk-</i> PFV <sub>2</sub>	<i>k-</i> IPFV <sub>1</sub>	<i>=ik-</i> IPFV <sub>2</sub>	<i>χ-</i> PFV <sub>1</sub>	<i>=uχ-</i> PFV <sub>2</sub>	<i>χ-</i> IPFV <sub>1</sub>	<i>=iχ-</i> IPFV <sub>2</sub>
HAB (3)	–	– <i>kas</i>	<i>=ikas</i>	–	–	<i>χas</i>	<i>=iχas</i>	
HAB (EGO)	–	–	<i>kan</i>	<i>=ikan</i>	–	–	<i>χan</i>	<i>=iχan</i>
IMP	<i>ka(na)</i>	<i>=uka(na)</i>		<i>=ike(na)</i>	<i>χa(na)</i>	<i>=uχa(na)</i>		<i>=iχe(na)</i>
INF/FUT	<i>kes</i>	<i>=ukes</i>		<i>=ikes</i>	<i>χes</i>	<i>=uχes</i>		<i>=iχes</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>kiša</i>	<i>=ukiša</i>		<i>=ikiša</i>	<i>χiša</i>	<i>=uχiša</i>		<i>=uχiša</i>
NMLZ	<i>kari</i>	<i>=ukri</i>		<i>=ikri</i>	<i>χari</i>	<i>=uχri</i>		<i>=iχri</i>
PTCP	<i>kibi</i>	<i>=ukibi</i>	<i>kul</i>	<i>=ikul</i>	<i>χibi</i>	<i>=uχibi</i>	<i>χul</i>	<i>=iχul</i>
PST (3)	<i>kib</i>	<i>=ukib</i>		<i>=ikib</i>	<i>χib</i>	<i>=uχib</i>		<i>=iχib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>kira</i>	<i>=ukira</i>		<i>=ikira</i>	<i>χira</i>	<i>=uχira</i>		<i>=iχira</i>
CVB	<i>kile</i>	<i>=ukile</i>	<i>kuwe</i>	<i>=ikuwe</i>	<i>χile</i>	<i>=uχile</i>	<i>χuwe</i>	<i>=iχuwe</i>
PROH	–	–		<i>mi=ikadi</i>	–	–		<i>mi=iχadi</i>
OPT	<i>kab</i>	<i>=ukab</i>		<i>=ikab</i>	<i>χab</i>	<i>=uχab</i>		<i>=iχab</i>

Another irregularity of the caused motion verbs is morphosyntactic: their imperfective stem is A-labile with an antipassive pattern; see the following section.

## 11 Transitivity

In this section, I consider several transitivity related issues, first of all morphological causativization, but also change in argument structure or case assignment which is not marked by morphological means – binominative constructions and related lexical phenomena, labile verbs and antipassive verbs. I also briefly con-





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## (24) causative from transitive verbs (Corpus)

*d-aq'-ib*                      *duboʔoʔr-t niʔ-ane*, *χajagun-t*,    *d-aq'-ib*,  
 NPL-do:PFV-AOR dish-PL    milk-PL, fried.egg-PL NPL-do:PFV-AOR  
*si-k'al*                      *ħa-b-erk<sup>w</sup>-aq-i-le*  
 what-INDEF NEG-N-eat:PFV-CAUS-AOR-CVB  
*w-aq-ħa-q-ib*  
 M-let.go:PFV-NEG-M.let.go:PFV-AOR  
 '(She) prepared meals, milk products, fried eggs (she) made, she did not  
 let me go before I eat something.'

Causative from the ditransitive verb *g(ib) ~ lug-* 'give' is not attested in the corpus but is well-formed. It is however morphologically irregular, as with several other verbs with monoconsonantal stems. These verbs form causatives by adding suffix *-aχ-*.

Table 21: Irregular perfective causatives

<i>g(ib)</i>	'give'	<i>g-aχaq-ib</i>	'caused to give'
<i>g(ub)</i>	'see'	<i>g<sup>w</sup>-aχaq-ib</i>	'caused to see'
<i>χ(ib)</i>	'bring'	<i>χ-aχaq-ib</i>	'caused to bring'
<i>k(ib)</i>	'lead'	<i>k-aχaq-ib</i>	'caused to lead'
<i>i-b</i>	'say'	<i>aqaq-ib</i>	'caused to say'

The verb *es* 'say' forms the imperative from each of its two perfective stems (see Table 18), *a-* (*aqaqib*) and *bet'-* (*bet'aqib*), both meaning 'caused to say'. Caused motion verbs with irregular paradigm structure (see Table 20 above) apparently form causatives from all three stems; cf.:

(25) causatives of caused motion *=uχes* 'bring'

- a. *χ-aχaq-ib*  
 bring.?-CAUS-AOR  
 'caused to bring (it)'
- b. *ar-uχ-aq-iša*  
 away-M.bring:PFV-CAUS-FUT.EGO  
 'I will cause you to be brought away (by the river).'
- c. *ar-m-iχ-aq-adi*  
 away-NEGVOL-M.bring:IPFV-PROH  
 'Let (the river) not bring me away!'

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The non-caused motion verb  $=u^{\text{f}}q'es$  does not form the causative from its short stem  $q'$ - (see Table 19); the two available forms are formed from the stems  $=u^{\text{f}}q'$ - (perfective) and  $=aš-$  (imperfective):

- (26) causatives of motion verb  $=u^{\text{f}}q'es$  ‘go’
- a.  $*q'-aq-ib$ ,  $*q'-a\chi aq-ib$   
go:IPFV-CAUS
  - b.  $b-u^{\text{f}}q'-aq-as$   
HPL-go:PFV-CAUS-INF  
‘cause (them) to go’ (perfective causative infinitive)
  - c.  $b-aš-aq-uwe$   
HPL-go:IPFV-CAUS-CVB.IPFV  
‘making them come again and again’ (imperfective causative converb)

Irregular causatives in the imperfective are not attested.

Morphologically possible and accepted by many speakers are double causatives (noted in Ageeva 2014). In some cases, the forms convey the compositional meaning of double causation (27), but sometimes consultants interpret them as single causatives (28). Double causatives are not attested in the corpus; elicited examples include:

- (27) compositional double causatives (from Ekaterina Ageeva’s data)
- a.  $b-el\beta-aq-aq-ib$   
N-eat.full:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
‘made someone feed (an animal)’
  - b.  $b-erc'-aq-aq-ib$   
N-fry:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
‘made someone fry (it)’
  - c.  $d-a^{\text{f}}H^w-aq-aq-ib$   
NPL-get.wet:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
‘made someone get them (feet) wet’
  - d.  $b-alk'^w-aq-aq-ib$   
N-burn:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
‘made someone get (it) burning’
  - e.  $b-ar\chi-aq-aq-ib$   
N-touch:PFV-caus-caus  
‘made someone touch (it)’

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- f. *b-ac'-aq-aq-ib*  
 N-melt-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
 'made someone melt (it)'

(28) non-compositional double causatives (from Ekaterina Ageeva's data)

- a. *d-alh-aq-aq-ib*  
 F1-wake.up:PFV-caus-caus-aor  
 'woke her up'
- b. *w-a'rʔ-aq-aq-ib*  
 M-freeze:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
 'made him freeze'
- c. *w-a'bʔ-aq-aq-ib*  
 M-kill:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR  
 'made someone kill him'

Semantic contrast between double causatives in (28) and the respective simple causatives =*alhaqas* 'cause to wake up' etc.) is unclear, if exists at all. Except (28c), all verbs in (27) and (28) are intransitive. (The verb =*arχ-es* 'touch' means literally 'something touched on something', with a natural interpretation of getting one's hand in contact with something. The full meaning of the form in 32d is thus 'caused someone<sub>i</sub> to cause one<sub>i</sub>'s hand contact something'.) These are all double causative forms elicited by Ageeva. From a comparative East Caucasian perspective, all these meanings tend or may be labile; and some are also labile in Mehweb (e.g. 32d). This provides a tentative explanation of why double causatives may be limited to these verbs. A simple causative from a labile root is usually interpreted as a causative of its intransitive rather than transitive meaning (schematically, 'burn (tr/intr)' → 'burn (intr)'-CAUS (tr)). In such uses, the causative suffix does not derive a new transitive meaning but emphasizes the transitive semantics already present in the lexical meaning of the labile verb as one of its possible interpretations. It may be considered as a disambiguation mechanism for interpreting a labile root as expressing specifically transitive meaning. As this causative suffix does not have exactly the same function as regular causativization, it allows for a second marker which serves as a regular causative derivation.

The semantics of the simple causative forms, on the other hand, is always compositional, unless the whole causative derivation is lexicalized. On the special use of the causative in optative constructions see Dobrushina (2018). Examples of lexicalized causatives are, e.g. =*aʔ-aq(ib)* 'bring back' and also 'hit' - cf. =*aʔ(ib)*

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‘reach’ (the latter probably from ‘reach with hand’, lit. ‘cause the hand to reach’), =*ik-aq(ib)* ‘put right’ (of a joint etc.) – cf. =*ik(ib)* ‘happen’ (probably from ‘fall’, thus ‘make fall in place’) etc.

Some verbs are equally available in transitive and intransitive constructions without any morphological marking of the (de)transitivization on the verb. There are two known types of labile verbs, P-preserving labile verbs and A-preserving labile verbs. Note that lability is strictly lexical and limited to small classes of verbs. Additionally, there is a phenomenon formally similar to A-labiles that includes one verb that may be called lexical antipassive.

Table 22: Lexical valency phenomena

	P-labiles	A-labiles	antipassives
transitive	A-ERG verb P-NOM	A-ERG verb P-NOM	A-ERG verb P-NOM
intransitive	P-NOM verb	A-NOM verb	A-NOM verb P-ERG

In other words, in comparing intransitive uses of these verbs to the transitive ones, P-labiles suppress their A-argument; A-labiles lose their P-argument and re-assign nominative marking to the A-argument; and, finally, antipassives re-assign nominative marking to the A-argument without suppressing their P-argument but demoting it to an oblique slot.

With P-preserving labiles, the problem is that, in an ergative language with prodrop, it is hard to distinguish between a transitive verb with an omitted A-argument and intransitive use of a labile verb. Cf. their schematic representation in English:

(29) ‘(He) cut it.’

(30) ‘(He) cooked it.’ / ‘It cooked.’

Although, in my experience, the speakers easily distinguish between the availability of the intransitive reading with labile verbs and prodrop with strictly transitive verbs (e.g. by translating into Russian and using mediopassive for the former and a non-referential third person plural for the latter, or else adding *it happened all by itself* vs. *someone did it*), some kind of formal diagnostic may also be used. This diagnostic is provided by the morphological distinction between transitive and intransitive imperatives in the perfective paradigm. I thus classify a verb as labile if it is judged grammatical with both imperative endings. The following labile verbs are attested (note that the speakers’ judgements do not seem to be fully consistent):

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- (31) =ic'(ib) ~ =ilc'- 'fill'
- (32) =erx(un) ~ =urx- 'cook'
- (33) =erc'(ib) ~ =uc'- 'fry' (in intransitive use with human subjects, also 'straighten up')
- (34) mi? a?(ur) ~ mi? ir?w- 'freeze' (?)
- (35) =o<sup>ʔ</sup>r? (o<sup>ʔ</sup>b) ~ =o<sup>ʔ</sup>?- 'break'
- (36) =erq'(ub) ~ =iq'<sup>w</sup>- 'tear apart, wear off' (?)
- (37) abx(ib) ~ ibx- 'open'
- (38) ?ajk'(ib) ~ ?a<sup>ʔ</sup>jk'- 'lock'
- (39) q'a<sup>ʔ</sup>b?(ib) ~ q'i<sup>ʔ</sup>b?- 'close'
- (40) =a<sup>ʔ</sup>ld(un) ~ =a<sup>ʔ</sup>ld- 'hide'
- (41) =ar?(ib) ~ =ir?- 'gather'

The labile verbs designate situations that may proceed unsupervised (as cooking events), may both be carried out on purpose or occur spontaneously (as breaking or opening/closing events) or may involve both non-human/inanimate (thus non-intentional) or human undergoers (as 'hide' or 'gather'); on semantics of lability in East Caucasian, see [Haspelmath \(1993\)](#); [Daniel et al. \(2012\)](#).

Another test that could have been applied to Mehweb labiles is marking of egophoricity. Because personal agreement works on the accusative rather than ergative basis, after the A-argument is suppressed, the remaining P-argument controls personal agreement on the verb (see Section 3.1 in [Ganenkov 2018](#)). However, I have only applied the imperative test. Note that both tests are applied to labile verbs with some difficulty, or not equally well to all of them. Most labile verbs, in their intransitive uses, typically take inanimate subjects and thus are not compatible with first and second person subjects and are not easily compatible with imperatives. In the latter case, the speakers envisage a situation of urging a process to proceed (see [Dobrushina 2018](#)) – and most of them very easily accommodate to this interpretation.

No special study of semantics of the transitive/intransitive pattern alternation with labile verbs has been carried out. The following two examples from the text indicate that, in some cases, it may be connected to the absence of the agent, the usually transitive situation proceeding in a spontaneous way:

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(42) intransitive (Corpus)

*urx-ne q'-a<sup>ib</sup>-ib k'<sup>w</sup>an, unza ʔa-jk'-i-le*  
 key-PL PV-close:PFV-AOR QUOT door lock-LV:PFV-AOR-CVB  
*b-ik-ib*  
 N-happen:PFV-AOR  
 'The lock has locked itself, the door closed (=locked).'

(43) transitive (Corpus)

*abaj hil-l-ix-i-le r-arg-i-ra, unza=ra*  
 mother PV-F-lie.down:PFV-AOR-CVB F-find:PFV-AOR-EGO door=ADD  
*ʔa-jk'-i-le, hil-l-ix-i-le r-arg-i-ra*  
 lock-LV:PFV-AOR-CVB PV-F-lie.down:PFV-AOR-CVB F-find:PFV-AOR-EGO  
*abaj*  
 mother  
 'I found (my) mother already gone to bed – I discovered that, having  
 locked the door, she lied down.'

Note that, in these examples, there is no direct morphosyntactic evidence of transitive vs. intransitive use. It is only the context that suggests these readings. In (42), the agent is truly absent. In (43), it is omitted in the converb clause ('having locked the door') under co-reference to the subject of the main clause ('mother went to bed'). The first episode describes a situation of spontaneous locking of the door, leaving the master of the apartment, unexpectedly, outside the door and unable to go inside. The second episode tells how the narrator, coming home quite late, discovered her mother already asleep, and the door locked (apparently, by her mother, prior to go to bed). Very often, however, the division of labour between transitive and intransitive constructions with labile verbs in East Caucasian languages is more complex, so this needs further research.

In Mehweb, most experiential verbs are intransitive, with the experiencer marked by the inter-lative case. Some of these verbs take either the transitive or intransitive imperative suffix (e.g. *=arg(ib)* ~ *=urg-* 'find'; *=ah(ur)* ~ *=alh-* 'know'; *qum-art(ur)* ~ *-urt-* 'forget'). For two verbs, this correlates with a change in argument marking – the experiencer changes from inter-lative to ergative, and its agentivity increases ('know' = 'learn (so as to know)', 'forget' = 'try to forget' – see [Ganenkov 2018](#)).

A-preserving labiles are less prominent in Mehweb and, generally, in East Caucasian, and were not collected systematically, although, in principle, the same imperative test could have been applied. It seems that the following is an example of

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a verb that can may be used both intransitively and transitively while preserving its A-argument:  $=erq(ib) \sim =uq-$  ‘suck (intr and tr – e.g. milk)’.

Finally, two caused motion verbs  $k(ib) \sim =uk(ib) \sim =ik(ib)$  ‘bring (animate object)’ and  $\chi(ib) \sim =u\chi(ib) \sim =i\chi(ib)$  ‘bring (inanimate object)’ exceptionally follow the antipassive pattern of valency change. The verb is primarily transitive, but, exclusively (or at least preferably) in the imperfective, it can also be used with the A-argument in the nominative and the P-argument in the ergative.

- (44) transitive pattern (elicited)

*it-ini mura d-iχ-ib*  
 this-ERG hay NPL-bring:IPFV-IPFT  
 ‘He was bringing hay.’

- (45) antipassive pattern (elicited)

*it mura-li-ni w-iχ-ib*  
 this hay-OBL-ERG M-bring:IPFV-IPFT  
 ‘He was bringing hay.’

This pattern, to the best of my knowledge not documented in other Dargwa varieties, was independently confirmed by several consultants.

Some morphologically simple verbs may be considered to be ‘lexical causatives’ with respect to other simple verbs – i.e. forming pairs of verbs whose mutual relation is more or less similar to that in causative pairs but whose stems are not morphologically related. The list can not be exhaustive because it largely depends on what pairs one considers to be in causative correlation. Moreover, in a language with highly productive causative derivation, lexical causatives are not many. One example is  $=ebk'(ib) \sim =ubk'-$  ‘die’ –  $=a^ib\chi(ib) \sim =i^ib\chi$  ‘kill’; the other, already much more questionable, is  $q''- \sim =a^iq'(un) \sim =aš-$  ‘go’ –  $k(ib) \sim =uk(ib) \sim =ik(ib)$  ‘lead’.

The last phenomenon related to transitivity is the binominative (alias biabso-lutive) construction. In Mehweb, as in some other East Caucasian languages, including the languages of the Dargwa branch, periphrastic constructions license nominative marking of both A- and P-arguments. Binominative constructions are only available in periphrastic forms based on imperfective converbs (see [Ganenkova 2018](#)).

- (46) binominative construction (Corpus)

*q'us-ra w-iʔ-i-le dursi-la širbit-la dubilhani*  
 be.squatted=ADD M-sit:PFV-AOR-CVB daughter-GEN shoe-GEN lace

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*b-ilh-uwe*                      *le-w-re*              *il*  
N-tie:IPFV-CVB.IPFV    AUX-M-PST    this

‘He (lit. this one) squatted and was doing (his) daughter’s shoelace.’

The alternation between the expected ergative ~ nominative and the binominative pattern in the periphrastic transitive construction has been noticed and discussed by [Magometov \(1982: 84ff.\)](#) The semantic effect that the binominative construction brings remains unclear; in fact Magometov suggests that, in Mehweb, it is the binominative construction that is more natural in imperfective periphrasis. For further discussion of the syntax of binominative constructions in Mehweb, see [Ganenkov \(2018\)](#); [Lander \(2018\)](#).

Finally, I provide some examples of what has come to be called, in recent research on East Caucasian, the verificative construction. This construction has not been controlled in elicitation; the only and few examples that I have come from the corpus. The verificative construction based on a verb P is a complex predicate whose meaning is, speaking formally, ‘verify whether P is true’ or ‘check what/who is x such that P(x) is true’, where x is the argument of P – see the examples below. The verbal complex essentially includes two elements – the lexical verb followed by the interrogative particle followed by a more or less grammaticalized form of the verb ‘see’; literally, ‘P-whether-see’. This construction has been previously attested in two distantly related Lezgian languages, Archi ([Kibrik et al. 1975](#)) and Agul ([Maisak & Merdanova 2004](#)), and later also reported in Chirag by Dmitry Ganenkov. In [Daniel & Maisak \(2014\)](#); [Maisak \(2016\)](#), various properties of the verificative construction are discussed, including that, while various forms may appear in elicitation, the verificative is primarily used in purposive contexts with the infinitive (‘in order to check whether...’) or in the imperative (‘go and check whether...’). These are exactly the forms attested in the corpus; only the copula as the main verb is attested:

- (47) infinitive verificative, no question word (corpus)

*nomir=ra*              *χal*    *b-aq’-i-ra*                      *k’wan*    *šula-le*  
number=ADD    seek    N-do:PFV-AOR-EGO    QUOT    tight-ADVZ  
*le-b-u-g-es*  
be-N-Q-VERIF-INF

‘I touched the number (plate), to see whether it sits tightly.’

- (48) imperative verificative, question word (Magometov’s texts)

*w-eʕe,*              *ħule*    *w-iz-e,*                      *či-ja*              *le-b-u-g<sup>w</sup>-a*  
M-go:PFV    look    M-LV:PFV-IMP    who-Q    be-N-Q-VERIF-IMP

‘Go and look, see who is there.’



In all East Caucasian languages where it has so far been attested, the verificative results from univertation of the interrogative form of the main verb with the verb ‘see’. Our consultants tend to write these forms together in transcription; otherwise, the only formal indication of grammaticalization in Mehweb is the loss of labialization in infinitive verificatives ( $g^w\text{-es} \rightarrow \text{-g-es}$ ). In other languages the grammaticalization process is more advanced. To understand the position of the Mehweb verificative with respect to the parameters previously set up for Archi and Agul, further research is needed.

## 12 Complex verbs

In Mehweb, a verbal stem is a bound morpheme that typically consists of one syllable, followed by one or more inflectional suffixes (exception being the truncated optative, where no suffix follows; see [Dobrushina 2018](#)). Pre-root slots are optional. The presence of a gender prefix is lexically determined – formally identical roots may be different in having or not having a gender agreement prefix (cf. *umc-* ‘weight (IPFV)’ and *=umc-* ‘swell (IPFV)’). After the agreement prefix, the next slot to the left is that of the inflectional marker of negation (either standard or volitional). Then may follow a preverbal element. Schematically, this template may be generalized as PREVERB-NEGATION-GENDER-ROOT-INFLECTION.

I consider the position of the negation prefix to be a diagnostic of a morphologically complex verb – if it is inserted inside what otherwise seems a verbal stem that conveys single verbal meaning, then the morphological element preceding the negation marker is a preverbal part of the verb, however bound it is. For verbs possessing an agreement slot, the position of this slot is another such diagnostic. Cf. the verb *qumartes* ‘forget’ where neither *qum-* or *-art-* is used without the other part, yet the negation is inserted between them. In *kajʔes* ‘sit down’, the gender prefix comes after what historically is a spatial preverb.

- (49) ‘forget’ *qumartur* – *qum-art-ur* (PFV), cf. negative *qum-ħa-rt-ur*  
 (50) ‘sit down’ *kajʔib* – *ka-jʔ-ib*, the masculine *w-* is lost after vowel – cf. feminine *ka-d-iʔ-ib* (see §2)

Unlike negation, positioning of a gender prefix at the beginning of a verbal form does not prove its simplex status, because the preverbal element may have its own gender agreement position. Then, the complex status of a verbal stem is only unambiguously tested by the position of the negation.

- (51) ‘pull’ *bitʔakʔib* (N), *ditʔakʔib* (F1), cf. *bitʔ-ħa-kʔ-ib*

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There is only one bisyllabic simplex root recorded so far – a root with two syllables not split by negation:

(52) ‘fall asleep’ *=usaʔ(un) ~ =usulʔ-*, cf. negative *ħa-wsaʔun*

While many East Caucasian languages use some more or less bound preverbal morphemes, some but not all of them also have a more or less substantial set of true preverbs (derivational verbal prefixes). Preverbs constitute a specific subclass of preverbal elements in that they combine with several verbal stems – first of all, motion and posture verbs, and have an isolatable meaning – often, spatial. While many Dargwa languages possess a considerable inventory of preverbs, in Mehweb they all ceased to be productive, so that many verbs with preverbs ended up with non-compositional meanings. On the other hand, there is a set of verbal stems that are more or less productively used in complex verb formation. Finally, some complex verbs are combinations of a preverbal element and a verbal stem that are only used together, as *qum-art-* above. I will consider them in turn.

Dargwa preverbs are identifiable in Mehweb first of all on etymological grounds. The only typical preverb formations are the prefix *ar-* ‘away’ (*ʔaʔr-* in roots with pharyngealization, see [Moroz 2018](#)) in various motion verbs, in which a prefix with a clear directional meaning combines with a motion verb. All other combinations show a strong degree of idiomatization. The presence of highly idiomatic combinations seems to contradict Magometov’s (1982: 74) suggestion that, in Mehweb, the system of prefixes has not been fully developed – rather, it passed away, leaving behind few vestiges. Below, all preverb ~ verb combinations attested so far are given as perfective and imperfective, the perfective also showing the aorist suffix in parentheses; the preverbs are provided with meaning labels suggested by [Magometov \(1982: 74–80\)](#), who based these suggestions on comparison with other Dargwa languages.

(53) Preverb *ar-* ‘away’

- a. *ʔaʔr=aʔqʔ-(un) ~ ar=aš-* ‘go away, leave’ from *=aʔqʔ-* ‘go’
- b. *ar=uk-(ib) ~ ar=ik-* ‘lead away’; cf. *=uk-* ~ *=ik-* ‘lead’
- c. *ar=uχ-(ib) ~ ar=iχ-* ‘bring away’; cf. *=uχ-* ~ *=iχ-* ‘bring’
- d. *ar=ik-(ib) ~ ar=irk-* ‘fall down, fall out’; cf. *=ik-* ~ *=irk-* ‘happen’ (etymologically probably ‘fall’)
- e. *ar=ih(ub) ~ =irh<sup>w</sup>-* ‘throw away, out from somewhere’; cf. *=ih(ub) ~ =irh<sup>w</sup>-* ‘throw’
- f. *ar=as(ib) ~ ar=is-* ‘take away’; cf. *as(ib) ~ is-* ‘take’
- g. *ar=uʔ- ~ ar=ulʔ-* ‘lose’; cf. *=uʔ- ~ =ulʔ-* ‘spoil’

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- (54) Preverb *ka-* ‘down’
- a. *ka-lʔ(un) ~ k-ulʔ-* ‘remain’; cf. *alʔ-(un) ~ ulʔ-* ‘cut’
  - b. *ka-at(ur) ~ ka-alt-* ‘leave’; cf. *=atur ~ =alt-* ‘put on/under (?)’ (the distribution of this verbal stem in Mehweb is further discussed below)
  - c. *ka-iʔ(ib)- ~ ka-irʔ-* ‘sit down’; the stem is not attested as a free verb
- (55) Preverb *har-* (not discussed by Magometov, highly idiomatized)
- a. *har-ik(ib) ~ har-irk-* ‘become first’; cf. *=ik(ib) ~ =irk* ‘happen’ (etymologically probably ‘fall’)
  - b. *har-uq(un) ~ har-ulq-* ‘run away, flee’; cf. *=uq(un) ~ =ulq* ‘come, enter’
- (56) Preverb *če-* ‘surface’ (highly idiomatized)
- a. *če-uq(un) ~ če-ulq-* ‘grow (of plants or hair)’; cf. *=uq- ~ =ulq* ‘come, enter’
  - b. *če-di=uq(un) ~ če-di-ulq-* ‘become arrogant’; cf. *=uq- ~ =ulq* ‘come, enter’
  - c. *če==arc-(ur) ~ če==urc-*, the verb which is described as ‘unmount a horse’ by Magometov (1982: 76) but is only attested in his texts once meaning ‘stay as a guest’ (Magometov’s texts, Brother and sister); cf. *=arc- ~ =urc* ‘stuck’
- (57) Preverb *q’a-* (not discussed by Magometov)
- a. *q’a-ʔbʔ(ib) ~ q’-ibʔʔ-* ‘close’; cf. *ʔaʔbʔ(ib) ~ ʔibʔʔ-* ‘shut someone up; cast someone a spell of not being able to urinate or defecate (?)’
  - b. *q’a=ik(ib) ~ q’a=irk-* ‘become silent, stop’; cf. *=ik(ib) ~ =irk-* ‘happen’

Some preverbs are only attested with one verbal root, and thus synchronically undistinguishable from bound preverbal elements discussed below:

- (58) *hil=ixib ~ hil=irxib* ‘lie down (intr)’; cf. *=ixib ~ =irxib* ‘put’
- (59) *a=izur ~ a=ilzib* ‘stand up’; cf. below on the status of the verbal stem

Like many East Caucasian languages, Mehweb has verbs that combine with various elements in preverbal position to form non-compositional (or not fully compositional) complex verbs. Complex verbs show different degree of univerbation, which may be viewed as decrease in compositionality of the complex and increase in the boundedness of the preverbal element. The latter includes the loss of categorical transparency of the preverbal element, from autonomous noun, adverb or adjective for which the verbal stem serves as a verbalizer, to

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a bound morpheme with no clear autonomous semantics or categorical status. Assumedly, intermediate cases are also possible, when the preverbal element is recognized by the speakers as a separate word but is much more often used in a verbal complex, but this issue has not been studied, so the orthographic solutions are somewhat arbitrary. Whenever I have no elicited evidence that the element is only used in this complex, I write it separately below.

The most productive verbs include *=uh(ub)* ‘become’ and *=aq'(ib)* ‘do’. When combining with adjectives (the short form, lacking the attributivizer *-(i)l*), the two verbs form inchoative ~ causative pairs. Cf. *ara =uhes* ‘recover’ lit. ‘healthy become’, *ara =aq'as* ‘heal’ lit. ‘healthy do’ from *ara(l)* ‘healthy’. Other verbs are only exceptionally attested in inchoative constructions. I have one example: *ʔaʔrba =aʔib* ‘stretch’; cf. *ʔaʔrba(l)* ‘long’ and *=aʔas* ‘begin’.

The verbs *=uh(ub)* ‘become’ and *=aq'(ib)* ‘do’ also form less compositional derivations with nouns or elements of synchronically unclear categorical status, e.g. *deh buh(ub)* ‘start stinking’ (*deh* ‘smell’), *g<sup>w</sup>er baq'(ib)* ‘rock (a cradle)’, *ʒal-baq'(ib)* ‘seek’, *dam-baq'(ib)* ‘beat up’.

The verb *ib* ‘say’ (PFV) is used in complex verbs designating sound production or similar (*š<sup>w</sup>aʔt<sup>t</sup> ib* ‘whistle’, *tu ib* ‘spit’, *aʔmč<sup>u</sup> ib* ‘sneeze’ etc.) The recorded complex verbs designating motion are based on the verb *=uq(un)* ~ *=ulq* ‘come, enter’ which has a limited distribution as a free verb but is also used with prefixes (see above), in combination with an adverbial element *dur(a)* ‘outside’ in *dura =uq(un)* ‘exit’. The complex verbs with *=uq(un)* ~ *=ulq* ‘move, enter’ include *tʔaʔ<sup>H</sup> =uq(un)* ‘jump’, *čaʔ<sup>χ</sup> =uq(un)* ‘slip’, *ducʔ =uq(un)* ‘run’, *tir =uq(un)* ‘wander’ – it seems such verbs tend to designate quick movement. The verb *=aʔq(ib)* ~ *=irqʔ* ‘hit’ is used in several complex verbs, from highly compositional *kʔ<sup>w</sup>ama =aʔq(ib)* ‘churn butter’ (*kʔ<sup>w</sup>ama* ‘butter’) and *urculi =aʔq(ib)* ‘chop wood’ (*urculi* ‘firewood’) to non-transparent verbs with no common semantic denominator, *kal =aʔq(ib)* ‘go stale’ (*kal* ‘stale’), *ʔaʔš =aʔq(ib)* ‘come back’ and *urux =aʔq(ib)* ‘become afraid’. The meaning ‘be afraid’ in the imperfective may also be rendered by *urux kʔ-*, where *kʔ-* is a bound verbal stem only attested in the imperfective. It could be that the difference between the two imperfective verbs, *urux =irqʔ(ib)* and *urux kʔ(ib)* is that between multiple episodic events (true imperfective of *urux =aʔq(ib)*) vs. state, respectively – but the evidence for this is not sufficient.

Other verbs include completely non-compositional combinations with roots which do not serve as productive verbalizers, so that identification of a light verb with a lexical verb is fully formal. These include:

- (60) *xar b-aʔ(ib)* ‘ask’ cf. *=aʔ(ib)* ‘begin’
- (61) *qʔacʔ b-ik(ib)* ‘bite’ cf. *=ik(ib)* ‘happen’ (<\* ‘fall’?)

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While the common way of univerbation is the increase in boundedness of the preverbal adverb or nominal with the stem identifiable with a free verb, several complex verbs contain a stem whose identification is problematic. Attested cases are:

- (62) *miʔ aʔ(ur)* ~ *ir<sup>w</sup>*- ‘freeze’ (cf. *miʔ* ‘ice’)
- (63) *dub aʔib* ~ *ilʔ<sup>f</sup>*- ‘eat’ (cf. *dub d-at(ur)* or *b-uc(ib)* ‘be fasting’)
- (64) *qum-art-(ur)* ~ *qum-urt-* ‘forget’
- (65) *=uħ(a)-aq-* (IPFV only?) ‘talk’  
(note the absence of the agreement slot, thus not *=aq(ib)* ‘do’)
- (66) *=it'(a)-ak'(ib)* ~ *=it'(a)-irk'-* ‘drag’
- (67) *ʔa-jk'(ib)* ~ *ʔa-rk'-* ‘lock’

In (65) and (65), the (a) appears before the negative prefix, otherwise lost before the vowel of the stem. If the verb in (67) has a pharyngealized root, the preverbal element could be the pharyngealized version of the prefix *a-* (see above); however, I have recorded the present habitual negative form as *ʔaj-ħa-jk'-an* ‘does not (usually) lock’, which suggests a different underlying structure, something like *ʔaj-ik'(ib)*.

Two cases have an especially unclear morphological status in terms of (un)boundedness of the verbal root. First, the verbal root *=at(ur)* ~ *=alt* seems to mean ‘put’ (probably from the original meaning ‘leave’), but it is a markedly rare choice in this meaning (the common verb for ‘put’ is *=ix(ib)*). The stem is much more common in several non-compositional structures, including the prefixal verb *ka=at(ur)* ~ *ka=alt-* ‘leave behind, lose’ (also causative *ka=at-aq-* ‘kidnap (cause to be lost?)’), with designation of clothes meaning ‘take off’, the noun *ši* ‘sting’ (meaning ‘sting (verb)’), the apparently bound element *dub* (meaning ‘hold fast’, cf. also *dub buc(ib)* ‘hold fast’ and *dub aʔ(ib)* ‘eat’), the word *c'urʔa* in the sense ‘become/leave orphan’ and the spatial form *hune=* ‘on the road’ meaning ‘see off’ (‘leave/put on the road?’). But it is also used in the construction *=atur* *=aʔas* ‘let (someone pass/go)’, where what appears to be a finite form (an aorist *=atur*) is used in apparent subordination to the verb ‘begin’/‘arrive’. Another probable use is the complex verb *waʔb-aʔt(ur)* ~ *waʔb-aʔlt-* ‘call out’. The verbal stem is similar, but, first, the putative *=at(ur)* ~ *=alt* is irregularly pharyngealized (probably, pharyngealization has spread from the preverbal component, but this is an irregular process, because pharyngealization in Mehweb usually spreads leftwards – see Moroz 2018). And, second, in negative forms, the *b* splits in two (*waʔb-ħa-baʔt(ur)*). This may mean that the former gender marker, now frozen

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because it was controlled by the lexical noun which was the source of the bound preverbal element *wa<sup>b</sup>-*, fused with the final *-b* of this element when there was no intervening negation prefix. But this process, again, is irregular.

Second, the verbal root *=iz(ib) ~ =ilz-* is attested with a preverb (see *a=iz(ib)* ‘stand up’ above), in *tir =iz(ib) ~ =ilz-* ‘turn around’ (cf. *tir =uq(un)* ‘wander, go in circles’ above), and in the expression *hule =iz(ib)*, where *hule* is an unclear form related to the noun ‘eye’, while the complex verb agrees with the subject – the one who looks). Otherwise, the verb *=iz(ib)/=ilz-* does not seem to be used alone.

Finally, there are some idiomatic combinations of words of different categories with verbs, showing more or less clear paths of semantic derivation, e.g. *lihi bixes* ‘listen’ – lit. ‘ear put’; *surat diltes* ‘draw’, lit. ‘take out image’; *himi abizes* ‘become angry’, lit. ‘the bill raises’, *aqu ih<sup>wes</sup>* ‘cover’, lit. ‘throw up’; and less transparent synchronically *žuχ wi?(ib)* ‘urinate’ and *k’uč’e wi?(ib)* ‘defecate’ – cf. the same root as a bound root in *ka=i?(ib) ~ ‘sit down’*; *ask’es =erχ<sup>wes</sup>* ‘fight’ (lit. ‘catch/cling go’) etc.

## List of abbreviations

ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
ANTE	anteriority converb
AOR	aorist
APPR	apprehensive
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
COND	conditional
CVB	converb
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
ERG	ergative
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IMP	imperative

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INDEF	indefinite particle
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LOC	locative converb
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NEGVOL	negation in volitional forms (negative imperative and negative optative)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
OPT	optative
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PROH	prohibitive
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question (interrogative particle)
QUOT	quotative (particle)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
VERIF	verificative

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## Chapter 5

# Moods of Mehweb

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The paper is a description of moods in Mehweb, a lect of the Dargwa branch of East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) languages, Republic of Daghestan. The data were collected in the course of several field trips to the village of Mehweb (officially, Megeb). The forms of non-indicative moods and common constructions where these forms occur are described. Mehweb has inflectional forms for the imperative, prohibitive, optative, irrealis and apprehensive. Hortative and jussive are expressed periphrastically.

*Key words:* Nakh-Daghestanian, East Caucasian, modality, mood, imperative, hortative, jussive, optative, irrealis, conditional, apprehensive, volitional.

## 1 Introduction

This paper is a description of non-indicative moods in Mehweb. Mehweb moods are briefly discussed in [Magometov \(1982\)](#); [Khajdakov \(1985\)](#) and in a sketch of Mehweb morphology by Nina [Sumbatova](#) (manuscript). The data for this paper were collected in the course of field trips to Mehweb in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

I describe morphological forms of non-indicative moods as well as periphrastic constructions used for the expression of some categories which are rendered by non-indicative moods in many languages of the world.

There are five forms which can be considered as inflectional forms of mood in Mehweb: second person imperative, prohibitive, optative, irrealis, and apprehensive. I also briefly describe the converbs which are used in the subordinate part of conditional clauses, because these forms are functionally close to the non-indicative moods, and in many languages, non-indicative forms are used in these clauses. The hypothetical conditional converb is derived from the same irrealis



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stem in *-a*, as optative, irrealis, and apprehensive, thus manifesting similarity with non-indicative moods.

I also consider two periphrastic constructions: one is used for the Hortative (=first person plural imperative, or inclusive imperative), and the second for the jussive (third person imperative).

The paper is structured in accordance with the semantics of non-indicative forms and constructions. It starts with volitional categories. In §2, the formation of second person imperative is considered, and typical constructions with second person imperative are described. §3 describes the prohibitive – the negative Imperative which is expressed in Mehweb, as in most East Caucasian languages, by a dedicated morphological marker. Several interjections with imperative meaning are considered in §4. §5 and 6 describe the form and semantics of periphrastic constructions which are used for hortative and jussive. In §7, semantics of the optative is discussed, as well as some typical constructions involving the Optative. After volitionals, the forms with the Irrealis meaning are considered in §8; as in most East Caucasian languages, they occur almost exclusively in conditional clauses. Last, I consider the apprehensive form, used to introduce a situation the speaker is afraid of (§9). In §10 (Discussion), I compare the system of Mehweb non-indicative moods with that of five other Dargwa languages and dialects.

## 2 Second person imperative

Second person imperative expresses commands and requests addressed to the hearer. In this section, I analyze the formation of second person Imperatives in their relation to transitivity and controllability of the verbs, the agreement of imperatives with the addressee, and the forms of address in the imperative constructions.

### 2.1 Formation of imperatives

The second person imperative of imperfective verbs is always marked by the suffix *-e* (1, 2), unlike the imperative of perfective verbs. The second person imperative of perfective verbs is marked either by *-e* or *-a* depending on the transitivity of the verb. Intransitive verbs take the suffix *-e*, transitive verbs take the suffix *-a* (see Table 1):

- (1) *ni? urt'-e*  
 milk pour:IPFV-IMP  
 'Pour the milk!'

- (2) *ħu w-aqnal duc' ulq-e*  
 you.sg(NOM) M-often run M.LV:IPFV-IMP  
 'Run more often!'
- (3) *ni? art'-a*  
 milk pour:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Pour the milk!'
- (4) *qa-d-i? -e heše-r*  
 down-F1-sit:PFV-IMP here-F(ESS)  
 'Sit down here.'

Table 1: Formation of second person imperatives

	transitive	intransitive
Perfective	-a	-e
Imperfective	-e	-e

As *-e* as an imperative marker is an unmarked choice, it is glossed simply as IMP.

Labile perfective verbs can form two imperatives, one that follows the transitive pattern, the other that follows the intransitive one. Cf. *abxes* 'open, PFV', (b)*a<sup>l</sup>des* 'hide, PFV', (b)*erq<sup>w</sup>es* 'become worn, PFV':

- (5) *rasul, qali abx-a!*  
 Rasul house open:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Rasul, open the house!'
- (6) *qali, abx-e!*  
 house open:PFV-IMP  
 'House, open up!'
- (7) *ħali, b-a<sup>l</sup>ld-a barba!*  
 Ali N-hide:PFV-IMP.TR stone  
 'Ali, hide the stone!'
- (8) *ħali, w-a<sup>l</sup>ld-e barba-la ħa<w>ad*  
 Ali M-hide:PFV-IMP stone-GEN <M>behind  
 'Ali, hide behind the stone!'

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- (9) *ʔali, b-erq<sup>w</sup>-a* *ħawa!*  
 Ali, N-tear:PFV-IMP.TR dress  
 ‘Ali, tear the dress!’
- (10) *ħawa, b-erq<sup>w</sup>-e!*  
 dress N-tear:PFV-IMP  
 ‘Dress, get torn!’

Some verbs have irregular and/or suppletive imperative forms, for example the verb *es* ‘say’ has the imperative *bet’a*; other cases are considered in [Daniel \(2018\)](#) (this volume).

Imperatives from the verbs that denote events and situations over which the speaker exerts no control are acknowledged as grammatical by some speakers only. In most cases speakers are able to come up with a special context. For example, one can say *Bemže!* ‘Get hot!’ as if (s)he were addressing a stove.

Imperatives of some perfective verbs which denote uncontrollable events are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: Imperative of intransitive uncontrollable verbs

Verb	intransitive imperative
<i>-ac’es</i> (PFV) ‘melt’	<i>b-ac’e</i> (addressing snow)
<i>-arχes</i> (PFV) ‘touch’ (unintentionally)	<i>w-arχe</i>
<i>-ebk’es</i> (PFV) ‘die’	<i>w-ebk’e</i>
<i>-emžes</i> (PFV) ‘become hot’	<i>b-emže</i> (addressing a stove)
<i>-erħes</i> (PFV) ‘become rotten’	<i>b-erħe</i>
<i>-ertes</i> (PFV) ‘curdle’	<i>d-erte</i> (addressing milk)
<i>-erʔ<sup>w</sup>es</i> (PFV) ‘become dry’	<i>b-erʔ<sup>w</sup>e</i>
<i>-ikes</i> (PFV) ‘happen’	<i>b-ike</i>
<i>-uʔes</i> (PFV) ‘become spoilt’	<i>b-uʔe</i>
<i>-emχes</i> (PFV) ‘swell’	<i>b-emχe</i>
<i>kalʔes</i> (PFV) ‘be left’, ‘remain’	<i>kalʔe</i>
<i>-arʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>s</i> (PFV) ‘become cold, freeze’	<i>d-a<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔe</i>

Most two-place experiencer verbs have two imperatives, with suffix *-a* and with suffix *-e*. There is no clear difference in the meaning between these two forms.

- (11) *ħa-ze* *arʔs-e*  
 you.sg.OBL-INTER(LAT) understand:PFV-IMP  
 ‘[You] understand!’

- (12) *ħa-ze* *arɁ-a*  
 you.sg.OBL-INTER(LAT) understand:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘[You] understand!’

Imperatives from experiencer verbs are shown in Table 3. Not all speakers acknowledge both imperative forms of these verbs; the less accepted forms are marked by question mark.

Table 3: Imperative from experiencer verbs

	transitive imperative	intransitive imperative
<i>-ahas</i> (PFV) ‘know’	<i>b-ah-a</i>	<i>b-ah-e</i>
<i>-arges</i> (PFV) ‘find’	<i>b-arg-a</i>	<i>b-arg-e</i>
<i>(-)iges</i> (IPFV) ‘love, want’	?? <i>dig-a</i>	<i>dig-e</i>
<i>arɁes</i> (PFV) ‘understand, hear’	<i>arɁ-a</i>	<i>arɁ-e</i>
<i>g<sup>w</sup>es</i> (PFV) ‘see’	? <i>g<sup>w</sup>-a</i>	* <i>g<sup>w</sup>-e</i>
<i>qumartes</i> ‘forget’	<i>qumart-a</i>	? <i>qumart-e</i>
<i>urux k’es</i> (IPFV) ‘be afraid’	* <i>urux k’-a</i>	<i>urux k’-e</i>

Notably, verbs that show semantic restrictions on the formation of imperatives easily produce imperatives within the Jussive construction. Jussive is built as a combination of an imperative of the main verb with the imperative of the verb *es* ‘say’ (see §6):

- (13) *g<sup>w</sup>-e* *bet’-a*  
 see:PFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘Let him see!’ (he should make attempts to see)

Some intransitive verbs that allow just one form of second person imperative, have the jussive construction with two imperative forms, the one in *-e* and the one in *-a*. Speakers’ first choice is usually the form in *-e*. They do not see any semantic difference between the construction based on imperative in *-e* and the construction with imperative in *-a*. Cf. the examples (13) and (14):

- (14) *g<sup>w</sup>-a* *bet’-a*  
 see:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘Let him see!’ (he should make attempts to see)

Examples of the Jussive constructions with intransitive and experiencer verbs are shown in Table 4.

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Table 4: Examples of jussive construction with uncontrollable verbs

	jussive construction with imperative in <i>-e</i>	jussive construction with imperative in <i>-a</i>
<i>g<sup>w</sup>es</i> (PFV) ‘see’	<i>g<sup>w</sup>e bet’a</i>	<i>g<sup>w</sup>a bet’a</i>
<i>-ac’es</i> (PFV) ‘melt’	<i>b-ac’e bet’a</i>	<i>b-ac’a bet’a</i>
<i>-emχes</i> (PFV) ‘become swollen’	<i>b-emχe bet’a</i>	<i>b-emχa bet’a</i>
<i>-ertes</i> (PFV) ‘curdle’	<i>d-erte bet’a</i>	<i>d-erta beta</i>
<i>-emžes</i> (PFV) ‘become hot’	<i>b-emže bet’a</i>	<i>b-emža bet’a</i>

## 2.2 Number and gender of the addressee

All verbs in the imperative obligatorily add a dedicated imperative plural suffix *-na* to convey the plurality of the addressee.

Intransitive verbs which have a prefixal agreement slot agree in gender and number with the nominative argument; and since this nominative argument and the addressee coincide in intransitive verbs, the plural imperative suffix *-na* agrees with the same argument as prefix (17).

- (15) *w-ak’-e*  
M-come:PFV-IMP  
‘Come to me (addressing a men)!’
- (16) *d-ak’-e*  
F1-come:PFV-IMP  
‘Come to me (addressing a women)!’
- (17) *b-ak’-e-na*  
HPL-come:PFV-IMP-IMP.PL  
‘Come to me (addressing several people)!’

Transitive verbs with a prefixal agreement slot also agree with their nominative argument. Here, however, the addressee is the agent in the ergative case. The prefixal agreement and the plural imperative suffix are triggered by different arguments (19).

- (18) *b-a<sup>h</sup>bʔ-a*                      *urš-be*  
HPL-kill:PFV-IMP.TR   boy-PL  
‘Kill these boys (addressing one person)!’



- (19) *w-aʃbʔ-a-na* *rasul*  
 M-kill:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL Rasul  
 ‘Kill Rasul (addressing several people)!’

The suffix *-na* as a plurality of addressee marker is also used on prohibitive forms (see §3).

In some Dargwa dialects (e.g. in Tanty – Sumbatova & Lander 2014: 146) the imperative form is not used if the P of the transitive construction is a first person argument. Optative is used instead. It is not true for Mehweb – there is no restriction on the usage of the imperative with the first person:

- (20) *nu dub aʃʔ-aq-a*  
 I eat LV-CAUS-IMP.TR  
 ‘Feed me!’

### 2.3 Subject and forms of address

The agent of the imperative is not usually expressed, but it can be indicated by an overt second person pronoun if it is stressed:

- (21) *ħu učitel uʔ-e*  
 you.sg(NOM) teacher M.be:PFV-IMP  
 ‘[You] become a teacher!’
- (22) *ħu-ni dečʔ b-aqʔ-a*  
 you.sg-ERG song N-do:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘[You] sing the song!’

Imperative utterances may contain address expressed by a noun phrase in the nominative. The form of address is in the nominative even when referring to the agent of transitive verbs:

- (23) *Muħammad, dečʔ b-aqʔ-a*  
 Muhammad(NOM) song N-do:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘Muhammad, sing the song.’
- (24) *Muħammad, učitel uʔ-e*  
 Muhammad(NOM) teacher M.be:PFV-IMP  
 ‘Muhammad, become a teacher!’

Second person pronouns and demonstratives (used as third person pronouns) cannot be used as forms of address:

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- (25) \**hu*                      *deč'*    *b-aq'-a*  
 you.sg(NOM) song N-**do**:PFV-IMP.TR

- (26) \**it*                      *deč'*    *b-aq'-a*  
 this(NOM) song N-**do**:PFV-IMP.TR

The second person imperative construction can however include a third person NP which is not a form of address. It is marked by the ergative with transitive verbs and by the nominative with intransitive verbs. Although the construction formally includes a third person NP, it is addressed to the hearer whose name is Muhammad:

- (27) *Muhammad-ini*    *deč'*    *b-aq'-a*  
 Muhammad-ERG song N-**do**:PFV-IMP.TR  
 '[Muhammad] sing the song.'

- (28) *it-ini*                *deč'*    *b-aq'-a*  
 this-ERG song N-**do**:PFV-IMP.TR  
 '[He] sing the song.'

- (29) *it*                      *w-ak'-e*  
 that(NOM) M-**come**:PFV-IMP  
 '[He] come.'

Speakers often build this construction with the additive particle *-ra*:

- (30) *Muhammad-ini=ra*    *deč'*    *b-aq'-a*  
 Muhammad-ERG=ADD song N-**do**:PFV-IMP.TR  
 '[Muhammad] sing the song.'

- (31) *it=ra*                      *w-ak'-e*  
 that(NOM)=ADD M-**come**:PFV-IMP  
 '[He] come!'

The construction with a third person NP and the imperative is primarily used when the speaker addresses several people. The following sentences can be uttered by the teacher who is addressing the whole class and chooses the pupils to perform certain actions:

- (32) *pat'imat=ra*                *d-ak'-e*,                      *asijat=ra*  
 Patimat(NOM)=ADD F1-**come**:PFV-IMP Asijat(NOM)=ADD  
*d-ak'-e*  
 F1-**come**:PFV-IMP  
 'Patimat come, and Asijat come.'

- (33) *pat'imat-li deč' b-aq'-a, asijat-li deč'*  
 Patimat-ERG song N-do:PFV-IMP.TR Asijat-ERG song  
*bel'č'-a*  
 read:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Patimat sing the song, and Asijat read the rhyme.'

The following example with the word *ca* as third person imperative subject comes from the corpus:

- (34) *mallarasbadij-ni ib iš-di-li-ze : ca*  
 Molla Nasreddin.OBL-ERG say:PFV.AOR that-PL-OBL-INTER(LAT) one  
*udi-di w-iz-e-na, ca aqu-di*  
 below-TRANS M-stand:IPFV-IMP-IMP.PL one up-TRANS  
*w-iz-e-na, urga-w nu w-iz-iša,*  
 M-stand:IPFV-IMP-IMP.PL between-M I(NOM) M-stand:IPFV-FUT.EGO  
*nu-ni ħuša k'wi-jal-la χ<sup>w</sup>asar b-aq'-iša ca-ca*  
 I-ERG you.pl two-ORD-ADD rescue HPL-do:PFV-FUT.EGO one-one  
*buruši-ze*  
 rouble-INTER(LAT)  
 'Molla Nasreddin told them: one of you stand higher, the other stand lower, I will stand between you two, I will rescue the two of you for one rouble each.'

Similar phenomenon – the possibility to use 2<sup>nd</sup> person imperative with 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject with reference to the addressee is found in other East Caucasian languages (cf. [Dobrushina 2001: 323](#)).

## 2.4 Imperative with particles

The imperative can be used with particles *-w* and/or *-ca*. Although the particle *-w* resembles the masculine gender marker, it does not depend on the gender of the addressee:

- (35) *deč' b-aq'-a-w*  
 song N-do:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL  
 'Sing a song! (addressing women or men)'

The particle *-w* is identical to the question particle *-w/-u*. The particle *ca* is formally identical to the word *ca* 'one' and probably originates from it.

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- (36) *haʳramir-ti-la      kuša-ne      elʔ-a-ca*  
 Haramirt-PL-GEN house-PL count:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL  
 ‘List the families of the Haramirt (clan).’ (Text 19. Clans, 1.6)

Neither of the particles can be used if the imperative utterance expresses permission:

- (37) *abaj,      b-uh-es=u                      nu-ni g-es                      rasuj-s      kʳampʳitʳ*  
 mother N-become:PFV-INF=Q I-ERG give:PFV-INF Rasul-DAT sweet  
 ‘– Mother, can I give a sweet to Rasul?’  
*b-uh-es                      b-eg-a                      /      ʔʔ b-eg-a-w                      /*  
 N-become:PFV-INF N-give:PFV-IMP.TR / N-give:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL /  
*ʔʔ b-eg-a-ca*  
 N-give:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL  
 ‘– You can, give it to him.’

The particle *-w* expresses a more categorical demand than that expressed by the particle *-ca*. Therefore, it is not used in the situations when the speaker has a status lower than the addressee, or when the speaker has no right to demand. In the following example, the child asks her mother to give her the sweet; with the particle *-w* she is straightforward, as if her mother must give it to her; with the particle *-ca* the utterance sounds as a mild request.

- (38) *A baj      ag-a                      /      ag-a-ca                      /*  
 Mother give:PFV-IMP.TR / give:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL /  
*ʔ ag-a-w                      nab      kʳampʳitʳ*  
 give:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL I.DAT sweet  
 ‘Mother, give me a sweet.’

In example (39), the imperative with the particle *-w* would have been completely inappropriate, since the pupil addresses his request to the teacher. The imperative with the particle *-ca* is better, although it is not the typical way to address the teacher.

- (39) *ʔ Maisarat Magomedovna      ag-a-ca                      di-ze*  
 Maisarat Magomedovna give:PFV-IMP.TR-PTCL I.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*kung*  
 book  
 ‘Maisarat Magomedovna, give me the book please.’

The particles *-w-* and *-ca* can occur together:

- (40) *pat'imat hu d-ak'-e-w-ca*  
 Patimat you.sg(NOM) F1-come:PFV-IMP-PTCL-PTCL  
 'Patimat, [you] come!'

According to the corpus, the particle *-ca* is used very frequently; the particle *-w* was not found in the corpus.

## 2.5 Coordinated constructions with imperatives

If several imperatives are combined, the chain of verb forms can either consist of imperatives or combine imperative(s) with converb(s):

- (41) *b-uc-a maza a?-a b-uħna*  
 N-catch:PFV-IMP.TR sheep drive:PFV-IMP.TR N-inside(LAT)  
 'Catch the sheep, let it inside.'
- (42) *pat'imat kaltuška=ra d-ur?un d-aq'-i-le ħarši*  
 Patimat potato=ADD NPL-clean NPL-do:PFV-AOR-CVB soup  
*d-aq'-a*  
 NPL-do:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Patimat, peel the potato and make the soup!'
- (43) *k'amp'it'-une as-i-le tukaj-ħe-la ħu-ni-jal*  
 sweet-PL take:PFV-AOR-CVB shop-IN-EL you.sg-ERG=EMPH  
*mu-d-uk-adi*  
 NEGVOL-NPL-eat:IPFV-PROH  
 'Buy some sweets, (but) don't eat them.'

Further examples and some discussion of the contrast between the chains with imperatives and the chains with converbs can be found in [Kustova \(2018\)](#) (this volume).

## 3 Prohibitive

The prohibitive is a negative imperative which is expressed by a dedicated affix. It is formed with the prefix *mV-* with an unspecified vowel which assimilates to the next vowel (see discussion in [Moroz 2018](#), this volume, and [Daniel 2018](#), this volume), and the suffix *-adi*, sometimes truncated to *-ad*. In §10, I give some information on the origin of this marker. The gender agreement marker *b-* (N or HPL)

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assimilates to the NEGVOL marker *mV-* (see Moroz 2018, this volume). Sometimes, prohibitive formation involves reduplication, as in (46) – see the discussion in Daniel (2018), this volume.

- (44) *deč' mi-m-iq'-ad(i)*  
 song NEGVOL-N-do:IPFV-PROH  
 'Don't sing!'

The prohibitive can be derived only from imperfective stems. Therefore, each verb has two imperatives but only one prohibitive. There is no formal distinction between transitive and intransitive prohibitives.

- (45) *mu-lug-adi d-uk'-a-k'a-ra, maja*  
 NEGVOL-give:IPFV-PROH F1-say:IPFV-IRR-COND-ADD Maja  
*g-i-le le-l-le hub-li-s*  
 give:PFV-AOR-CVB AUX-F-CVB husband-OBL-DAT  
 'Although she said: 'Don't give', they still married Maja'. (Text 14. Laces, 1.3)
- (46) *gurda b-ik'-uwe le-b sinka-li-ze*  
 fox N-say:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N bear-OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*b-is-mi-m-is-adi hu*  
 N-cry-NEGVOL-N-cry-PROH you.sg(NOM)  
 'The fox told [to the bear]: "Don't cry"'. (Text M. A bear, a wolf and a fox, 1.11)

The prohibitive has the same marker of plurality *-na* as the imperative. The prohibitive suffix cannot be truncated before the plural marker.

- (47) *deč' mi-m-iq'-adi-na*  
 song NEGVOL-N-do:IPFV-PROH-IMP.PL  
 'Don't sing!' (addressing several speakers)
- (48) *\*deč' mi-m-iq'-ad-na*  
 song NEGVOL-N-do:IPFV-PROH-IMP.PL  
 Intended: 'Don't sing!' (addressing several speakers)

The prohibitive can be used with the forms of address as the imperative is used (§2.3):

- (49) *pat'imat, deč' mi-m-iq'-adi*  
 Patimat song NEGVOL-M-do:IPFV-PROH  
 'Patimat, don't sing the song.'

Constructions with third person subject are also available for the prohibitive:

- (50) *pat'imat-li deč' mi-m-iq'-adi*  
 Patimat-ERG song NEGVOL-M-**do**:IPFV-PROH  
 '[Patimat] don't sing the song.'

The prohibitive can take the particle *-ca*:

- (51) *mi-m-iq'-adi-ca hel deč'*  
 NEGVOL-M-**do**:IPFV-PROH-PTCL this song  
 'Don't sing this song!'

## 4 Imperative interjections

There are several words which function as imperatives although they are not related to any verb. They are used to urge the addressee to perform an action, and some of them can attach the imperative plural marker *-na*.

The interjection *ma* 'take, hold' is known in various languages of Daghestan (e.g. Archi, Aghul). In Mehweb, it may attach the plural marker *-na*:

- (52) *ma!*  
 INTJ  
 'Take!'
- (53) *ma-na!*  
 INTJ-IMP.PL  
 'Take (addressed to several people)!'

The interjection *ma* can be combined with other imperative form:

- (54) *ma as-a!*  
 INTJ take:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Take!'
- (55) *ma-na as-a-na!*  
 INTJ-IMP.PL take:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL  
 'Take (addressed to several people)!'

The imperative interjection *hara* is used to attract visual attention of the addressee. It also can attach the plural marker *-na*:

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- (56) *hara!*  
INTJ  
'Look!'
- (57) *hara-na!*  
INTJ-IMP.PL  
'Look! (addressing several people)'

Two imperative interjections are used to urge the addressees to be quite and keep silence. For example, the teacher can use them in order to make children silent: *q'ah!* 'Shhh!' and *c'it!* 'Shhh!'. These interjections cannot combine with the plural marker *-na*.

## 5 Hortative (first person inclusive imperative)

The term *hortative* is used here for the constructions which express the inducement to perform an action together with the speaker, cf. English *Let's go*. There is no dedicated hortative morphology in Mehweb, but the periphrastic construction is widely used to express invitation to common action.

Hortative construction consists of the infinitive of the main verb and the form CL-*aš-e*, where CL is a gender marker.

- (58) *w-aš-e*            *χal*    *w-aq'-as*            *ħa-la*            *urtaq'*  
M-go:IPFV-IMP seek M-do:PFV-INF you.sg.OBL-GEN friend  
'Let's look together for your friend' (Aspectual test 1, 1.121)

The form CL-*aš-e* is an imperative of the verb CL-*aš-es* 'go/come (ipfv)'. Alone, this form can be used as a second person Imperative and as a hortative. There are no other words in Mehweb which combine these two meanings in one form; there are also no other Hortatives which are expressed lexically, in one word.

- (59) *pat'imat*, *d-aš-e*            *di-šu*  
Patimat, F1-go:IPFV-IMP I.OBL-AD(LAT)  
'Patimat, come to me!'
- (60) *d-aš-e*            *tukaj-ħe*  
F1-go:IPFV-IMP shop-IN(LAT)  
'Let's go to the shop!' (addressing a women)
- (61) *ʔali*, *w-aš-e*            *di-šu*  
Ali, M-go:IPFV-IMP I.OBL-AD(LAT)  
'Ali, come to me!'



- (62) *w-aš-e*                      *tukaj-ħe*  
 M-go:IPFV-IMP shop-IN(LAT)  
 ‘Let’s go to the shop!’ (addressing a man)

This pattern of hortative construction – with an infinitive and a particle originating from an imperative or hortative form of a motion verb – is attested in some other East Caucasian languages (Khwarshi (Khalilova 2009), Lak and Rutul (personal fieldnotes)).

The imperative CL-*aš-e* followed by the plural marker *-na* is used as a second person plural imperative or as an inducement to several addressees to perform an action together. There is an irregular change of *-e* to *-i* when the plural suffix is added: *w-aše* – *b-ašina*:

- (63) *b-aš-ina*                      *tukaj-ħe*  
 HPL-go:IPFV-IMP.PL shop.OBL-IN(LAT)  
 ‘Go to the shop!’ / ‘Let’s go to the shop!’ (addressing several people)

In the hortative construction, the form CL-*aš-e* agrees with the addressee, while the infinitive of the main verb agrees with the nominative. In the constructions with intransitive imperatives, the addressee and the nominative participant coincide (64), (65). In the constructions with transitive imperatives, the addressee coincides with the ergative participant; therefore, the main verb and the auxiliary form CL-*aš-e* agree with different arguments (66)–(69).

- (64) *w-aš-e*                      *uz-es*  
 M-come:IPFV-IMP M-work:IPFV-INF  
 ‘Let us work! (addressing a boy)’
- (65) *d-aš-e*                      *d-uz-es*  
 F1-come:IPFV-IMP F1-work:IPFV-INF  
 ‘Let us work! (addressing a girl)’
- (66) *d-aš-e*                      *deč’ b-aq’-as*  
 F1-come:IPFV-IMP song N-do:PFV-INF  
 ‘Let’s sing a song! (addressing a girl)’
- (67) *w-aš-e*                      *deč’ b-aq’-as*  
 M-come:IPFV-IMP song N-do:PFV-INF  
 ‘Let’s sing a song! (addressing a boy)’
- (68) *d-aš-e*                      *urši w-it’-es*  
 F1-go:IPFV-IMP boy M-draw:PFV-INF  
 ‘Let’s draw a boy! (addressing a girl)’

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- (69) *w-aš-e dursi d-it'-es*  
 M-go:IPFV-IMP girl F1-draw:PFV-INF  
 'Let's draw a girl (addressing a boy)'

The plural suffix *-na* is added to the verb *CL-aše* when the Hortative construction is addressed to several people and the action is thus meant to be performed by more than two participants, including the speaker:

- (70) *b-aš-ina deč' b-aq'-as*  
 HPL-come:IPFV-IMP.PL song N-do:PFV-INF  
 'Let's sing a song (addressing several people)'

The hortative construction can contain the first person plural pronoun as a subject:

- (71) *d-aš-e nuša tukaj-ħe b-u'q'-as*  
 F1-go:IPFV-IMP we shop.OBL-IN(LAT) HPL-go:PFV-INF  
 'Let's go to the shop (addressing a girl)'
- (72) *b-aš-e sinka b-erk<sup>w</sup>-es nuša-jni*  
 N-go:IPFV-IMP bear N-eat:PFV-INF we-ERG  
 'Let's eat the bear!' (fox addressing wolf) (Text M. A bear, a wolf and a fox)

In hortative construction, negation is marked on the main verb, since the illocution is not under the scope of negation:

- (73) *d-aš-e deč' ħa-b-aq'-as*  
 F1-come:IPFV-IMP song NEG-N-do:PFV-INF  
 'Let's not sing a song (addressing a girl)'
- (74) *d-aš-e urši ħa-jt'-es*  
 F1-go:IPFV-IMP boy NEG-M.draw:PFV-INF  
 'Let's not draw a boy (addressing a girl)'

Constructions with the negated verb of motion are not interpreted as Hortatives:

- (75) *mi-d-ik'-adi deč' b-aq'-as*  
 NEGVOL-F1-come:IPFV-PROH song N-do:PFV-INF  
 'Don't come to sing a song.'

If a hortative occurs in the coordinative construction, one of the predicates can be expressed by a perfective converb (76), or both predicates are expressed by infinitives (77); in the latter case, one hortative auxiliary can belong to both infinitives:

- (76) *b-aš-ina*                      *qali=ra*                      *b-aq'-i-le,*                      *q'<sup>w</sup>a<sup>l</sup> as-es*  
HPL-go:IPFV-IMP.PL    house=ADD    N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB    cow    take-INF
- (77) *b-aš-ina*                      *qali=ra*                      *b-aq'-as,*                      *q'<sup>w</sup>a<sup>l</sup>=ra as-es*  
HPL-go:IPFV-IMP.PL    house=ADD    N-do:PFV-INF    cow=ADD    take-INF
- ‘Let’s build the house and buy the cow.’

The motion verb almost always takes the first place in hortative constructions (78), but its final position is not completely ungrammatical (79).

- (78) *b-aš-ina*                      *qali*                      *b-aq'-as,*  
HPL-go:IPFV-IMP.PL    house    N-do:PFV-CVB
- ‘Let’s build the house.’
- (79) <sup>?</sup> *qali*                      *b-aq'-as*                      *b-aš-ina*  
house    N-do:PFV-CVB    HPL-go:IPFV-IMP.PL
- ‘Let’s build the house.’

The particle of mild request *-ca* can be used with hortative:

- (80) *w-aš-e-ca*                      *heč'*                      *xunul*                      *ʔa<sup>l</sup>χ*                      *r-aq'-as*  
M-go:IPFV-IMP-PTCL    that.higher    woman    good    F-do:PFV-INF
- ‘Let’s help that women.’ (Text 06. Mahmud Omar who was friends with devils, 1.11)

## 6 Jussive (third person imperative)

Jussive is a form or construction which is used to express an inducement to a third person, most often transferred via the addressee. Some East Caucasian languages have a dedicated form for this meaning; often, the meaning of jussive is covered by optative (Dobrushina 2012). In Mehweb, the meanings of the jussive and optative are expressed separately, by a periphrastic construction and by an inflectional form respectively. In §6.1, the structure of the jussive construction is described. §6.2 discusses the semantics of the jussive construction. Optative is considered in §7.

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## 6.1 Jussive construction

The Mehweb jussive consists of the imperative of the verb ‘say’ *bet’a* (irregular form; see Daniel 2018, this volume) and the Imperative of the main verb. The jussive is conceived as a transfer of a command or request to the non-locutor via the addressee (Tell him “Work!” → Let him work!):

- (81) *Musa uz-e bet’a*  
 Musa M.work:IPFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘Let Musa work.’
- (82) *sa<w>i-jal u<sup>s</sup>q’-e bet’a heɽ<sup>w</sup>an-i*  
 <1>self-EMPH M.go:PFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR similar-ATR  
*kiz-be-ču*  
 hair-PL-COMIT  
 ‘With this kind of hair, let him drive on his own.’ (Aspectual test 1, 1.141)

Jussive semantics does not require the verb to designate a controllable action (see §6.2). Therefore, the verbs which denote uncontrollable actions can occur in the jussive construction in the form which is morphologically imperative, while normally second person imperative of these verbs is not used (see also §2.1):

- (83) *d-aq-a, ni? d-ert-e / d-ert-a*  
 NPL-let:PFV-IMP.TR milk NPL-spoil:PFV-IMP / NPL-spoil:PFV-IMP.TR  
*bet’a*  
 say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘Leave it, let the milk spoil.’

The imperative of the verb ‘say’ does not have an agreement slot. It can only agree with the addressee in number, as all imperatives:

- (84) *urš-be-jni deč’ b-aq’-a bet’a*  
 boy-PL-ERG song N-do:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 ‘Let the boys sing a song (addressing one person).’
- (85) *urš-be-jni deč’ b-aq’-a bet’a-na*  
 boy-PL-ERG song N-do:PFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL  
 ‘Let the boys sing a song (addressing several people).’

The jussive construction shows some evidence of grammaticalization. The agent of the jussive construction usually bears A or S marking (ergative with transitive verbs and nominative with intransitive verbs):

- (86) *Muḥammad-ini deč' b-aq'-a bet'-a*  
 Muhammad-ERG song N-do:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Let Muhammad sing a song.'
- (87) *Musa uz-e bet'a*  
 Musa M.work:IPFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Let Musa work.'

Although, as was shown above (§2.3), second person imperative in Mehweb can be used with 3<sup>rd</sup> person subject and A/S marking, such constructions are clearly peripheral. They do not occur in the texts; they are used in a special pragmatic type of context – addressing several people in distributional meaning; they cannot apply to non-animate subject. Examples (82)–(86) hence cannot be interpreted as the cases of reported speech.

The addressee of the verb 'say' is normally marked by inter-lative. The availability of S or A marking in the jussive construction shows that the jussive has developed into a periphrastic form distinct from the complement construction of the verb 'say'. Cf. example (87) with a complement clause-like structure with addressee marking in (88):

- (88) *musa-ze uz-e bet'a*  
 Musa-INTER(LAT) M.work:IPFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Tell Musa to work.'

In jussive constructions, the verb 'say-IMP' follows the imperative of the main verb. The following sentence is ungrammatical:

- (89) \**musa bet'-a uz-e*  
 Musa say:PFV-IMP.TR M.work:IPFV-IMP

As with hortative, negation is marked on the lexical verb of the jussive construction:

- (90) *muḥammad-ini deč' mi-m-iq'-adi bet'-a*  
 Muhammad-ERG song NEGVOL-N-do:IPFV-PROH say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Let Muhammad not sing a song.'

## 6.2 Semantics of the jussive

Jussive is used in exhortations to actions by third person agents:

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- (91) *išbari muḥammad-ini t'ult' b-aq'-a bet'-a*  
 today Muhammad-ERG bread N-do:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Let Muhammad bake bread today.'

Jussive can also express permission:

- (92) *b-uh-es=u muḥammad-ini k'amp'it' as-es?*  
 N-become:PFV-INF=Q Muhammad-ERG sweet take:PFV-INF  
 '– May Muhammad take a sweet?'  
*b-uh-es, as-a bet'-a*  
 N-become:PFV-INF take:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR  
 '– (He) may, let him take.'

Jussives can have inanimate subjects. The jussive construction with an inanimate subject expresses the speaker's indifference towards the situation (indifference is semantically close to permission). The implication is that the addressee should not interfere with the realization of the situation; for instance, s/he should not take the boiling soup from the stove:

- (93) *rurž-e bet'-a ḥarši*  
 boil:IPFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR soup  
 'Let the soup boil.'
- (94) *d-uh-e bet'-a dig-uj-s*  
 F1-become:PFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR love-PTCP.OBL-DAT  
 'Let her get married with anyone (lit. become to whoever she wants).'

Constructions with inanimate subjects show again that the jussive construction is highly grammaticalized, because the imperative *bet'a* has lost its original meaning 'say!':

The jussive is available only in the third person. First and second person pronouns cannot occur in jussive constructions:

- (95) *it-ini as-a bet'-a k'amp'it'*  
 that-ERG take:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR sweet  
 'Let him take your sweet.'
- (96) *\*nu-ni as-a bet'-a k'amp'it'*  
 I-ERG take:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR sweet  
 Intended: 'Let me take a sweet.'

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- (97) \**ħu-ni as-a bet'-a k'amp'it'*  
 you.sg-ERG take:PFV-IMP.TR say:PFV-IMP.TR sweet  
 Intended: 'Let you take a sweet.'

The semantics of indifference is the source for the constructions where the jussive has a concessive meaning:

- (98) *uz-e bet'-a, sab<sup>w</sup>a-l=la miski-je*  
 M.work:IPFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR how-ATR=ADD poor-ADVZ  
*uʔ-es-i it*  
 1.be:IPFV-INF-ATR that  
 'Let him work, he will still be poor (=Even if he works, he will still be poor)'  
 (99) *d-uʔ-e bet'-a x<sup>w</sup>aldili amma quli-b*  
 F1-be:IPFV-IMP say:PFV-IMP.TR beautiful but home.IN-N(ESS)  
*ha<sup>f</sup>nči ħa-b-iq'-an*  
 work NEG-N-do:IPFV-HAB  
 'Let her be beautiful, but she does not make her work at home (Though she is beautiful, she does not work at home).'

Unlike the optative, the jussive is not used to express wishes. Accordingly, the example (100) is acknowledged to be grammatical, but semantically inappropriate; one of the speakers suggested that this sentence can be uttered by an atheist who thinks that God can be forced to perform an action. The correct choice would be to use the optative (101).

- (100) *ʔaradeš ag-a bet'-a*  
 health give:PFV-IMP.TR tell:IPFV-IMP.TR  
 'ʔLet [Allah] make [you] healthy'  
 (101) *aradeš g-a-b*  
 health give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 'May [Allah] make [you] healthy!'

When the jussive is used to denote uncontrollable situations, it is interpreted as expression of indifference or allowance but not as wish. The following utterance can be pronounced when the speaker does not care about the rain, e.g. because he has already done his work in the field:

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- (102) *d-aq'-a*                      *bet'-a*                      *zab*  
 NPL-do:PFV-IMP.TR    say:PFV-IMP.TR    rain  
 'Let it rain (I don't care).'

If the speaker wants the rain to fall, she would rather use the form of Optative:

- (103) *d-aq'-a-b*                      *zab*  
 NPL-do:PFV-IRR-OPT    rain  
 'May it rain!'

## 7 Optative

The optative is used to convey good and bad wishes. In Mehweb, as in many other East Caucasian languages, the optative is expressed by a dedicated inflectional form (for a discussion of optatives in languages of the Caucasus see Dobrushina 2011). The formation of the optative is described in §7.1, its semantics in §7.2, and typical constructions involving the optative form – in §7.3.

### 7.1 Morphology of the optative

The optative is marked by the suffix *-b* added to the irrealis stem in *-a-*:

- (104) *aradeš g-a-b*  
 health    give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 'May [Allah] make [you] healthy!'

The optative can be derived from both the perfective and imperfective stems: *g-a-b* (give:PFV-IRR-OPT) – *lug-a-b* (give:IPFV-IRR-OPT); *d-ic-a-b* (NPL-sell:PFV-IRR-OPT) – *d-ilc-a-b* (NPL-sell:IPFV-IRR-OPT).

The negative optative is derived from the imperfective stem with the prefix *mV-* (same negative volitional marker which is used in the Prohibitive). The negative optative may also be formed with the regular negative prefix *ħa-*. The negative optative with the prefix *mV-* usually comes as a first choice of the speaker when s/he translates wishes with negation, but the forms with the prefix *ħa-* are also often considered grammatical. Forms in *ħa-* are more easily accepted from perfective verbs, thus filling the gap of the perfective negative optative. Sometimes, however, imperfective negative optative with the prefix *ħa-* is also accepted by the speakers (see Table 5). Negative optative is not a frequent form, it does not occur in the corpus. I was unable to compare the actual frequency of these two negative forms.



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Table 5: Forms of the positive and negative optative

	positive		negative	
	perfective	imperfective	perfective	imperfective
‘give’	<i>g-a-b</i>	<i>lug-a-b</i>	<i>ħa-g-a-b</i>	<i>mu-lug-a-b</i> ?? <i>ħa-lu-ga-b</i>
‘sell’	<i>d-ic-a-b</i>	<i>d-ilc-a-b</i>	<i>ħa-dic-a-b</i>	<i>mi-d-ilc-a-b</i> * <i>ħa-d-ilc-a-b</i>
‘find’	<i>b-arg-a-b</i>	<i>b-urg-a-b</i>	<i>ħa-b-arg-a-b</i>	<i>mu-m-urg-a-b</i> * <i>ħa-b-urg-a-b</i>
‘eat’	<i>b-erk<sup>w</sup>-a-b</i>	<i>b-uk-a-b</i>	<i>ħa-b-erk<sup>w</sup>-a-b</i>	<i>mu-m-uk-a-b</i> <i>ħa-b-uk-a-b</i>
‘drink’	<i>b-erž-a-b</i>	<i>b-už-a-b</i>	<i>ħa-b-erž-a-b</i>	<i>mu-m-už-a-b</i> <i>ħa-b-už-a-b</i>
‘happen’	<i>b-ik-a-b</i>	<i>b-irk-a-b</i>	<i>ħa-b-ik-a-b</i>	<i>mi-m-irk-a-b</i> <i>ħa-b-irk-a-b</i>

Some optatives have a reduced form without any suffixes: *w-ebk’-a-b* ‘may [he] die!’ – *w-ebk’* ‘may [he] die!’

- (105) *kapul-le w-ebk’-a-b*  
pagan-ADVZ M-die:PFV-IRR-OPT  
‘May he die impious!’

- (106) *kapul-le w-ebk’*  
pagan-ADVZ M-die:PFV(OPT)  
‘May he die impious!’

- (107) *ħa-la abaj r-ebk’*  
you.sg.OBL-GEN mother F-die:PFV(OPT)  
‘May your mother die!’ (...can be uttered by a mother of a child, and addressed to the child if something bad is going to happen to her/him – i.e. may I die in your stead!)

Apart from the verb ‘die’, the reduced form was attested for the verbs CL-*er<sup>2</sup>wes* ‘become dry’, *če-CL-uqes* ‘grow’, and CL-*alqaqas* ‘grow (causative)’. However, not all speakers accept all these examples (unlike *w-ebk’* which is frequent).

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- (108) *ma<sup>ɛ</sup>q<sup>ʷ</sup> b-erʔ<sup>w</sup>-a-b*  
 root N-become.dry:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May the roots dry out.’ (a bad wish, suggesting that the addressee’s clan should disappear)
- (109) *ma<sup>ɛ</sup>q<sup>ʷ</sup> b-erʔ<sup>w</sup>*  
 root N-become.dry:PFV(OPT)  
 ‘May the roots dry out.’ (same as (108))
- (110) *ma<sup>ɛ</sup>q<sup>ʷ</sup> ha-b-le če-b-uq-a-b*  
 root front-N-ADVZ PV-N-grow:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May it all grow roots up.’
- (111) *ma<sup>ɛ</sup>q<sup>ʷ</sup> ha-b-le če-b-uq*  
 root front-N-ADVZ PV-N-grow:PFV(OPT)  
 ‘May it all grow roots up.’
- (112) *qu b-alq-aq-ab*  
 field N-grow:IPFV-CAUS-OPT  
 ‘May the field grow!’
- (113) *qu b-alq-aq*  
 field N-grow:IPFV-CAUS(OPT)  
 ‘May the field grow!’

Truncated forms of the optative are also attested in Akusha ([van den Berg 2001: 34](#)), Ashty ([Belyaev \(a\)](#), manuscript), Shiri ([Belyaev \(b\)](#), manuscript), Tanty ([Sumbatova & Lander 2014](#)), and Sanzhi ([Forker](#), in preparation) lects of Dargwa.

Some optative forms have a causative suffix which is not motivated semantically. Cf. examples (111), (112), (114), (115), (116) and (117). When the speakers discuss the difference between the optative with and without the causative suffix, they usually say that the sentences with causative suffix *-aq-* imply an appeal to God:

- (114) *qu b-alq-a-b*  
 field N-grow:IPFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May the field grow!’
- (115) *qu b-alq-aq-a-b*  
 field N-grow:IPFV-CAUS-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May the field grow [with the help of Allah]!’

- (116) *hum-be ʔaʕχ d-uh-a-b*  
road-PL good NPL-become:PFV-IRR-OPT  
‘May you have a good trip!’
- (117) *hum-be ʔaʕχ d-uh-aq-a-b*  
way-PL good NPL-become:PFV-CAUS-IRR-OPT  
‘May Allah give you a good trip!’

This semantic difference between the ordinary and the causative optative is due to the fact that the causative derivation adds a new participant to the situation. The sentences with the causative suffix may include the ergative of Allah (118, 119). If the participant is not overtly expressed in the sentence, this new participant in the causativized Optative construction is by default understood as Allah. In another Daghestanian language, Archi (Lezgetic), the ergative of Allah can be included even in intransitive optative constructions meaning ‘with the help of Allah’, where the ergative may be interpreted as the ergative of the cause, one of the known functions of the ergative case (Dobrushina 2011). In Mehweb, most speakers reject intransitive optative sentences with Allah in the ergative (120, 121).

- (118) *allah-li-ni hum-be ʔaʕχ d-uh-aq-ab*  
Allah-OBL-ERG way-PL good NPL-become:PFV-CAUS-OPT  
‘May Allah give you a good trip!’
- (119) *allah-li-ni qu b-alq-aq-ab*  
Allah-OBL-ERG field N-grow:IPFV-CAUS-OPT  
‘May the field grow with the help of Allah!’
- (120) *\*allah-li-ni hum-be ʔaʕχ d-uh-a-b*  
Allah-OBL-ERG way-PL good NPL-become:PFV-IRR-OPT  
Intended: ‘May Allah give you a good trip!’
- (121) *\*allah-li-ni qu b-alq-ab*  
Allah-OBL-ERG field N-grow:IPFV-OPT  
Intended: ‘May the field grow with the help of Allah!’

If there is another overt ergative participant in the sentence, the clause is interpreted as an ordinary causative construction; cf. (124):

- (122) *rasul w-ebk’-a-b*  
Rasul M-die:PFV-IRR-OPT  
‘May Rasul die!’

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- (123) *rasul w-ebk'-aq-a-b*  
 Rasul M-die:PFV-CAUS-IRR-OPT  
 'May Allah make Rasul die!'
- (124) *pat'imat-ini rasul w-ebk'-aq-ab*  
 Patimat-ERG Rasul M-die:PFV-CAUS-IRR-OPT  
 'May Patimat make Rasul die!'

## 7.2 Optative constructions

The optative form is available for all persons, but with the first person the construction is pragmatically less felicitous.

Third person optative construction

- (125) *dursi d-arš-i-le kal?-a-b ħa-la*  
 girl F1-be.beautiful:PFV-AOR-CVB stay:PFV-IRR-OPT you.sg.OBL-GEN  
 'May your daughter be beautiful.'
- (126) *urši q'uwat le-b-le kal?-a-b ħa-la*  
 boy strength be-N-CVB stay:PFV-IRR-OPT you.sg.OBL-GEN  
 'May your son be strong.' (lit. May your boy stay having strength)

Second person optative construction

- (127) *d-arš-ib-i kal?-a-b ħu*  
 F1-be.beautiful:PFV-AOR-PTCP stay-IRR-OPT you.sg  
 'May you be beautiful.'
- (128) *q'uwat le-w-i kal?-a-b ħu*  
 strong be-M-PTCP stay:PFV-IRR-OPT you.sg  
 'May you be strong.'

First person optative construction

- (129) *nu r-ebk' / r-ebk'-ab*  
 I F-die:PFV(OPT) / F-die:PFV-OPT  
 'May I die [but not you – addressing the child]!'

In optative constructions, typical are frozen formulae, and central participants are often left implicit. Cf. examples (108), (114), (116) where neither the addressee nor the actor are overtly expressed. However, mentioning the addressee is not ungrammatical, as in the following examples:

- (130) *muḥammadi-s hum-be ʔaʕχ d-uh-aq-a-b*  
 Muhammad-DAT way-PL good NPL-become:PFV-CAUS-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May Muhammad have a good trip!’
- (131) *muḥammad-ini vačne ʔaʕχ-le d-ic-a-b*  
 Muhammad-ERG calf.PL good-ADVZ NPL-sell:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May Muhammad sell calves with a profit.’

Another possible participant of the optative situation is Allah. Most often it occurs in optative sentences as a form of address:

- (132) *ja-allah hušab taliḥ g-a-b*  
 PTCL-Allah(NOM) you.pl.DAT luck give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May [Allah] give [you] luck!’

In transitive constructions, Allah can also be expressed as an Agent, assuming ergative marking:

- (133) *allah-li<sup>1</sup> ara-deš g-a-b*  
 Allah-OBL(ERG) healthy-NMLZ give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May [Allah] give [you] health!’
- (134) *m-irq-ab hu allah-li*  
 NEGVOL-M.let.go:IPFV-OPT you.sg(NOM) Allah-OBL(ERG)  
 ‘May Allah stay with you.’ (= may Allah not let something bad happen to you) (Aspectual test 1, 1.156)

The Ergative form of the word *Allah* cannot co-occur with another agent in the ergative case:

- (135) *\*allah-li hu-ni b-iz-il t’ult’ b-aq’-a-b*  
 Allah-ERG you.sg-ERG N-tasty-ATR bread N-do:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 Intended: ‘May you make good bread with the help of Allah.’

### 7.3 Semantics of the Optative

Optative forms are dedicated to the expression of good or bad wishes.

- (136) *ʔaq’ lug-a-b, balhni g-a-b*  
 intellect give:IPFV-IRR-OPT knowledge give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May [Allah] give [you] intellect, may [Allah] give [you] knowledge.’

<sup>1</sup>The ergative forms *Allahlini* ~ *Allahli* are morphological variants.

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Unlike the jussive, the optative does not denote an action which is meant to be fulfilled by the addressee or by a third person. If the Optative is derived from the verb which typically denotes controllable actions, the sentence is interpreted as a wish that Allah fulfills the action. The following example can be interpreted as a wish which can be made real by Allah, but not as an indirect command to the third person to give money:

- (137) *d-aq-il*                      *arc*                      *g-a-b*  
 NPL-much-ATR money give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May you be given [by Allah] a lot of money.’

The optative cannot refer to the past, cf. examples (138) and (139):

- (138) *w-ebk'-a-b*                      *nu*  
 M-die-IRR-OPT I  
 ‘May I die!’
- (139) *\*dag*                      *w-ebk'-a-b*                      *nu*  
 yesterday M-die-IRR-OPT I  
 Intended: ‘I wish I have died yesterday!’

Optative forms are widely used in everyday life. Below are some traditional optative formulae:

- (140) *q'uwat*                      *g-a-b*  
 strength give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May [Allah] give [you] strength!’
- (141) *k'wabaq'ala*                      *g-a-b*  
 god.help<sup>2</sup> give:PFV-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May you have enough strength [to do your work]’
- (142) *w-ebk'-a-b*                      *ħu*  
 M-die:PFV-IRR-OPT you.sg  
 ‘May you die!’
- (143) *ja-allah*                      *d-alq-aq-a-b*  
 PTCL-Allah NPL-grow:IPFV-CAUS-IRR-OPT  
 ‘May [it] grow! (wish formula addressed to the person who is planting something)’

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<sup>2</sup>This word occurs only in this formula and so far seems to be unanalyzable.

#### 7.4 Expression of wish by means of forms in *-q'alle*

The wish of the speaker can also be expressed by forms ending in *-q'alle*. The derivation of these forms is described in §8. Forms in *-q'alle* show some properties of converbs (see §8, and [Sheyanova 2018](#), this volume); the wish-constructions with forms in *-q'alle* must be considered as cases of insubordination (in terms of [Evans 2007](#)).

The counterfactual conditional converb in *-q'alle* can be used in a main clause in order to express the speaker's wish (similar to the forms of the conditional protasis in many European languages, as well as other languages of the East Caucasian family, cf. [Belyaev 2012](#)). Independent converbs in *-q'alle* differ semantically from the Optative. While the optative form expresses blessings and curses, constructions with conditional converbs denote dreams and desires of speaker about some uncontrollable events. In [Dobrushina \(2011\)](#), these two types of optative were referred to as performative optative and desiderative optative. East Caucasian languages often have the dedicated inflectional form for the former, but the latter is usually expressed by conditional forms, as in Mehweb.

- (144) *ca di-la qali b-uʔ-ib-q'alle*  
 PTCL I.OBL-GEN house N-become:PFV-AOR-CTRF  
 'If only I had a house!'
- (145) *di-la adami žaʔwal ʔaʔš-w-irq-ul-q'alle*  
 I.OBL-GEN husband early PV-M-come.back:IPFV-ATR-CTRF  
 'If only my husband came back soon!'

The speaker's wish can also be expressed by a combination of the infinitive with the counterfactual marker *-q'alle*:

- (146) *nu-ni čaj d-erž-es-q'alle*  
 I-ERG tea NPL-drink:PFV-INF-CTRF  
 'I wish I had some tea!'

Unlike other converbs in *-q'alle*, the converb derived from infinitive is not used in reference to the past:

- (147) *dag w-ebk'-ib-q'alle nu*  
 yesterday M-die:PFV-AOR-CTRF I  
 'May I have died yesterday!'

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- (148) \**nu-ni dag čaj d-erž-es-q'alle*  
 I-ERG yesterday tea NPL-drink:PFV-INF-CTRF  
 Intended: 'I wish I had some tea yesterday!'

The hypothetical conditional converb in *-k'a* (see §8) cannot be used in independent constructions.

- (149) \**nu-ni čaj d-erž-a-k'a!*  
 I-ERG tea NPL-drink-IRR-COND  
 Intended: 'I wish I had some tea yesterday!'
- (150) *nu-ni čaj d-erž-a-k'a, ʔa<sup>ɕ</sup>χ-le b-uʔ-a-re*  
 I-ERG tea NPL-drink-IRR-COND good-ADVZ N-become-IRR-PST  
 'If I had some tea, it would be good.'

## 8 Irreal forms

Cross-linguistically, forms with irreal meaning are most often found in conditional constructions and in complement clauses (Mauri & Sansò 2016). In Mehweb, as in many other languages of Daghestan, complement clauses do not employ irreal forms. Mehweb conditional constructions have non-finite forms in the subordinate clause (conditional converbs), and a finite form in the main clause (Irrealis). In this section, derivation of conditional converbs (8.1) and Irrealis (8.2) will be discussed. In §8.3, 8.4, and 8.5, conditional constructions of different types will be considered.

### 8.1 Conditional converbs

There are two markers of conditional clause in Mehweb. They are distributed according to the degree of (ir)reality: the suffix *-k'a* is used in the conditional clauses which may come true (hypothetical marker), the suffix *-q'alle* designates situations which did not and can not take place (counterfactual marker).

The suffix *-k'a* presumably originates from the particle *k'a*. The particle *k'a* is used for topicalization of words of different classes. In example (151), it attaches to the noun *sinkala*, in example (152) – to the perfective stem of the verb. In the latter example, the particle is used together with reduplication, typical for predicate topicalization (Maisak 2010): *dargk'a dargira*.

- (151) *sinka-la k'a abzul-le ɸ<sup>w</sup>a<sup>ɕ</sup>n-ne d-elʔ-un-na*  
 bear-GEN PTCL all-ADVZ lie-PL NPL-tell:PFV-AOR-EGO



*wahaj-le=l      ɛ<sup>w</sup>a<sup>ɕ</sup>n-ne    luʔ-es      w-aʔ-i-ra*  
 very-ADVZ=EMPH    lie-PL      tell:IPFV-INF    M-begin:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘As for the bear, I did actually tell fibs.’ (Aspectual test 1, 1.89)

- (152) *d-arg-k’a      il-di    qulle    di-ze*  
 NPL-find:PFV-PTCL    this-PL    house.PL    I.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*d-arg-i-ra      huni=ra    b-arg-i-ra*  
 NPL-find:PFV-AOR-EGO    road=ADD    N-find:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘As for getting there, I did reach those houses and found the street.’  
 (Aspectual test 1, 1.164)

Elicitation gave examples with predicate topicalization marked by the particle *k’a* alone, without reduplication:

- (153) *luč’-ib-k’a      il    ʔa<sup>ɕ</sup>χ-le*  
 learn:IPFV-IPFT-PTCL    this    good-ADVZ  
 ‘As for studies, he did study well.’
- (154) *luč’-an-k’a      il    ʔa<sup>ɕ</sup>χ-le    amma abaj-s*  
 learn:IPFV-HAB-PTCL    this    good-ADVZ    but    mother.OBL-DAT  
*zahmat d-urh-an      il    d-aχ-as*  
 difficult    F1-be:IPFV-HAB    this    F1-support-INF  
 ‘As for studies, she makes good progress. But it is difficult for her  
 mother to support her.’

That the suffix of conditional clause originates from the topicalization particle is in conformity with the close relation between topic and condition as described in [Haiman \(1978\)](#). It is likely that the suffix of counterfactual condition *-q’alle* also originates from the marker of topicalization. In Mehweb, the only function of *-q’alle* is to mark counterfactual conditional converbs, but in some other Dargwa languages there is a particle *q’al* (*q’alli*) with a wide range of meanings including topicalization ([Maisak 2010](#); [Mutalov & Sumbatova 2003](#); [Forker](#) in preparation). The following examples come from two Dargwa dialects:

Dargwa (Khuduts village) ([Maisak 2010](#); example elicited by D. Ganenkov)

- (155) *buč’-q’al      buč’unni      cab    cik’al*  
 read:IPFV=PTCL    read:IPFV.CVB    COP    nothing  
*hankalgunnek:u*  
 remember:IPFV.CVB+COP.NEG  
 ‘As for reading, he reads (the book), but does not remember anything.’

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Dargwa (Icari village) (Maisak 2010; example suggested by R. Mutalov)

- (156) *buč'-ni-la q'alli buč'at:a cacajnaq:illa behelra...*  
 read:IPFV-NMLZ-GEN PTCL read.PRS.1SG sometimes however  
 'As for reading, I read (books), but...'

Forms in *-q'alle* and in *-k'a* can be embedded. This is an argument in favor of their converbial status.

- (157) *nu [di-la urši-li-ni xunul k-a-k'a]*  
 I I.OBL-GEN boy-OBL-ERG wife bring:PFV-IRR-COND  
*iχ-di-li-šu-r d-uʔ-es-i*  
 that-PL-OBL-AD-F(ESS) F1-be:PFV-INF-ATR  
 'If my son gets married, I will live at their place.'
- (158) *nu=ra [iχ w-ebk'-ib-q'alle] d-ubk'-a-re*  
 I=ADD this M-die:PFV-AOR-CTRF F1-die:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If he died, I would have also died.'

In §8.1.1 and 8.1.2, the derivation of conditional converbs in *-k'a* and *-q'alle* will be considered in more detail.

### 8.1.1 Hypothetical conditional converb

In the Hypothetical conditional converb, the suffix *-k'a* can be added to the Irreal stem of imperfective and perfective verbs. Therefore, every verb has two conditional converbs in *-k'a*: CL-*elč'es* 'read, PFV' – CL-*elč'ak'a*; *luč'es* 'read, IPFV' – *luč'ak'a*.

Conditional clauses with converbs in *-k'a* denote that the situation can come true in the future:

- (159) *hel deħ b-aq'-a-k'a sinka-li nuša k'wi-jal-la*  
 this smell N-do:PFV-IRR-COND bear-OBL(ERG) we two-CARD-ADD  
*b-erg-es*  
 HPL-eat:PFV-INF  
 'If the bear smells this, he will eat us both.' (Text M. A bear, a wolf and a fox, 1.6)

Followed by the additive particle *-ra*, hypothetical conditional converbs are used in concessive clauses (160). This pattern of marking concessive clauses – by a combination of conditional converb and emphatic or additive particle, also

well known in Latin and Romance languages – is attested in the majority of Nakh-Daghestanian languages (cf. Tanty (Sumbatova & Lander 2014: 138), Aghul (Dobrushina & Merdanova 2012); Forker 2016 for generalizations).

- (160) *iti-s                    rasul   hune-če                    w-ik-a-k'a-ra,*  
 this.OBL-DAT Rasul way-SUPER(LAT) M-happen:PFV-IRR-COND-ADD  
*it-ini        beši-če    waʔb-Haʔbaʔt-ur*  
 this-ERG wedding.OBL-SUPER(LAT) call-NEG-LV:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Although she met Rasul, she did not call him to the wedding.’
- (161) *mu-lug-adi    d-uk'-a-k'a-ra,    maja*  
 NEGVOL-give:IPFV-PROH F1-say:IPFV-IRR-COND-ADD Maja  
*g-i-le    le-l-le    hub-li-s*  
 give:PFV-AOR-CVB AUX-F-CVB husband-OBL-DAT  
 ‘Although she said: ‘Don’t give’, they still married Maja’. (Text 14. Laces, 1.3)

### 8.1.2 Counterfactual conditional converb

The counterfactual marker *-q'alle* can be added to the past and infinitive forms, but not to the present. The speakers of Mehweb sometimes consider *-q'alle* as a separate word, but it cannot be separated from the verb. In this description, we consider *-q'alle* as a suffix. Table 6 summarizes the combinations of the verbal stems and the suffix *-q'alle*: possible combinations are marked as (+), impossible combinations are marked as (–); the perfective present form does not exist in Mehweb. Examples are presented in the Table 7.

Table 6: Stems which can add the counterfactual suffix *q'alle*

	past	present	infinitive	participle
imperfective	(+)	(–)	(+)	(+)
perfective	(+)		(+)	(+)

Counterfactual converbs in *q'alle* are used in subordinate clauses of conditional constructions (example (162), more details in §8.3), and in independent clauses with the meaning of wish (example (162), more details in §7.4). This latter usage may be considered a case of insubordination, typical for the forms used in conditional clause.

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Table 7: Examples of the forms with the counterfactual suffix *-q'alle*

		past	infinitive	participle
'find'	imperfective	<i>b-urg-ib-q'alle</i>	<i>b-urg-es-q'alle</i>	<i>b-urg-ul-q'alle</i>
	perfective	<i>b-arg-ib-q'alle</i>	<i>b-arg-es-q'alle</i>	<i>b-arg-ib-i-q'alle</i>
'read'	imperfective	<i>luč'-ib-q'alle</i>	<i>luč'es-q'alle</i>	<i>luč'-ul-q'alle</i>
	perfective	<i>b-elč'-un-q'alle</i>	<i>b-elč'-es-q'alle</i>	<i>b-elč'-un-i-q'alle</i>

- (162) *hete-r hed-di malʔun-t-ini r-uc-es*  
 there-F(ESS) that.far.away-PL devil-PL-ERG F-catch:PFV-INF  
*q'-o<sup>h</sup>we le-l-le k<sup>w</sup>an, nu ca-vida ajɓaj*  
 go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL-CVB QUOT I(NOM) one-few tarry  
***r-uh-ub-q'alle***  
**F-become:PFV-AOR-CTRF**  
 'If I would tarry there for just a minute, these devils would get to me for sure.' (Text 03, Story told by Aminat, 1.29)
- (163) *ca di-la urši-li-ni xunul d-ik-ul-q'alle*  
 PTCL I.OBL-GEN boy-OBL-ERG wife **F1-bring:IPFV-PTCP-CTRF**  
 'If only my son got married!'

## 8.2 Irrealis

The predicate of the main clause of conditional constructions is expressed by the form with the suffixal cluster *-a-re*: CL-*ubk'are* 'would die'. The cluster consists of the suffix of the Irreal stem *-a-* and the suffix of the Past *-re* (*-a-re* – IRR-PST). The marker *-are* is used only for the expression of Irrealis, so the form must be considered as a dedicated irrealis. The past suffix *-re* is not productive. Apart from irrealis, the suffix *-re* occurs regularly only in several lexemes: in the past copula *le-CL-re*, negative copula *ag<sup>w</sup>ire*, in the lexeme *burgare* 'likely, probably' (originally irrealis), and the form *digibre* 'would like':

- (164) *k'ala-li-ze-b le-b-re do<sup>h</sup>hi*  
 Kala-OBL-INTER-N(ESS) **be-N-PST** snow  
 'There was snow in Kala.' (Text 15, Lost Donkeys)
- (165) *nab d-ig-ib-re čaj*  
 I.DAT NPL-want:IPFV-IPFT-PST tea  
 'I would like some tea.'

Some speakers acknowledge other forms in *-re* derived from the past stem of imperfective verbs as grammatical, such as *luč'ibre* (*luč'es* 'read, study, IPFV'), *isibre* (*ises*, 'take, buy, IPFV'), *urcibre* (*urces* 'fly, IPFV'). These forms are also interpreted as irrealis:

- (166) *ʔtukaj-he-la si-k'al is-ib-re nu-ni-ra, arc*  
 shop-IN-EL what-INDEF take:IPFV-IPFT-PST I-ERG=ADD money  
*d-uʔ-ib-q'alle*  
 NPL-be:IPFV-AOR-CTRF  
 'I would have bought something in the shop, if (I) had some money.'

These forms however are never used spontaneously, do not occur in texts, and many speakers do not recognize them at all. Even the speakers who can come up with an example using one of these forms, tend to replace it by the regular irrealis in *-are*.

The Irrealis form in *-are* is used in the main clause of conditional clauses (most often counterfactual) (167) as well as for the expression of irreal situations in independent clauses beyond conditional constructions (168):

- (167) *iχ w-ebk'-ib-q'alle, nu-ra d-ubk'-a-re*  
 this M-die:PFV-AOR-CTRF I=ADD F1-die:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If he had died, I would have also died.'
- (168) *rasuj-ni qu išq-a'-re dag, amma*  
 Rasul-ERG field mow:IPFV-IRR-PST yesterday but  
*Haʔ-q'-un*  
 NEG-M.GO:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul could have mowed the field yesterday, but he didn't go.'

### 8.3 Counterfactual conditional clauses

Counterfactual conditional clauses contain a converb in *-q'alle* in the protasis, and the Irrealis in the apodosis. The constructions with the converb in *-q'alle* and Irrealis in *-are* denote situations which did not take place in the past (169), and most likely will not take place in the future (168).

- (169) *urši-li-ni xunul k-ib-q'alle, nu iχ-di-li-šu-r*  
 boy-OBL-ERG wife take:PFV-AOR-CTRF I that-PL-OBL-AD-HPL(ESS)  
*d-uʔ-a-re*  
 F1-become:PFV-IRR-PST  
 'If my son had got married, I would have lived at their place.'

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- (170) *c'able w-ebk'-ib-q'alle, nu-ra d-ubk'-a-re*  
 tomorrow M-die:PFV-AOR-CTRF I=ADD F1-die:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If you should die tomorrow, I would also die.'

A conditional clause with a counterfactual converb derived from an aorist refers to the past; if the converb is derived from an imperfective participle, it refers to the present:

- (171) *iχ dag ?a's-w-aq'-ib-q'alle ?a'sχ-le*  
 this yesterday PV-M-come.back:PFV-AOR-CTRF good-ADVZ  
*b-u?-a-re*  
 N-be:PFV-IRR-PST  
 'If he had come yesterday, it would have been good.'
- (172) *iχ išbari ?a's-w-irq-ul-q'alle ?a'sχ-le*  
 this today PV-M-come.back:IPFV-PTCP-CTRF good-ADVZ  
*b-u?-a-re*  
 N-be:PFV-IRR-PST  
 'If he comes today, it would have been good.'

Converbs in *-q'alle* based on infinitives refer to the future, but there is an additional meaning of wish. They are also used in independent clauses (§7.4) to express wish. In conditional protasis, they denote desirable situations (173). Therefore, the converb “infinitive + *-q'alle*” is not appropriate if the conditional construction denotes non-desirable situations (175):

- (173) *nu-ni čaj d-erž-es-q'alle nu wana urh-a-re*  
 I-ERG tea NPL-drink:PFV-INF-CTRF I warm 1.become:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If I had tea, I would get warm.'
- (174) *abaj d-ebk'-ib-q'alle, il eh-il urh-a-re*  
 mother F1-die:PFV-AOR-CTRF this bad-ATR 1.become:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If his mother had died, he would have become a bad person.'
- (175) *\*abaj d-ebk'-es-q'alle, il eh-il urh-a-re*  
 mother F1-die:PFV-INF-CTRF this bad-ATR 1.become:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 Intended: 'If his mother had died, he would have become a bad person.'

## 8.4 Hypothetical conditional constructions

Hypothetical conditional constructions denote situations which can either be true in the present, or can be realized in the future, or are habitual. The protasis

of a hypothetical construction is expressed by the converb in *-k'a*. The apodosis can have different forms depending on the semantics of the clause.

- (176) *iχ-ini b-arx-le b-urh-a-k'a, iχ w-atur*  
 that-ERG N-be.right-CVB N-tell:IPFV-IRR-COND that(NOM) M-free  
*aʔ-as-i*  
 drive:PFV-INF-ATR  
 'If he tells the truth, they will let him go.'

Clauses with and hypothetical conditional converbs in *-k'a* contrast as denoting single vs. multiple actions:

- (177) *het kung b-elč'-a-k'a nu-ni ħa-ze*  
 that book N-read:PFV-IRR-COND I-ERG you.sg.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*b-urh-iša hel-li-ja χabar*  
 N-tell:IPFV-FUT.EGO this-OBL-GEN story  
 'If you read this book, I will tell you his story.'
- (178) *d-aq-il kung-ane luč'-a-k'a d-aq-il*  
 NPL-much-ATR book-PL read:IPFV-IRR-COND NPL-much-ATR  
*si-k'al nuša-ze d-alh-ul*  
 what-INDEF we-INTER(LAT) NPL-know:IPFV-PTCP  
 'If we read many books, we know many things.'

## 8.5 Real conditional constructions

Real conditional clauses presuppose that the state of affairs in the subordinate clause is true. Real conditionals are sometimes treated as reason clauses, since they lack the main feature of conditionals – the lack of knowledge about the state of affairs denoted in the subordinate clause. In Mehweb, this type of conditionals has a special mode of marking, using an analytic construction with the verb *CL-arges* 'find, PFV'. This verb is found in many languages of Daghestan in semi-grammaticalised constructions designating direct (visual) evidence (cf. [Maisak & Daniel 2018](#)).

Conditional clauses of real conditional constructions have an auxiliary verb *CL-arges* marked by the conditional suffix *-k'a*, and the lexical verb.

The main clause of real conditional constructions can have different indicative forms depending on the semantics of the situation. In example (179), the situation of the matrix clause belongs to the past, in examples (180) and (181) it belongs to the future:

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- (179) *ili-s hune-če w-ik-i-le*  
 this-DAT way-SUPER(LAT) M-happen:PFV-AOR-CVB  
**w-arg-a-k'a** *rasul, il-ini bebi-če*  
 M-find:PFV-IRR-COND Rasul this-ERG wedding-SUPER(LAT)  
*wa'b-a't-ur-i il*  
 call-LV:PFV-AOR-PTCP this  
 'If she met Rasul [according to what you know about it], she called him to the wedding.'
- (180) *anwar w-ak'-i-le w-arg-a-k'a, abaj-šu*  
 Anwar M-come:PFV-CVB M-find:PFV-IRR-COND mother-AD(LAT)  
*u'q'-es*  
 M.go:PFV-FUT  
 'As [it turned out that] Anwar came, he will go to his mother.'
- (181) *rasuj-ze arc k<sup>w</sup>e*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) money in.hands(LAT)  
*d-ik-i-le d-arg-a-k'a, il-ini*  
 NPL-happen:PFV-AOR-CVB NPL-find:PFV-IRR-COND this-ERG  
*abaj-s sajbat as-es*  
 mother-DAT gift take:PFV-INF  
 'As Rasul [as it turned out] has got the money, he will buy the gift to his mother.'

## 9 Apprehensive

Mehweb has a dedicated form to express apprehension. When used in independent clauses, the apprehensive means that the speaker is afraid that some undesirable situation may come true. The apprehensive is formed with the suffix *-la* attached to the irrealis stem: *-a-la*.

- (182) *d-arʔ-a mura, zab d-a'q'-a-la*  
 NPL-gather:PFV-IMP.TR hay rain NPL-go:PFV-IRR-APPR  
 'Collect the hay, it might rain.'

The apprehensive has a negative counterpart:

- (183) *zab ha-d-a'q'-a-la hab, d-a'q-a šin*  
 rain NEG-NPL-go:PFV-IRR-APPR ahead NPL-hit:PFV-IMP.TR water



*agarod-le-ħe*

vegetable.garden-OBL-IN(LAT)

‘Turn on the water in the garden, [because/in case] it might not rain.’

Apprehensive forms are commonly used to express warnings about something that may happen to the addressee:

(184) *q’ēju, w-ig<sup>w</sup>-a-la*

slow M-burn:PFV-IRR-APPR

‘Be careful, beware not to get burnt.’

(185) *q’ēju, ar-d-ik-a-la*

slow down-F1-fall:PFV-IRR-APPR

‘Be careful, beware not to fall down.’

Apprehensives are often accompanied by the particle *ʔaʃj*:

(186) *ħu ʁanq’ uh-a-la ʔaʃj*

you.sg drown M.become:PFV-IRR-APPR PTCL

‘Beware not to drown.’

First and third person subjects are also available in the apprehensive constructions:

(187) *nu ʁanq’ uh-a-la*

I drown M.become:PFV-IRR-APPR

‘May I not drown.’

(188) *hara nu ar-d-uk-a-la*

PTCL I(NOM) away-F1-lead:PFV-IRR-APPR

‘Be careful, someone may abduct me!’

(189) *ʒanawal-li-ni maza ar-b-uk-a-la*

wolf-OBL-ERG sheep away-N-lead:PFV-IRR-APPR

‘The wolf can steal the sheep.’

The apprehensive has an inherent negative value. If it is used with reference to situations which are usually viewed as positive, the situation changes its value from positive to negative. The example (190) is grammatical only if the speaker wants to have a daughter more than a son (which is unusual for Daghestan), the example (191) – only if the speaker does not want to recover from his illness.

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- (190) *urši w-aq'-a-la ħu-ni d-aq'-a dursi*  
 boy M-do:PFV-IRR-APPR you.sg-ERG F1-do:PFV-IMP.TR girl  
 'I am afraid that] you give birth to a boy, [better] give birth to a girl!'
- (191) *ara d-uh-a-la*  
 healthy F1-become:PFV-IRR-APPR  
 'I am afraid that] I become healthy!'

Apprehensive predicates are regularly used in the complement clauses of the verbs of fear followed by the complementizer *ile* (which is the perfective converb of the verb 'say'):

- (192) *nu uruχ k'-uwe le-w-ra žanawal-li-ni maza*  
 I be.afraid LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV be-M-EGO wolf-OBL-ERG sheep  
*ar-b-uk-a-la ile*  
 away-N-lead:PFV-IRR-APPR COMP  
 'I am afraid that the wolf steals a sheep.'
- (193) *nu uruχ k'-as ħu iz-es*  
 I be.afraid LV:IPFV-HAB.EGO you.sg be.ill:IPFV-INF  
*d-a?-a-la ile*  
 F1-begin:PFV-IRR-APPR COMP  
 'I am afraid that you might fall ill.'

If the subject of the apprehensive complement clause is coreferent to the subject of the main clause, the logophoric pronoun *sa<CL>i* is used (see [Kozhukhar 2018](#), this volume). This is a phenomenon common to other cases of subordination with the complementizer *ile*.

- (194) *baba uruχ k'-uwe le-r χ<sup>we</sup> q'ac'*  
 granny be.afraid LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-F dog bite  
*b-ik-a-la ile*  
 N-LV:PFV-IRR-APPR COMP  
 'My grandmother is afraid that the dog bites her.'
- (195) *baba uruχ k'-uwe le-r, sa<r>i*  
 granny be.afraid LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-F self<F>  
*ar-d-ik-a-la ile*  
 PV-F1-fall:PFV-IRR-APPR COMP  
 'The grandmother is afraid of falling down.'

Apprehensives cannot refer to a situation in the past. The next example is ungrammatical (196), and has to be modified as in (197).

- (196) \**nu urux k'-as dag anwal-li-če*  
 I be.afraid LV:IPFV-HAB.EGO yesterday Anwar-OBL-SUPER(LAT)  
*χ<sup>we</sup> q'ac' \*b-ik-a-la*  
 dog bite N-LV:PFV-IRR-APPR  
 Intended: 'I am afraid that the dog bit Anwar yesterday.'
- (197) *nu urux k'-as dag-ɫ<sup>w</sup>anal anwal-li-če*  
 I be.afraid LV:IPFV-HAB.EGO yesterday-like Anwar-OBL-SUPER(LAT)  
*χ<sup>we</sup> q'ac' b-ik-a-la ile*  
 dog bite N-happen:PFV-IRR-APPR COMP  
 'I am afraid that the dog might bite Anwar as it happened yesterday.'

The clause with the apprehensive and complementizer can be inserted into the main clause:

- (198) *Musa-ni mura d-arʔ-ib [dunijal ur-a-la ile]*  
 Musa-ERG hay NPL-gather:PFV-AOR world rain-IRR-APPR COMP  
 'Musa collected the hay out of fear that rain starts.'
- (199) *Musa-ni [dunijal ur-a-la ile] mura d-arʔ-ib*  
 Musa-ERG world rain-IRR-APPR COMP hay PL-gather:PFV-AOR  
 'Musa collected the hay out of fear that rain starts.'

The apprehensive construction without the complementizer cannot be inserted into the main clause:

- (200) *eli šula-le b-uc-a [Ɂadara*  
 child tight-ADVZ N-hold:PFV-IMP.TR dish  
*b-oʔrʔ-aq-a-la]*  
 N-break:PFV-CAUS-IRR-APPR  
 'Hold the child tight so that it does not break the dish.'
- (201) \**eli [Ɂadara b-oʔrʔ-aq-a-la] šula-le b-uc-a*  
 child dish N-break-CAUS-IRR-APPR tight-ADVZ N-hold:PFV-IMP.TR  
 Intended: 'Hold the child tight so that it does not break the dish.'
- (202) *sumka b-uχ-a mataħ ar-d-uʔ-a-la*  
 bag N-bring:PFV-IMP.TR money PV-NPL-lose:PFV-IRR-APPR  
 'Take the bag not to lose the money.'

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- (203) \**sumka* [*matah ar-d-uʔ-a-la*] *b-ux-a*  
 bag money PV-NPL-lose:PFV-IRR-APPR N-bring:PFV-IMP.TR  
 Intended: ‘Take the bag not to lose the money.’

Apprehensive is used to express negative purpose:

- (204) *w-aʔld-e adaj-ni hu dam w-aqʼ-a-la*  
 M-hide:PFV-IMP father-ERG you.sg(NOM) beat M-do:PFV-IRR-APPR  
 ‘Hide, so that your father does not beat you.’
- (205) *cʼa-li-che hule w-iz-e, b-uš-a-la*  
 fire-OBL-SUPER(LAT) look M-LV:PFV-IMP N-die(of.fire):PFV-IRR-APPR  
 ‘Watch the fire so that it does not go out.’

The purpose converb in *-alis* is also used to express negative purpose. Unlike apprehensive, negation in the purpose converb is overtly marked by prefix *ha-*:

- (206) *w-aʔld-e adaj-ni hu dam*  
 M-hide:PFV-IMP father-ERG you.sg(NOM) beat  
*ha-qʼ-a-lis*  
 NEG-M.do:PFV-IRR-PURP  
 ‘Hide, so that your father don’t beat you.’
- (207) *cʼa-li-che hule w-iz-e*  
 fire-OBL-SUPER(LAT) look M-LV:PFV-IMP  
*ha-b-uš-a-lis*  
 NEG-N-die(of.fire):PFV-IRR-PURP  
 ‘Watch the fire so that it does not go out.’

As some other verbal forms, apprehensives can be part of constructions with topicalizing reduplication.

- (208) *it w-erχʰ ha-rχʰ-a-la nu le-l-la*  
 this M-enter:PFV NEG-M.enter:PFV-IRR-APPR I AUX-F-EGO  
*uruχ kʼ-uwe*  
 be.afraid LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 ‘I worry that he may not enter [the university].’

## 10 Discussion

In this section, I will compare the Mehweb system of non-indicative forms with that of several other Dargwa lects (languages or dialects): Akusha, Ashty, Shiri,

Tanty, and Icari. Akusha is especially interesting for this study, because it is suggested that Mehwebs came to the place where they now live from the areas where the Akusha dialect is spoken (Dobrushina 2018) (this volume). If this hypothesis is true, we might expect that Mehweb will show more similarity with Akusha than with other Dargwa lects. Another object for the comparison is Avar – the language which is spoken in the vicinity and which could have influenced Mehweb.

The main prominent feature of Mehweb is the absence of personal endings in all non-indicative forms. In this respect, Mehweb is presumably unique among Dargwa languages and dialects. Akusha, Tanty, Shiri, Ashty, Icari – all distinguish persons in the forms of optative and in Conditional forms. The loss of personal endings may be due to the influence of Avar, since the latter has no personal paradigm.

Some traces of the former personal endings are still present in the grammar of non-indicative mood forms. Mehweb prohibitive ends in *-ad(i)*. In Akusha Dargwa, *-ad* of prohibitive coincides with the second person Future marker (van den Berg 2001: 36). Shiri, Ashty and Icari use the endings *-t/-t:* in prohibitive, which are the markers of the second person in some other forms of these lects (Belyaev (b) manuscript; Mutalov & Sumbatova 2003). Mehweb, however, has the marker *-ad(i)* only in the prohibitive, hence synchronically it does not denote person. Sumbatova suggested that the Mehweb prohibitive marker originates from the second person ending (Sumbatova & Lander 2014: 590).

In other respects, however, the Mehweb prohibitive is similar to that of the other Dargwa lects: it is formed by a special negative prefix *ma-* (used only for the prohibitive and the negative optative) and the suffix *-ad(i)*. In Avar, the prohibitive is expressed by a suffix.

There are several more features which distinguish Mehweb non-indicative mood forms from what is typical for Dargwa lects.

The system of imperative marking is simpler in Mehweb than in other Dargwa dialects. In Akusha, Tanty, Ashty, Shiri, and Icari, the choice of the imperative marker is triggered by three factors: transitivity, aspect and the formal class of the verb. In Mehweb, the formal class is irrelevant for the choice of the imperative marker. The only relevant factors are transitivity and aspect.

It is interesting that the marker of the imperative itself is formally identical to that of Tanty but not to that of Akusha (which is supposed to be closest to Mehweb). In Akusha, Ashty, Shiri and Icari, the marker for perfective transitive imperatives is *-a*, other types of imperative have *-i* or some other marker depending on the class of verb (van den Berg 2001: 48; Belyaev (a) & (b) manuscripts; Mutalov & Sumbatova 2003). In Mehweb, the second class of imperatives takes *-e*,

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like the Tanty dialect (Sumbatova & Lander 2014: 142). The marker *-e* in Mehweb could have been supported by the imperative of Avar, but the distribution of Avar markers is opposite to that of Mehweb: *-e* for transitive imperatives, *-a* for intransitive (Charachidzé 1981: 105).

Mehweb differs from other Dargwa idioms in using the marker *-na* for the plural imperative and prohibitive. Akusha, Ashty, Shiri, Tanty, and Icari also mark the plurality of the addressee by a special ending, but in these dialects this marker is identical to the marker of the second person plural in other forms. The Mehweb imperative/prohibitive plural marker differs from other Dargwa lects even formally. In Mehweb, plural imperative/prohibitive is *-na*; compare to *-ja/-aja* in Akusha (van den Berg 2001: 48), *-a*: in Ashty (Belyaev (a) manuscript), *-aja* in Shiri (Belyaev (b) manuscript), *-a/-ja* in Tanty (Sumbatova & Lander 2014: 142), *-aja* in Icari (Mutalov & Sumbatova 2003). Note that Avar has no special endings for the second plural imperative. For the moment, I have no suggestions as to the origin of the marker *-na*.

Unusual for Dargwa idioms are also Mehweb conditional markers. In Akusha, Ashty, Shiri, Tanty, and Icari, conditional forms are marked by the suffix *-li* or *-le*. Counterfactual conditionals in all these lects are derived from hypothetical conditionals with the marker of the past tense. Mehweb conditionals differ both in terms of content and in terms of structure. Mehweb conditionals have other markers than these Dargwa dialects (*-k'a* for hypothetical conditional converb and *-q'alle* for counterfactual; see §8.1 on the probable origin of these markers). The counterfactual form is not formally related to the hypothetical. It seems therefore that the proto-Dargwa conditional forms were completely substituted in Mehweb by new forms.

The optative of Mehweb has the same marker *-b* as other Dargwa lects. Another similarity is the presence of truncated optative forms in Mehweb as well as in Akusha, Ashty, Shiri and Tanty (see references in §7.1). The difference from other Dargwa lects is that the Mehweb optative has one form for all persons, as I mentioned before. Mehweb is also simpler than the related idioms is that it does not use the optative for commands which have first person object, as do Tanty, Shiri, Ashty, and Icari (I have no information about this construction in Akusha).

As most other Dargwa dialects, Mehweb lacks a dedicated form for the Hortative. The meaning of the hortative is regularly expressed by the combination of the particle based on the imperative of 'go' and the infinitive. Unfortunately, there is no sufficient information on how the hortative is expressed in Akusha, Ashty, Shiri, Tanty, and Icari.

As for the jussive, Mehweb uses a periphrastic construction to express it. The combination of the imperative of the verb with the imperative of the verb

of speech (lit. ‘verb-imp say’) is found in several East Caucasian languages (Akhvakh ([Creissels](#) manuscript), Lak and Archi ([Dobrushina 2012](#))), but not among the Dargwa lects discussed above.

Apprehensives seem to be rare in East Caucasian (as well as in other languages of the world). To my knowledge, apart from Mehweb, the apprehensive is attested only in Archi ([Kibrik 1977](#)). These forms however are rarely looked for by linguists, so the reason for the infrequency of these forms can as well be their undocumentedness.

## 11 Conclusion

As this study has shown, there are several features which show the special position of Mehweb among other Dargwa lects. In several cases, Mehweb differs from other five lects used for comparison, while those five show affinity between them. The study of non-indicative moods did not show any special similarity between Mehweb and Akusha. The influence of Avar, however, is also not attested in these forms. The only feature of Mehweb system of non-indicative moods which can result from intensive contact with other languages is that, in several respects, it is simpler than the system of other Dargwa lects.

## List of abbreviations

1SG	first person singular
AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
AOR	aorist
APPR	apprehensive
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CARD	cardinal numeral
CAUS	causative
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
COMIT	comitative
COMP	complementizer
COND	conditional
COP	copula
CTRF	counterfactual

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CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
EMPH	emphasis (particle)
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IMP	imperative
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INDEF	indefinite particle
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
INTJ	interjection
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
IRR	irrealis (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NEGVOL	negation in volitional forms (negative imperative and negative optative)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
OPT	optative
ORD	ordinal numeral
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PROH	prohibitive
PRS	present
PST	past



PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PURP	purposive converb
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question (interrogative particle)
QUOT	quotative (particle)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
TRANS	motion through a spatial domain

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## Chapter 6

# Periphrastic causative constructions in Mehweb

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In Mehweb, periphrastic causatives are formed by a combination of the infinitive of the lexical verb with a verb that conveys semantics of causation and originate from caused motion verbs. Mehweb periphrastic causatives do not qualify as canonical. Various tests show that the grammaticalization has not yet been completed. But this is not a compositional expression, either. Although one clause usually contains either a morphological or a periphrastic causative marker, there is evidence that in a periphrastic causative construction the lexical verb itself may carry the causative affix, resulting in only one causative meaning.

**Keywords:** causative, periphrastic causative, double causative, Mehweb, Dargwa, East Caucasian.

## 1 Introduction

The causative construction is a linguistic expression which denotes a complex situation consisting of two component events: (1) the event that causes another event to happen; and (2) the result of this causation (Comrie 1989: 165–166; Nedjalkov & Silnitsky 1973; Kulikov 2001). Here, the first situation refers to the action of the causer and the second explains the effect of the causation on the causee.

Causativization is a valency-increasing derivation which is applied to the structure of the clause. In the resulting construction, the causer is the subject and the causee shifts to a non-subject position. The set of semantic roles does not remain the same. Minimally, a new agent is added. With a new argument added, we have to redistribute the grammatical relations taking into account how these participants semantically relate to each other. The general scheme of the causative derivation always implies a participant that is treated as a causer



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(someone or something that spreads his/her/its control over the situation and ‘pulls the trigger’). At the same time, there is someone who is, willingly or not, involved in the situation induced by the causer. With originally transitive predicates (or intransitive predicates with an indirect object), there is also another, patient-like participant who does not interact with the causer directly and does not play a role in the redistribution of grammatical relations. This participant retains the marking that it had in the original sentence. The following English examples illustrate these options:

- a. *The professor made his student work hard.* (originally intransitive)
- b. *The professor made his student drop a course this semester.* (originally transitive)
- c. *The professor made his student laugh at his joke.* (originally intransitive with an indirect object)

Mehweb has a morphologically productive category of morphological causative (Ageeva 2014; Daniel 2018). The aim of this study is to identify and investigate the means of building periphrastic constructions with causative semantics, with a verb that functions as a separate cause predicate in the construction (causative verb below). As noted in Harris & Campbell (1995: 151–194), biclausal structures may undergo simplification over the history of a language and end up as a fused clause. In this paper I shall briefly discuss the degree of grammaticalization of periphrastic causative constructions in Mehweb by considering their clause structure.

I propose the following research questions:

1. Are there any grammaticalization effects in constructions with causative verbs?
2. What are the meanings these constructions express, in addition to causation?
3. What is the syntactic structure of periphrastic causatives? Are there any syntactic constraints on building such constructions?
4. Is there any difference between constructions involving animate or inanimate causees?

The paper is divided into five sections. They present the results of syntactic tests applied in order to detect whether these constructions are periphrastic causatives or not. §2 surveys possible ways of non-periphrastic expression of the causative meaning, including synthetic and suppletive causatives. §3 introduces lexical verbs participating in periphrastic causative constructions. §4 considers the syntax of such constructions in more detail, in particular, what types of verbs

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are allowed to be used with each causative verb. In §5, some aspects of forming negative causative clauses are discussed. Finally, §6 provides some evidence on double causative construction.

## 2 Synthetic and suppletive causatives

There are three possible ways of expressing causative meaning in Mehweb: synthetic (morphological), suppletive (lexical) and analytic (periphrastic).

Synthetic causatives are formed by adding an affix to the verbal stem. Synthetic means of expressing causation usually produce monoclausal structures, with no additional predicate added to the syntactic structure. In Mehweb, the causative affix *-aq-* is used; it has an allomorph *-aχaq-* with a very limited distribution. The affix can be added to both perfective and imperfective verb bases. Cf.:

- (1) *abaj-ni      urši-li-ze                      kung   b-aʿld-aʿq-ib*  
 mother-ERG boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) book N-hide:PFV-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Mother made her son hide a book.’

This way of causative derivation is highly productive in Mehweb. The causative affix can be added to all kinds of verbs. For further discussion of morphological causative formation see [Ageeva \(2014\)](#); [Daniel \(2018\)](#).

Suppletive causatives are also called ‘covert’ causatives ([Kulikov 2001](#)), since they share no morphological material with their non-causative equivalents. The English pair *kill* and *die* is commonly treated as an example of suppletive (lexical) causativization. In Mehweb, the pair CL<sup>1</sup>-*aʿbʔas* ‘to kill’ and CL-*ebkʿes* ‘die’ is also an example of lexical causativization.

## 3 Periphrastic causativization

The constructions considered in this paper (originally) represent complementation with several matrix verbs<sup>2</sup>:

- *aʔas* ‘drive:PFV’ – *ʔes* ‘drive:IPFV’ (cause to move, as of sheep)
- CL-*aqas* ‘leave:PFV’ – CL-*irqes* ‘leave:IPFV’ (leave something, let stay)
- CL-*aqʿas* ‘do:PFV’ – CL-*iqʿes* ‘do:IPFV’

<sup>1</sup> Here and further I will use glossing CL- to refer to a gender agreement slot (on verb agreement morphology, see [Daniel 2018](#), in this volume).

<sup>2</sup> Further, verbal forms from the list will be given with the perfective stem as a quotation form.

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Compare the two causative constructions in (2). Ex. (2a) (repeated ex. 1) illustrates the synthetic causative expression. (2b) conveys the causative meaning, but involves two verbs. The main predicate is the verb *aʔib* ‘drove’, and its dependent argument is the verb of caused action (CL-*urhes* ‘tell’).

- (2) a. *abaj-ni urši-li-ze kung b-aʔld-aʔq-ib*  
 mother.OBL-ERG boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) book N-hide:PFV-CAUS-AOR  
 b. *abaj-ni urši kung b-aʔld-es aʔib*  
 mother.OBL-ERG boy book N-hide:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Mother made her son hide a book.’

The lexical meaning of the verbs *aʔas* ‘drive, cause to move’ involve motion, more specifically, caused motion, describing the action of driving e.g. a herd. The lexical meaning of the verb CL-*aqas* is ‘leave’, ‘leave behind’, ‘let stay where it is’ expresses the permissive caused motion. Consider examples of non-causative uses of these verbs:

- (3) *adaj-ni aʔ-ib maza ʔaʔjne*  
 father-ERG drive:PFV-AOR ram yard.IN(LAT)  
 ‘Father drove ram into the yard.’  
 (4) *adaj-ni b-aq-ib inc ustuj-če-b*  
 father-ERG N-leave:PFV-AOR apple table.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS)  
 ‘Father left an apple on the table.’

According to Song (2001), analytic causatives include two predicates. One is the predicate of cause, namely a verb that expresses causative impact. It has two functions: (1) to introduce a new argument (the causer), and (2) to establish the new position of the causee. The other predicate which functions as a lexical argument to the predicate of cause is called the predicate of effect. It fills the slot established by the predicate of cause. For instance, in *The concierge made the lobby boy carry the bags on his own* the predicate of cause is the verb *made* and *carry* is the predicate of effect. Below, I follow this terminology.

I will discuss the causative constructions produced by combining cause and effect predicates. Note that the verbs used as predicate of cause continue to be used in their lexical meaning, and this meaning involves an element of causation. The question is thus whether these verbs should be considered grammaticalized expressions of causation. Below, I argue that there is linguistic evidence to conclude that they are, to some extent, grammaticalized.



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## 3.1 The structure of the periphrastic construction

In Mehweb the syntactic structure of causative constructions requires using a finite predicate of cause and a non-finite predicate of effect. The predicates of cause functions as the predicate of a simple transitive sentence, with its A (the causer) in ergative case and the causee in the absolutive case. The effect predicates are represented by infinitives, either perfective or imperfective (see (5a)–(5b)). Other verbal forms are ungrammatical, either finite or non-finite; cf. examples (5c)–(5e) with the aorist, imperfective past and perfective converb, respectively.

- (5) a. *adaj-ni kung urši b-elč'-es aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG book boy N-read:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Father made his son read the book.'
- b. *adaj-ni kung urši luč'-es aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG book boy read:IPFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Father made his son be reading the book.'
- c. \**adaj-ni kung urši b-elč'-un aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG book boy N-read:PFV-AOR drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Father made his son read the book.'
- d. \**adaj-ni kung urši luč'-ib aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG book boy read:IPFV-IPFT drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Father made his son be reading the book.'
- e. \**adaj-ni kung urši b-elč'-i-le aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG book boy N-read:PFV-AOR-CVB drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Father made his son read the book.'

The word order is not strict, but there is a preference for SOV. Considering the clausality of the whole construction, we may expect that the object 'book' of the embedded verb 'read' to be adjacent to it, but it is not. This is however not a good criterion for postulating biclausal structure. Native speakers do not seem to be very sensitive to changing word order of the direct and indirect object in the examples above. The finite verb is typically in the final position, and the infinitive immediately precedes it. These two forms cannot be separated by an additional syntactic phrase, e.g. by a temporal adverb (see (6c); the rule is only relevant in case if both verbal forms are located at the end of the phrase).

- (6) a. *abaj-ni rasul q'ar iʃšq-es iʔ-an har*  
 mother.OBL-ERG Rasul grass mow:IPFV-INF drive:IPFV-HAB every

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*barhi*

day

- b. *har barhi abaj-ni rasul q'ar iʃʃq-es*  
 every day mother.OBL-ERG Rasul grass mow:IPFV-INF  
*iʔ-an*  
 drive:IPFV-HAB

- c. \**abaj-ni rasul q'ar iʃʃq-es har barhi*  
 mother.OBL-ERG Rasul grass mow:IPFV-INF every day  
*iʔ-an*  
 drive:IPFV-HAB

‘Mother makes Rasul mow the lawn every day.’

The scope of the temporal phrase is depends on the context. Sometimes the temporal or adverbial phrase belongs with the main clause, sometimes it belongs with the subordinate clause. Both readings are available when the temporal phrase is placed at the border between the two clauses. Consider the next example:

- (7) *adaj-ni urši aʔ-ib har barhi mašina as-es /*  
 father-ERG boy drive:PFV-AOR every day car take:PFV-INF /  
*is-es*  
 take:IPFV-INF

‘Every day the father made his son buy a car.’

‘The father made his son buy a car every day.’

In (7), even though the cause predicate has perfective aspect, there are no restrictions on the aspect of the effect predicate. The same is observed in constructions with the cause predicate in the imperfective, where either imperfective or perfective effect predicate is allowed. In other words, aspectual categories of the cause and effect predicates are mutually independent.

Causative semantics has two major subtypes: (a) something is made/urged to be done/happen (factitive causative), and (b) something is not prevented from being done (permissive causative). The first meaning is associated with the verb *aʔas* ‘drive’. The second meaning is associated with the verb *CL-aqas* ‘leave’.

### 3.2 The use of *aʔas* ‘drive’

Factitive causatives (cf. English constructions with *make*, *force*, *get* or *have* someone (to) do something) are formed by means of the verb *aʔas* ‘drive’. The causee

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usually is an animate object. Inanimate objects are incompatible with the semantics of coercion, as they cannot be urged to do something (see below for exceptions). The causer is marked with the ergative, while the causee carries the absolutive. Consider examples (8)–(10):

- (8) *pat'imat-ini anwar u<sup>q</sup>'-es a?-ib*  
 patimat-ERG Anwar M.go:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Patimat made Anwar go away.'
- (9) *sovet-ini direktur uškul q'-a<sup>b</sup>?-es a?-ib*  
 administration-ERG principal school PV-close:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Administration made the principal close the school.'
- (10) *\*anwal-li-ni inc b-erh-es a?-ib*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG apple N-rotten:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Anwar made the apple rot.'

The causer is typically represented by an animate agent. However, it is also possible to have an inanimate causer. These uses seem to be explained through personification, attributing control to natural forces.

- (11) *izaj-ni abaj-la beč' ulč'-es a?-ib*  
 illness.OBL-ERG mother.OBL-GEN head be.bald:IPFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'The illness made mother grow bald.'
- (12) *izaj-ni anwar balnica-le-ħe u<sup>q</sup>'-es*  
 illness.OBL-ERG Anwar hospital-OBL-IN(LAT) M.go:PFV-INF  
*a?-ib*  
 drive:PFV-AOR  
 'The illness caused Anwar to go to hospital.'

In (13a) the snow appears as a real causer, not a natural force. In a more realistic situation, for instance after a meltdown in the mountains, the sentence would be as in (13b).

- (13) a. *do<sup>f</sup>hi-li-ni ħark'<sup>w</sup> χ<sup>w</sup>ala b-aq'-as a?-ib*  
 snow-OBL-ERG river big N-do:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Snow has made a river become [*lit.* to be done] bigger.'
- b. *do<sup>f</sup>hi-li-ni ħark'<sup>w</sup> χ<sup>w</sup>ala b-aq'-ib*  
 snow-OBL-ERG river big N-do:PFV-AOR  
 'Snow has made the river big.'

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Examples with an inanimate causee are not common (judging by the interviews with language consultants), but not very difficult to construct. The consultants produce them freely and do not have troubles in identifying the participants' roles.

- (14) *ʔali-ni adaj-la sune-če-l naʔʔ aq b-aq'-as*  
 Ali-ERG father-GEN self.OBL-SUPER(LAT)-EMPH(LAT) hand up  
*aʔ-ib*  
 N-:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Ali made his father to raise a hand against him.'

The causative construction with the verb *aʔas* is, thus, flexible. It allows using an inanimate as well as an animate causer. The same applies to the causee. In particular, in example (11), the illness is presented as something physically real which functions as a living creature. While consultants allow such uses, they do not produce them as first answer in the elicitation task but simply accept a constructed sentence. In any case, it is important that there are no strict constraints on animacy of the participants.

### 3.3 Permissive causative with CL-*aqas* 'leave'

In the permissive construction, the causer permits rather than causes the causee to bring about the caused event. In Mehweb, it is usually expressed by means of the verb CL-*aqas* 'leave'. The causer carries ergative marking, while the causee is in the absolutive. Consider some examples with different effect predicates (15)–(17):

- (15) *sovet-ini direktur uškul q'-aʔbʔ-es*  
 administration-ERG principal school PV-close:PFV-INF  
*w-aq-ib*  
 M-leave:PFV-AOR  
 'Administration let the principal close the school.'
- (16) *adaj-ni dursi urši qum-art-es d-aq-ib*  
 father-ERG girl boy forget-LV:PFV-INF F1-leave:PFV-AOR  
 'Father let his daughter forget the boy.'

One of the main contexts for the permissive is a positive response to request. For instance, in (17), it is presupposed that, before kissing Patimat, Anwar actually asked a permission about this action.

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- (17) *pat'imat-ini anwar w-aq-ib umma d-aq'-as*  
 Patimat-ERG Anwar M-leave:PFV-AOR kiss NPL-do:PFV-INF  
 'Patimat let Anwar kiss her.'

On the other hand, there may be no inquiries or requests, and the causer is introduced as an independent agent. Inanimate causees are widespread in such contexts. Consider some examples:

- (18) *rasuj-ni šin rurq-es d-aq-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG water flow:IPFV-INF NPL-do:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul let the water flow.'
- (19) *rasuj-ni uq'laha abx-es b-aq-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG window open:PFV-INF N-leave:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul let the window open.'

Examples like (18) and (19) can be described in terms of a physical situation in which the causer does not interfere with the situation of the causee. There are some other effect predicates that denote natural processes. For instance, verbs like *ulč'es* 'become bald', *mi? a?was* 'freeze', *CL-ic'es* 'melt' in causative constructions usually are found in combination with the cause predicate *CL-aqas* 'leave'. Cf. the following examples:

- (20) *anwal-li-ni di? mi? a?w-as b-aq-ib /*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG meat freeze:PFV-INF N-leave:PFV-AOR /  
 \**a?-ib*  
 drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Anwar froze the meat'
- (21) *anwal-li-ni k'wama b-ac'-es b-aq-ib /*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG butter N-melt:PFV-INF N-leave:PFV-AOR /  
 \**a?-ib*  
 drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Anwar melted butter'

The permissive constructions in Mehweb are closely connected to the original meaning of the word *CL-aqas* 'leave'. The causer leaves the causee on its own without taking any part in the change of its state. This is especially visible when the causer is an inanimate object (18–21). In the cases where the causee is a person (17), the permissive element is evident. The permissive is then understood in a metaphorical sense of not preventing someone's action. I interpret the construction with *CL-aqas* 'leave' as a permissive causative.

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### 3.4 Agreement in permissive causative construction

The relation between case assignment and gender agreement is relevant only for the verb CL-*aqas* ‘leave’, because *aʔas* ‘drive’ does not carry any gender markers. Periphrastic causative constructions allow two agreement strategies. The first one apparently prevails, with the causee retaining the absolutive case (22a). Note that gender agreement on the verb is controlled by the absolutive participant (the masculine gender marker appears on the verb ‘leave’). The second strategy shows marking of the causee by inter-lative<sup>3</sup> case; the gender agreement changes. There is no absolutive participant in the matrix clause to agree with. What we observe is distant agreement between the matrix predicate and the absolutive argument of the dependent clause. Consultants translate both (22a) and (22b) in the same way.

- (22) a. *sovet-ini*                      *direktur* *uškul* *q'-aʔbʔ-es*  
 administration-ERG principal school PV-close-INF  
*w-aq-ib*  
 M-leave:PFV-AOR
- b. *sovet-ini*                      *direktur-li-ze*                      *uškul* *q'-aʔbʔ-es*  
 administration-ERG principal-OBL-INTER(LAT) school PV-close-INF  
*b-aq-ib*  
 N-leave:PFV-AOR
- ‘The administration let the principal close the school.’

In (23), the causative verb shows plural agreement with the absolutive argument in the dependent clause.

- (23) *patʔimat-ini* *urši-li-ze*                      *d-aq-ib*                      *d-ix-es*  
 Patimat-ERG boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) NPL-leave:PFV-AOR NPL-put:PFV-INF  
*heš-di* *karawatu-ne* *caj-li* *quli*  
 this-PL bed-PL one-OBL room.IN(LAT)  
 ‘Patimat let the boy carry these beds to another room.’

### 3.5 Adjectival causative

Adjectives form causatives by means of ‘do’-periphrasis, adding the verb CL-*aqʔas* ‘do’ (24b). In Mehweb, this is one of the rare contexts where the adjective cannot be used with the attributive affix (cf. 24b and 24c).

<sup>3</sup> See [Chechuro \(2018\)](#) on the use of the form.

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- (24) a. *musa zuba-l*  
 Musa blind-ATR  
 ‘Musa is blind.’
- b. *χaj-ni musa zuba w-aq’-ib*  
 khan.OBL-ERG Musa blind M-do:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Khan blinded Musa.’
- c. \**χaj-ni musa zuba-l w-aq’-ib*  
 khan.OBL-ERG Musa blind-ATR M-do:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Khan blinded Musa.’

## 4 The syntax of causatives

## 4.1 Biclausality

While morphological causative constructions are monoclausal, periphrastic causatives are apparently biclausal. It means that they have a main clause that contains the causative predicate that introduces the causer and the dependent clause that describes the caused event. The causee also belongs to the matrix clause. In Mehweb, the dependent clause is headed by an infinitive (25).

- (25) *anwal-li-ni rasul abaj-ze b-arx-le*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG Rasul mother.OBL-INTER(LAT) N-be.right-CVB  
*b-urh-es aʔ-ib*  
 N-tell:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Anwar made Rasul tell mother the truth.’

In order to prove that there are two syntactic clauses in periphrastic causative constructions, I use several tests. The first test is based on the case of the causee. In (26), two agentive participants are present. It is impossible to have two ergative arguments in one clause. The verb *CL-erh<sup>w</sup>-es* ‘slaughter’ also requires an ergative agent, but only the verb *aʔas* ‘drive’ assigns the ergative to its agent. The case of the causee is absolutive and is thus assigned by the predicate of cause.

- (26) a. *rasuj-ni uzi maza b-erh<sup>w</sup>-es aʔ-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG boy ram N-slaughter:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR
- b. \**rasuj-ni uzi-ni maza b-erh<sup>w</sup>-es aʔ-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG boy-ERG ram N-slaughter:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul made his son slaughter the ram.’

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The second test is based on agreement. The verb agrees in gender with the absolutive participant of its clause. If the analytic causative would constitute only one clause, it would be possible for a verbal form which is marked with a gender marker to agree in gender with the sole absolutive argument. In (27), the predicate of cause agrees with the absolutive argument (i.e. the causee) in the main clause, whereas the predicate of effect agrees in gender with the other absolutive argument. Changing agreement so that the predicate of cause agrees with *kung* ‘book’ is ungrammatical. Based on §3.4, one could expect that distant agreement from the embedded clause is available, because, in principle, the matrix verb may agree with the embedded absolutive argument.

- (27) *adaj-ni urši kung b-elč'-es iʔ-uwe le-w /*  
 father-ERG boy book N-read:PFV-INF drive:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M /  
 \**le-b*  
 AUX-N  
 ‘Father made his son read the book.’

The periphrastic causative construction contains two absolutive arguments. Only one of them controls the agreement of the causative verb. The other triggers agreement on the predicate of effect. It is thus biclausal.

## 4.2 Types of predicates of effect

The predicate of effect fills the valency of the causative verb. In all periphrastic causative constructions the causer gets ergative marking, while the causee appears in the absolutive or inter-lative case. All other arguments preserve their case marking. Below, different possible types of effect predicates with the verb *aʔas* ‘drive’ (factive causatives) are discussed. The permissive causative verb *CL-aqas* ‘leave’ behaves in exactly the same way.

### 4.2.1 A-intransitive verbs and P-intransitive verbs

In general, intransitive verbs are more frequently causativised. An agentive intransitive verb takes one lexical subject in the absolutive case and represents an action, as *duc* ‘CL-uqes’ ‘run’ in (28).

- (28) a. *anwar duc' uq-un*  
 Anwar run M.LV:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Anwar ran.’



## 6 Periphrastic causative constructions in Mehweb

- b. *učitej-ni anwar duc' uq-es aʔ-ib*  
 teacher.OBL-ERG Anwar run M.LV:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'The teacher made Anwar run.'

The difference between A- and P-intransitive verbs is the degree of subject's control. While the subject of A-intransitive controls the situation he/she is involved in, the subject of P-intransitive does not. cf. (29):

- (29) a. *inc b-erħ-ib*  
 apple N-rotten:PFV-AOR  
 'The apple has rotten.'
- b. *anwal-li-ni inc b-erħ-es b-aʔ-ib*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG apple N-rotten:PFV-INF N-leave:PFV-AOR  
 'Anwar let the apple rot.'

## 4.2.2 Experiential verbs

In East Caucasian, subject of experiential verbs are non-canonical subject and take non-core case marking. In Mehweb, they are coded with the inter-lative case (30a), or with a dative with the verb *CL-iges* 'want'. Under causativization, the causee switches from inter-lative to absolutive, according to the general scheme causee case marking in analytic causative constructions.

- (30) a. *dursi-li-ze urši qum-art-ur*  
 girl-OBL-INTER(LAT) boy forget-LV:PFV-AOR  
 'The girl forgot the boy.'
- b. *adaj-ni dursi / \*dursi-li-ze urši qum-art-es*  
 father-ERG girl / girl-OBL-INTER(LAT) boy forget-LV:PFV-INF  
*aʔ-ib*  
 drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Father made his daughter forget the boy.'

With morphological causatives of experiential effect predicates, the causee retains its inter-lative case. Consider the following example, quoted from Ageeva (2014: 8):

- (31) a. *ʔali-ze χabar arb-ib*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) tale hear:PFV-AOR  
 'Ali heard a tale.'

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- b. *pat'imat-ini ʔali-ze ʁabar arb-aq-ib*  
 Patimat-ERG Ali-INTER(LAT) tale hear:PFV-CAUS-AOR  
 'Patimat told Ali a tale.'

Unlike what happens in morphological causatives, in analytic causative construction the original marking of the causee as non-canonical subject is ungrammatical (see 30b).

#### 4.2.3 Transitive verbs

With originally transitive constructions, case marking of the causee changes. In analytic causatives, the causer takes the ergative, leaving the absolutive slot to the causee (32b). Having two ergative arguments in one utterance is not allowed (32c).

- (32) a. *uzi-li-ni maza b-erh-un*  
 boy-OBL-ERG ram N-slaughter:PFV-AOR  
 'The son slaughtered the ram.'
- b. *rasuj-ni uzi maza b-erh<sup>w</sup>-es aʔ-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG boy ram N-slaughter:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR
- c. *\*rasuj-ni uzi-ni maza b-erh<sup>w</sup>-es aʔ-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG boy-ERG ram N-slaughter:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul made his brother cut the ram.'

#### 4.2.4 Ditransitive verbs

Ditransitive verbs take three arguments that correspond to the subject, the recipient and the theme. As with causativization of transitive verbs, analytic causativization of ditransitive verbs does not license two ergative arguments. The causee is coded by inter-lative.

- (33) a. *urši-li-ni abaj-ze arc g-ib*  
 boy-OBL-ERG mother-INTER(LAT) money give:PFV-AOR  
 'The boy gave his mother the money'
- b. *anwal-li-ni urši abaj-ze arc g-es*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG boy mother-INTER(LAT) money give:PFV-INF  
*aʔ-ib*  
 drive:PFV-AOR  
 'Anwar made his son give his mother the money.'

## 6 Periphrastic causative constructions in Mehweb

Causativization of transitive and ditransitive verbs thus follows the same scheme, with the causer in ergative and the causee in a peripheral case.

## 5 Negation

Formation of a negative clause is one of possible ways for testing the degree of grammaticalization of causative constructions. The negation in constructions with *aʔas* ‘drive’ is only allowed on the matrix predicate, that is, the predicate of cause. The dependent infinitive cannot take the negation prefix *ha-*.

- (34) a. *abaj-ni rasul q'ar iʃq-es aʔib har*  
 mother-ERG Rasul grass mow:IPFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR every  
*barhi*  
 day  
 ‘Mother made Rasul mow the lawn every day.’
- b. *abajni rasul q'ar iʃq-es ha-ʔib har*  
 mother-ERG Rasul grass mow:IPFV-INF NEG-drive:PFV-AOR every  
*barhi*  
 day
- c. *\*abaj-ni rasul q'ar haʃq-es aʔib har*  
 mother-ERG Rasul grass NEG-mow:IPFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR every  
*barhi*  
 day
- d. *\*abaj-ni rasul q'ar haʃq-es ha-ʔib*  
 mother-ERG Rasul grass NEG-mow:IPFV-INF NEG-drive:PFV-AOR  
*har barhi*  
 every day  
 ‘Mother did not make Rasul mow the lawn every day.’

The examples (34c) and (34d) are considered ungrammatical by consultants no matter what meaning is implied (whether the negation scopes over the embedded predicate ‘makes not to mow’ or the matrix verb ‘does not make to mow’). Another example shows the same effect.

- (35) a. *učitel-t-ini nuša meħ<sup>w</sup>e-la mezi-sum*  
 teacher-PL-ERG we in.Megeb-GEN language-REPL

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- buh-a<sup>ɕ</sup>q'-as*                      *ħ-aʔ-ib*  
HPL-talk-LV:IPFV-INF NEG-drive:PFV-AOR  
‘Teachers do not make us speak Mehweb [at school].’
- b. *\*učitel-t-ini*      *nuša* *meħ<sup>w</sup>e-la*      *mezi-sum*  
teacher-PL-ERG we in.Megeb-GEN language-REPL  
*ħa-b-uħa<sup>ɕ</sup>q'-as*                      *aʔ-ib*  
NEG-hpl-talk:IPFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
‘The teachers make us not speak Mehweb [at school].’

On the other hand, in constructions with CL-*aqas* ‘leave’ it is possible to use the negative prefix both on the predicate of effect and on the predicate of cause, with different resulting meanings.

- (36) *adaj-ni*      *urši* *zul*                      *kak* *ħa-b-iq'-es*  
father-ERG boy in.the.morning pray NEG-N-do:IPFV-INF  
*w-aq-ib*  
M-leave:PFV-AOR  
‘Father let his son not to do the morning pray.’
- (37) *adaj-ni*      *urši* *zul*                      *kak* *b-iq'-es*  
father-ERG boy in.the.morning pray N-do:IPFV-INF  
*ħa-q-ib*  
NEG-M.leave:PFV-AOR  
‘Father did not let his son do the morning pray.’

The next pair of examples illustrates the same.

- (38) *abaj-ni*                      *urši* *ħa-q-ib*                      *uškuj-ħe*  
mother.OBL-ERG boy NEG-M.leave:PFV-AOR school.OBL-IN(LAT)  
*w-aš-es*  
M-go:IPFV-INF  
‘Mother did not let her son go to school.’
- (39) *abaj-ni*                      *urši* *w-aq-ib*                      *uškuj-ħe*  
mother.OBL-ERG boy M-leave:PFV-AOR school.OBL-IN(LAT)  
*ħa-š-es*  
NEG-M.go:IPFV-INF  
‘Mother let her son not to go to school.’

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The examples above show the possibility of placing the negative prefix on either the causative or effect predicate. On the other hand, it is considered ungrammatical to use the negative form from the infinitive of the verb dependent on *aʔas* ‘drive’. The verb *CL-aqas* ‘leave’ forms a looser connection with its predicate of effect and, thus, seems to be less grammaticalized than *aʔas* ‘drive’.

## 6 Double causative

Morphological and analytic causatives may co-occur. In other words, if a construction already contains a predicate of cause (i.e. *aʔas* ‘drive’ or *CL-aqas* ‘leave’), the predicate of effect can be additionally marked with a causative affix *-aq-*. In (40a) and (40b), the morphological marker is optional and may be dropped, while the analytic causative predicate remains in the sentence and the meaning of the whole does not change.

- (40) a. *adaj-ni urši kung b-elčʼ-aq-es aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG boy book N-read:PFV-CAUS-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Father made his son read a book’
- b. *adaj-ni urši kung b-elčʼ-es aʔ-ib*  
 father-ERG boy book N-read:PFV-INF drive:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Father made his son read a book.’

Constructions with inanimate causees show the same effect.

- (41) a. *anwal-li-ni inc b-erh-aq-as b-aq-ib*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG apple N-rotten:PFV-CAUS-INF N-let:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Anwar let an apple rot.’
- b. *anwal-li-ni inc b-erh-es b-aq-ib*  
 Anwar-OBL-ERG apple N-rotten:PFV-INF N-let:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Anwar let an apple rot.’

Examples (40) and (41) illustrate a double causative construction. Ageeva (2014: 10) points out that it is possible to build a double morphological causative by adding a second causative affix (cf. *CL-arʔaʔaqib* ‘freeze’). The meaning of the form remains the same, with no (clear) semantic change as compared to the (simple) morphological causative. Here, a similar phenomenon is observed in periphrasis. Constructions with double causative marking sound natural to native speakers and are produced spontaneously during elicitation. Consultants

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easily derive double analytic causatives from all analytic causatives discussed previously in the paper.

## 7 Conclusions

Periphrastic causative constructions co-exist in Mehweb with synthetic causatives. There is no difference in the meaning between analytic and morphological markers. It does not matter what syntactic type the predicate of effect is; verbs of all morphosyntactic classes are allowed. There are however some structural limitations on periphrastic causative formation.

There is a semantic division of labor between the causative predicates. Factitive causativization is expressed by means of the verb *aʔas* ‘drive’. The permissive meaning is expressed by *CL-aqas* ‘leave’. Both predicates introduce an infinitive expressing the predicate of effect. In adjectival causativization, the *CL-aqʔas* ‘do’ is used.

Cause predicates also show other differences. The verb *aʔas* ‘drive’ only allows animate causees. The verb *CL-aqas* ‘leave’ also allows inanimate causees. In both factitive and permissive constructions, the negation marker may attach to the matrix predicate. However, the verb *CL-aqas* ‘leave’ also allows negation on the infinitive.

These differences are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the causative predicates.

	causer		causee		negation	
	animate	inanimate	animate	inanimate	on the matrix predicate	on the dependent predicate
<i>aʔas</i> ‘drive:PFV’	+	+(personification)	+	+(rare)	+	
<i>CL-aqas</i> ‘leave/let:PFV’	+		+	+	+	+

In terms of case assignment, arguments other than the causee, behave identically with all morphosyntactic types of predicates. The causer is always marked with the ergative. Other arguments retain their original case marking. As to the causee, the intransitive causee keeps its original absolutive marking and the transitive causee is marked with inter-lative. No causative construction seems to

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allow two ergative arguments, marking both the causee and the causer with the ergative. This is similar to what happens under morphological causativization. Morphological and analytic causativization, however, become different if one compares what happens to the causee of experiential predicates with originally non-canonical subjects. Under morphological causatives, the causee keeps its original peripheral case marking (dative or inter-lative, depending on the verb). In analytic causative constructions, however, it obligatorily changes to the absolutive.

Causative constructions in Mehweb may combine morphological and analytic causative strategy together. Apparently, the meaning of such constructions is not different from the usual causative construction with either a synthetic or an analytic causative alone. Double causatives seem to be semantically redundant.

The tests discussed in the paper reveal some divergences between the constructions under consideration. The results of the negation test show that the factitive causative construction, apparently, is more grammaticalized than the permissive causative. It is not possible to apply negation to the dependent verb form in constructions with the verb *aʔas* ‘drive’, while *CL-aqas* ‘leave’ allows the negation either on the main verb or on the infinitive.

The negation test and agreement tests diverge. While the negation test in factitive causatives indicates a monoclausal structure, gender agreement indicates two separate clauses. Only negative constructions support grammaticalization of periphrastic causatives in Mehweb.

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## List of abbreviations

AOR	aoist
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
CVB	converb
EMPH	emphasis (particle)

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ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
REPL	replicative (nominal case)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark

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## Chapter 7

# Case and agreement in Mehweb

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The chapter deals with patterns of case marking and agreement in Mehweb. Based on morphosyntactic coding and anaphoric binding, a system of five valency classes is described for Mehweb. The chapter covers basic monoclausal structures with verbs of the five valency classes as well as their interaction with several specific constructions, such as reciprocal, causative, and bi-absolutive.

*Keywords:* case, personal agreement, gender, transitivity, experiential verbs, dative verbs, subject, reported speech, bi-absolutive construction.

The present chapter deals with the morphosyntax of argument expression in Mehweb. In many respects, Mehweb is a fairly typical representative of the Dargwa branch of Nakh-Daghestanian, and of the family in general. In certain respects, however, the language displays rare features only attested in a few other languages of the family. Three linguistic phenomena – argument case marking, gender agreement, and person agreement – are the focus of this chapter. The three coding properties are interrelated in many ways and together constitute major surface evidence about grammatical functions (including subjecthood), supported by other diagnostics, such as the binding of reflexive and reciprocal pronouns. They also generally determine how the Mehweb verbal lexicon can be broken down into verb (valency) classes. The notion of *core argument* will be key to capturing the system of valency classes. In this chapter, I define *core argument* as a clausal constituent expressed by a noun phrase that is able to determine at least one type of verbal agreement, either gender or person, or both. Depending on the number of core arguments and their morphosyntactic behav-

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ior with respect to coding properties, the Mehweb verbal lexicon is divided into the following valency classes:

- (1) Mehweb valency classes
  - a. *Intransitive verbs* have a single core argument in the absolutive that triggers both person and gender agreement.
  - b. *Transitive verbs* feature two core arguments. One core argument, the subject, is in the ergative case and triggers person agreement on the finite verb. The other core argument, the direct object, is in the absolutive case and determines agreement features in the gender agreement slot.
  - c. *Locative subject verbs* are also bi-valent verbs with two core arguments. Instead of an ergative argument, as with transitive verbs, they possess a core experiencer argument in the spatial case called *inter-lative*, see [Chechuro \(2018\)](#) (in this volume) for details of the nominal paradigm. Like the ergative subject of a transitive verb, the inter-lative (henceforth, locative) subject of a locative-subject verb also triggers person agreement.
  - d. *Dative subject verbs* have one core argument in the absolutive that only triggers gender agreement. No argument of a dative subject verb is able to determine person agreement on its own.
  - e. The *inter-relative subject verb* *buhes* ‘manage, be able’ features one core argument in the inter-relative case which optionally triggers person agreement but cannot control gender agreement.

The rest of this chapter provides empirical evidence about the behavior of various types of verbal arguments that motivates the above classification. §1 describes patterns of case marking and provides evidence from reflexive binding about the relative structural prominence of verbal arguments. §2 and 3 deal with rules of gender and person agreement. §4 presents an overview of case marking and agreement in reciprocal constructions. §5 discusses causative constructions. §6 describes basic properties of the bi-absolutive construction. The conclusion briefly summarizes the main issues observed in the chapter.

## 1 Case marking and structural prominence

Mehweb is a morphologically ergative language where the sole argument (S) of intransitive verbs is grouped together with the direct object (P) of transitive verbs

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with regard to morphological case marking, but separately from the subject (A) of transitive verbs: S and P arguments are in the unmarked absolutive case, while A arguments bear the ergative case.

- (2) *ʔali w-ak'-ib.*  
Ali(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR  
'Ali came.'
- (3) *sinka-ni ʔali uc-ib.*  
bear-ERG Ali(ABS) (M)catch:PF-AOR  
'A bear seized Ali.'
- (4) *ʔali-ini sinka b-aʔbʔ-ib.*  
Ali-ERG bear(ABS) N-kill:PF-AOR  
'Ali killed a bear.'

In (2), the DP *ʔali* 'Ali (a man's name)' is in its unmarked form and functions as the core argument of the intransitive verb *bak'es* 'come'. In (3), the same form is used to express the direct object (patient) of the transitive verb *buces* 'catch, seize'. In (4), however, the DP functions as the subject of the transitive verb *baʔbʔes* 'kill' and thus must be in the ergative case.

An absolutive case DP is present in almost every Mehweb clause. In intransitive clauses, the absolutive argument is the highest one from the structural point of view, as seen from the fact that it can bind reflexive pronouns in any other position, but cannot be bound itself by any other argument.<sup>1</sup> Example (5) shows the intransitive verb *hule* CL-izes 'look' with an oblique argument which is diagnosed as structurally less prominent than the clause-mate absolutive argument.

- (5) *hule* CL-izes 'look': absolutive > super-lative

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, to diagnose structural prominence, I employ sentences with *wh*-pronouns serving as antecedents of reflexive pronouns. This is necessary in order to exclude the possibility of the co-reference relation between the antecedent and the reflexive (Reinhart 1981). Co-reference is normally available with referential antecedents and works on pragmatic rather than strictly syntactic grounds in Mehweb. In particular, the "antecedent" can appear in a structurally lower position in co-reference, as in (i), which is not a grammatical option under semantic binding by non-referential antecedents (quantified, *wh*-pronouns), cf. (5b).

(i) *sune-la-l urši madina-če hule w-iz-ur.*  
self-GEN-EMPH son(ABS) Madina-SUPER(LAT) look M-LV:PF-AOR  
'Her<sub>i</sub> son looked at Madina<sub>i</sub> (a woman's name).'

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- a. *čija ħule d-iz-ur-a sune-la-l*  
 who(ABS) look F1-LV:PF-AOR-Q self-GEN-EMPH  
*urši-li-če?*  
 son-OBL-SUPER(LAT)  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> looked at her<sub>i</sub> son?’
- b. *\*sune-la-l urši hi-če ħule w-iz-ur-a?*  
 self-GEN-EMPH son(ABS) who-SUPER(LAT) look M-LV:PF-AOR-Q  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> did her<sub>i</sub> son look at?’

The linear order plays no role in acceptability of the “reversed” anaphoric binding, thus attesting to the relevance of weak crossover effects in reflexive binding, as shown in example (5c).

- (5) *ħule* CL-izes ‘look’: absolutive > super-lative
- c. *\*hi-če sune-la-l urši ħule w-iz-ur-a?*  
 who-SUPER(LAT) self-GEN-EMPH son(ABS) look M-LV:PF-AOR-Q  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> did her<sub>i</sub> son look at?’

The absolutive argument is not restricted to expressing any particular thematic role. It can denote an agentive participant, a patientive participant, or an experiencer. Unergative and unaccusative verbs in Mehweb are not distinguished by case marking. Some intransitive verbs are listed in (6).

- (6) Intransitive verbs  
*a-izes* ‘stand up’, *arces* ‘fly’, *aqas* ‘raise, climb’, *=alh<sup>w</sup>es* ‘wake up’, *=ebk<sup>es</sup>* ‘die’, *=er<sup>l</sup>wes* ‘become dry’, *=ises* ‘cry’, *=usa<sup>l</sup>was* ‘fall asleep’, *=urdes* ‘become worn’, *=ušes* ‘die out (of fire)’, *=uzes* ‘work’, *kal<sup>l</sup>es* ‘remain’, *uruχ* *=a<sup>l</sup>qes* ‘get afraid’

Two-place verbs are the verbs that mark their structurally highest argument with a morphological case other than absolutive. As suggested in (1) above, depending on the particular case of the highest argument, two-place verbs fall into three classes: transitive verbs with ergative subjects, locative subject verbs with inter-lative subjects, and dative subject verbs with dative subjects.

With transitive verbs, the ergative-marked argument is structurally the most prominent, as evidenced by its ability to bind a reflexive pronoun in any other position in the clause, including the absolutive argument, as in (7a-8a). The reverse binding of the ergative reflexive by an oblique or absolutive argument is impossible, as shown in (7b-8b).

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- (7) *haraq'e ih<sup>w</sup>es* ‘deceive’: ergative > absolutive
- a. *hinija haraq'e ih<sup>w</sup>-es-a sune-la-l urši?*  
 who(ERG) forward throw:PF-FUT-Q self-GEN-EMPH son(ABS)  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> will deceive his<sub>i</sub> son?’
- b. *\*sune-la-l urši-li-ni čija haraq'e ih<sup>w</sup>-es-a?*  
 self-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-ERG who(ABS) forward throw:PF-FUT-Q  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> will his<sub>i</sub> son deceive?’
- (8) *kumak baq'es* ‘help’: ergative > dative
- a. *hinija sune-la-l urši-li-s kumak b-aq'-ib-a?*  
 who(ERG) self-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-Q  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> helped his<sub>i</sub> son?’
- b. *\*sune-la-l urši-li-ni hi-sa kumak b-aq'-ib-a?*  
 self-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-ERG who-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-Q  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> did his<sub>i</sub> son help?’

Apart from agents, the ergative argument of a transitive verb can also denote a non-agentive causer (see also [Chechuro 2018](#), in this volume, on the instrumental function of the ergative).

- (9) *zab-li-ni mura d-a<sup>h</sup>h<sup>w</sup>-a<sup>q</sup>-ib.*  
 rain-OBL-ERG hay(ABS) NPL-become wet:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘The rain made the hay wet.’
- (10) *b<sup>w</sup>a<sup>l</sup>-li-ni kut'-be šiš d-uk'-aq-uwe le-r.*  
 wind-OBL-ERG tree-PL(ABS) move NPL-LV:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL  
 ‘The wind is waving trees.’
- (11) *c'a-li-ni qul-le ig-uwe le-r.*  
 fire-OBL-ERG house-PL(ABS) burn:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL  
 ‘Fire is burning houses.’

Ergative case is thus tightly associated with agentive and causative semantics and is not employed to express participants with other thematic roles. Almost every transitive clause contains an absolutive argument. Exceptions are very few and can be summarized as follows.

With verbs of contact like *CL-a<sup>l</sup>aqas* ‘hit (an inanimate object)’ and *CL-a<sup>q</sup>gas* ‘hit (an animal)’, the absolutive argument expresses the instrument. Generally, instruments are never obligatory and can be freely omitted from overt expression.

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The absolutive argument in the instrumental function thus often does not appear overtly.

- (12) *it-ini q<sup>w</sup>aʃ-če (derxa) b-aʃq-ib.*  
 this-ERG COW+OBL-SUPER(LAT) stick(ABS) N-hit:PF-AOR  
 ‘She hit the cow (with a stick).’
- (13) *ʔali-ni (χunkʻ) unza-li-ze b-aʔ-aq-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG fist(ABS) door-OBL-INTER(LAT) N-hit-LV:PF-AOR  
 ‘Ali hit the door with his fist (lit. his fist into the door).’

The absolutive argument, when omitted from overt expression, is arguably still present in the sentence, as evidenced by the possibility of non-default (neuter plural) gender agreement.

- (14) *ʔali-ni unza-li-ze d-aʔ-aq-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG door-OBL-INTER(LAT) NPL-hit-LV:PF-AOR  
 ‘Ali hit the door (with his fists).’

In (14), the plural gender marking on the verb reflects the plurality of the instrumental DP in the absolutive.

With some transitive verbs of speech and thought, the absolutive argument denotes the content of speech/thought.

- (15) *hu-ni sija i-ra?*  
 you.sg-ERG what(ABS) say:PF+AOR-EGO+Q  
 ‘What did you say?’
- (16) *nu-ni b-urh-iša ca χabar.*  
 I-ERG N-tell:PF-FUT.EGO one story(ABS)  
 ‘I will tell (you) one story.’

Likewise, many such verbs alternatively subcategorize for either an absolutive DP argument or a clausal argument. In the latter case, no absolutive argument is present in the clause.

- (17) *rasuj-ni abzulaj-ze b-urh-ib murad-li mašina*  
 Rasul+OBL-ERG all+OBL-INTER(LAT) N-tell:PF-AOR Murad-ERG car(ABS)  
*as-ib ile.*  
 take:PF-AOR COMP  
 ‘Rasul told everyone that Murat had bought a car.’



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With some complex transitive verbs, a nominal constituent in the unmarked form functions as a non-verbal component.

- (18) *mallarasbadij-ni                      žawab    b-aq'-i-le                      le-b.*  
 Molla Nasreddin.OBL-ERG answer N-do:PF-AOR-CVB AUX-N  
 'Molla Nasreddin answered.' (lit. 'made an answer')
- (19) *nu-ni di-la=l                      urši-li-s                      kumak    b-aq'-i-ra.*  
 I-ERG I.OBL-GEN=EMPH son-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I helped my son.'

The morphosyntactic status of such unmarked nominals is not clear. They can be analyzed either as absolutive-cased DPs or as (pseudo)-incorporated caseless NPs. More work is needed to decide on this question.

Some verbs are P-labile, that is, have both a transitive use and an intransitive use where the subject of the intransitive uses corresponds to (i.e. expresses the same participant as) the direct object of the transitive use. The verbal lexicon has not been systematically studied for P-lability. The transitive use with an unspecified (omitted) subject of a P-labile verb and the intransitive use of the same verb are distinguished by: (i) different imperative marking (see [Daniel 2018](#), this volume), and (ii) the ability of the absolutive argument to trigger person agreement on the finite verb (see §3.1 below).

Two other classes of two-place verbs are locative subject verbs and dative subject verbs. The locative subject class includes the verbs *arbes* 'hear, understand', *bahes* 'know', *barges* 'find', *g<sup>w</sup>es* 'see'.

- (20) *žali-ze                      it    deh<sup>w</sup>                      arb-ib.*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) this word(ABS) hear/understand:PF-AOR  
 'Ali heard/understood this word.'
- (21) *rasuj-ze                      žali                      w-alh-an.*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) Ali(ABS) M-know:IPF-HAB  
 'Rasul knows Ali.'
- (22) *žali-ze                      arc                      d-arg-ib.*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) money(ABS) NPL-find:PF-AOR  
 'Ali found money.'
- (23) *rasuj-ze                      žali                      g-ub.*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) Ali(ABS) see:PF-AOR  
 'Rasul saw Ali.'

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The dative subject class includes the verbs *biges* ‘want, love’, *bikes* ‘happen’, *eba buhes* ‘get bored’, *určeb leb* ‘remember’, *urče bak’as* ‘recall’, *urče bikes* ‘recall’.

- (24) *madina-s rasul w-ig-an.*  
 Madina-DAT Rasul(ABS) M-love:IPF-HAB  
 ‘Madina loves Rasul.’
- (25) *ʔali-s ʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>χ-il q’immat b-ik-ib.*  
 Ali-DAT good-ATR grade(ABS) N-happen:PF-AOR  
 ‘Ali got a good grade.’
- (26) *madina-s rasul eba uh-ub.*  
 Madina-DAT Rasul(ABS) bore (M)become:PF-AOR  
 ‘Madina got bored with Rasul.’
- (27) *madina-s ʔali urče-w le-w.*  
 Madina-DAT Ali(ABS) in.heart-M(ESS) be-M  
 ‘Madina remembers Ali.’
- (28) *rasuj-s hel deh<sup>w</sup> urče b-ak’-ib.*  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT this word(ABS) in.heart(LAT) N-come:PF-AOR  
 ‘Rasul recalled that word.’

The verb *qumartes* ‘forget’ alternatively allows for either the locative or the dative case marking of its subject.

- (29) *{ʔali-ze / ʔali-s} deč’ qum-art-ur.*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) / Ali-DAT song(ABS) forget-LV:PF-AOR  
 ‘Ali forgot the song.’

The inter-lative (locative) and dative arguments are the highest arguments in their respective clauses. Again, this is evidenced by the ability of the locative/dative argument to bind any other argument (including absolutive), while the reverse binding pattern is ungrammatical.

- (30) *g<sup>wes</sup>* ‘see’: inter-lative > absolutive
- a. *hi-ze g-ub-a sune-la-l urši?*  
 who-INTER(LAT) see:PF-AOR-Q self-GEN-EMPH son(ABS)  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> saw her<sub>i</sub> son?’
- b. *\*sune-la-l urši-li-ze čija g-ub-a?*  
 self-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-INTER(LAT) who(ABS) see:PF-AOR-Q  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> did her<sub>i</sub> son see?’

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- (31)
- biges*
- ‘love’: dative > absolutive

- a. *hi-sa      ħa-d-ig-ul                  sune-la-l                  abaj?*  
 who-DAT NEG-F1-love:IPF-PTCP self-GEN-EMPH mother(ABS)  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> does not love his<sub>i</sub> mother?’
- b. *\*sune-la-l                  abaj-s                  čija                  ħa-d-ig-ul?*  
 self-GEN-EMPH mother-DAT who(ABS) NEG-F1-love:IPF-PTCP  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> does his<sub>i</sub> mother not love?’

Again, while the absolutive argument generally must be present in a clause with a locative or dative subject verb, it may be absent in case the corresponding semantic argument is expressed by another constituent. Most locative and dative subject verbs allow a clausal complement instead of the absolutive argument.

- (32)
- arwes*
- ‘hear’ with finite complement

*ʔali-ze                  arw-ib                  [abaj                  iz-uwe                  le-r*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) hear:PF-AOR mother(ABS) be sick:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F  
*ile]*.  
 COMP  
 ‘Ali heard that mother was sick.’

- (33)
- biges*
- ‘want’ with infinitival complement

*rasuj-s                  dig-uwe                  le-b                  [anži-li*  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT want:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N Makhachkala-IN(LAT)  
*u‘q’-es]*.  
 (M)go:PF-INF  
 ‘Rasul wants to go to Makhachkala.’

- (34)
- bikes*
- ‘happen’ with a finite complement

*abzulaj-s                  b-ik-ib                  [ʔali                  w-ebk’-i-le*  
 everyone+OBL-DAT N-happen:PF-AOR Ali(ABS) M-die:PF-AOR-CVB  
*ile]*.  
 COMP  
 ‘Everyone thought (lit. it occurred to everyone) that Ali was dead.’

Finally, the verb *buhes* ‘manage, be able’ is the only verb in Mehweb that licenses a core argument in the inter-relative case.

- (35) *rasuj-ze-la                  ajz-es                  ħa-b-urh-an.*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER-EL (M)rise:PF-INF NEG-N-manage:IPF-HAB  
 ‘Rasul cannot stand up.’

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- (36) *rasuj-ze-la                      ħa-b-uh-ub                      ɤarɤa                      aq*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER-EL NEG-N-manage:PF-AOR stone(ABS) up  
*b-aq'-as.*  
 N-do:PF-INF  
 ‘Rasul did not manage to lift the stone.’

To summarize, Mehweb has five verb classes depending on the case of the structurally highest argument: (i) intransitive verbs with absolutive subject, (ii) transitive verbs with ergative subject, (iii) locative subject verbs with inter-lative subject, and (iv) dative subject verbs with dative subject, and (v) one inter-relative subject verb *buhes* ‘manage, be able’. The argument structure of all verbs includes an absolutive argument. As will be shown below, the subject and the absolutive argument (when they are different) play a special role in gender and person agreement, and thus are called *core arguments*. All other arguments are *oblique*.

## 2 Verbal gender agreement

Two morphological slots for gender agreement are potentially available in the Mehweb clause. One is the prefixal gender agreement marker on lexical verbs. Every verbal stem is specified for whether it hosts the prefixal gender agreement slot. Most verbs are specified to host this agreement marker in their perfective stems. In imperfective stems, the slot is often absent. For more on agreement morphology and its relation to stems, see [Daniel \(2018\)](#) (in this volume).

- (37) a. *urši-li-ni                      kaɤar-t                      d-elk'-un.*  
 boy-OBL-ERG letter-PL(ABS) NPL-write:PF-AOR  
 ‘The boy wrote letters.’  
 b. *urši-li-ni                      kaɤar-t                      luk'-an.*  
 boy-OBL-ERG letter-PL(ABS) write:IPF-HAB  
 ‘The boy writes letters (every day).’

The verb ‘write’ has a prefixal slot for gender agreement in its perfective stem, as shown in (37a), but lacks any such slot in its imperfective stem, as in (37b). If a stem features gender agreement, it is obligatory in any verbal form based on this stem, be it finite or non-finite.

The other morphological slot for gender agreement in the verbal complex is the suffix on the auxiliary in periphrastic verbal forms.

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- (38) *urši-li-ni kaɁar-t luk'-uwe le-r.*  
 boy-OBL-ERG letter-PL(ABS) write:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL  
 'The boy is writing letters.'

The rule of thumb for gender agreement in monoclausal structures is to agree with the clause-mate absolutive argument. With regard to gender agreement on lexical verbs, this means that agreement is always with the absolutive subject of an intransitive verb or with the absolutive direct object of other verb classes, as shown below.

- (39) a. *urši w-ak'-ib.*  
 boy(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR  
 'The boy came.'
- b. *dursi d-ak'-ib.*  
 girl(ABS) F1-come:PF-AOR  
 'The girl came.'
- (40) a. *ʔali-ini sinka b-aʔbʔ-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG bear(ABS) N-kill:PF-AOR  
 'Ali killed a bear.'
- b. *sinka-li ʔali w-aʔbʔ-ib.*  
 bear-ERG Ali(ABS) M-kill:PF-AOR  
 'A bear killed Ali.'
- (41) a. *abaj-ze urši w-arg-ib.*  
 mother-INTER(LAT) boy(ABS) M-find:PF-AOR  
 'Mother found her son.'
- b. *adaj-ze dursi d-arg-ib.*  
 father-INTER(LAT) girl(ABS) F1-find:PF-AOR  
 'Father found his daughter.'
- (42) a. *madina-s ʔali w-ig-ib.*  
 Madina-DAT Ali(ABS) M-love:IPF-IPFT  
 'Madina loved Ali.'
- b. *ʔali-s madina d-ig-ib.*  
 Ali-DAT Madina(ABS) F1-love:IPF-IPFT  
 'Ali loved Madina.'

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If a clause lacks an absolutive argument, as observed with some types of formally transitive verbs, gender agreement on the lexical verb appears as the default singular neuter agreement marker *b-*. This is also observed with intransitive impersonal predicates. See examples in §1 above.

The verb *buhes* ‘manage, be able’ subcategorizes for the inter-relative subject and the infinitival complement and thus does not have an absolutive argument. This verb, therefore, invariably appears with the default (singular neuter) marker *b-*, as in examples (35) and (36) above.

The second morphological slot for gender agreement appears on the auxiliary within periphrastic verbal forms like Present and Past Progressive, Present and Past Resultative. This slot cross-references the gender-number features of the highest absolutive argument or shows the default (neuter singular agreement) in clauses with no absolutive argument.

- (43) a. *urši iz-uwe le-w.*  
 boy(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
 ‘The boy is sick.’  
 b. *dursi iz-uwe le-r.*  
 girl(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F  
 ‘The girl is sick.’
- (44) a. *madina-ze rasul w-alh-uwe le-w.*  
 Madina-INTER(LAT) Rasul(ABS) M-know:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
 ‘Madina knows Ali.’  
 b. *rasuj-ze madina d-alh-uwe le-r.*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) Madina(ABS) F1-know:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F  
 ‘Rasul knows Madina.’
- (45) a. *madina-s rasul w-ig-uwe le-w.*  
 Madina-DAT Rasul(ABS) M-love:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
 ‘Madina loves Rasul.’  
 b. *rasuj-s madina d-ig-uwe le-r.*  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT Madina(ABS) F1-love:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F  
 ‘Rasul loves Madina.’
- (46) *urši-li-ni i-le le-b ...*  
 boy-OBL-ERG say:PF+AOR-CVB AUX-N  
 ‘The boy said that ...’

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In complex verbs that include an adjectival stem specified for prefixal gender agreement as a non-verbal component, the adjective always agrees with the absolutive argument.

- (47) a. *adam-ule-ni huni b-aʔu b-aq'-ib.*  
 man-PL-ERG road(ABS) N-wide N-do:PF-AOR  
 'Men widened the road.'
- b. *adam-ule-ni hun-be d-aʔu d-aq'-ib.*  
 man-PL-ERG road-PL(ABS) NPL-wide NPL-do:PF-AOR  
 'Men widened the roads.'

If a sentence contains two absolutive arguments, as attested in bi-absolutive constructions, the auxiliary agrees with the subject (see §6).

### 3 Verbal person agreement

#### 3.1 Intransitive, transitive, and locative subject verbs in synthetic indicative forms

In synthetic indicative tense-aspect forms (aorist, imperfect, habitual, future), person agreement operates on nominative–accusative basis and cross-references the person of the subject: the absolutive argument of intransitive verbs, the ergative argument of transitive verbs, or the inter-lative argument of locative subject verbs.

- (48) *nu usaʔ-un-na.*  
 I(ABS) (M)fall asleep:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I fell asleep.'
- (49) *nuša-jni qali b-aq'-i-ra.*  
 we-ERG house(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'We built a house.'
- (50) *di-ze sinka g-ub-ra.*  
 I-INTER(LAT) bear(ABS) see:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I saw a bear.'

Morphologically, person inflection only distinguishes two options. One is a form overtly specified for person (*-iša* in the Future, *-s* in the Habitual, *-ra* in the rest of indicative tense-aspect forms), the other is a non-agreeing form. A peculiar feature of Mehweb is that person agreement is sensitive to the illocutionary

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force of the utterance.<sup>2</sup> In declarative sentences, the overt person marker points to the first person of the subject, whereas non-agreeing forms are observed with second and third person subjects. By contrast, the same person marker indicates second person subject in interrogative sentences, while first and third person subjects do not trigger overt person marking on the verb. The following question-answer pairs illustrate.

- (51) Q: *ħu dag kuda {w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-un-na /*  
           you.sg(ABS) yesterday where M-go:PF-AOR-EGO+Q /  
           *\*w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-un-a}?*  
           M-go:PF-AOR-Q  
           ‘Where did you go yesterday?’  
   A: *nu anži-li {w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-un-na / \*w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-un}.*  
       I(ABS) Makhachkala-IN(LAT) M-go:PF-AOR-EGO / M-go:PF-AOR  
       ‘I went to Makhachkala.’
- (52) Q: *dag nu-ni sija {b-aq'-ib-a / \*b-aq'-i-ra}.*  
           yesterday I-ERG what(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-Q / N-do:PF-AOR-EGO+Q  
           ‘What did I do yesterday?’  
   A: *ħu-ni po<sup>ʕ</sup>ro<sup>ʕ</sup>m {b-u<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-aq-ib /*  
       you.sg-ERG glass(ABS) N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR /  
       *\*b-u<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-aq-i-ra}.*  
       N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO  
       ‘You broke a window.’

Example (51) shows that second person subjects in interrogatives and first person subjects in declaratives obligatorily require the overt person marking, whereas subjects in reverse combinations of person and illocutionary force – first person subjects in interrogatives and second person subjects in declaratives – can never trigger person marking, as example (52) demonstrates. (See the discussion of one notable exception in §3.4 below.)

Person marking on synthetic tense-aspect forms is obligatory with intransitive absolutive subjects and transitive ergative subjects and cannot be omitted. Locative subject verbs display variation on this point. The verb *g<sup>w</sup>es* ‘see’ patterns with transitive and intransitive verbs in requiring person agreement, whereas with the rest of the locative subject verbs, person marking is optional.

<sup>2</sup> This type of agreement systems is also referred to as *egophoric*, *conjunct/disjunct*, or *assertive agreement*, see Creissels (2008) who discusses assertive agreement in another Nakh-Daghestanian language, Akhwakh (Andic branch).



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- (53) *di-ze urx-ne {d-arg-i-ra / d-arg-ib}.*  
 I-INTER(LAT) key-PL(ABS) NPL-find:PF-AOR-EGO / NPL-find:PF-AOR  
 ‘I found the keys.’
- (54) *di-ze rasu-wa t’ama {arɁ-i-ra /*  
 I-INTER(LAT) Rasul+OBL-GEN sound(ABS) hear:PF-AOR-EGO /  
*arɁ-ib}.*  
 hear:PF-AOR  
 ‘I heard Rasul’s voice.’
- (55) *di-ze rasul {w-alh-as / w-alh-an}.*  
 I-INTER(LAT) Rasul(ABS) M-know:IPF-HAB-EGO / M-know:IPF-HAB  
 ‘I know Rasul.’

Similar to locative subject verbs, the inter-relative subject of the verb *buhes* ‘manage, be able’ triggers overt person marking only optionally.

- (56) *di-ze-la ajz-es {ħa-b-urh-an /*  
 I-INTER-EL (M)rise:PF-INF NEG-N-manage:IPF-HAB /  
*ħa-b-urh-as}.*  
 NEG-N-manage:IPF-HAB-EGO  
 ‘I cannot stand up.’
- (57) *di-ze-la ħa-b-uh-ub(-ra) ɁarɁa aq b-aq’-as.*  
 I-INTER-EL NEG-N-manage:PF-AOR-EGO stone(ABS) up N-do:PF-INF  
 ‘I did not manage to lift the stone.’

Non-subjects, including absolutive direct objects, inter-lative indirect objects (addressee, causee), inter-relative arguments (including involuntary agents) and other oblique arguments can never trigger person agreement.

- (58) *ʔali-ini nu {w-it-ib / \*w-it-i-ra}.*  
 Ali-ERG I(ABS) M-beat:PF-AOR / M-beat:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘Alit beat me up.’
- (59) *madina-ze nu {g-ub / \*g-ub-ra}.*  
 Madina-INTER(LAT) I(ABS) see:PF-AOR / see:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘Madina saw me.’
- (60) *rasuj-ni di-ze ca χabar {b-urh-ib /*  
 Rasul-ERG I-INTER(LAT) one story(ABS) N-tell:PF-AOR /

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*\*b-urh-i-ra*}.

N-tell:PF-AOR-EGO

‘Rasul told me a story.’

- (61) *abaj-ni di-ze badur-me {d-az-aq-ib /*  
 mother-ERG I-INTER(LAT) dish-PL(ABS) NPL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR /  
*\*d-az-aq-i-ra*}.

NPL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO

‘Mother made me wash dishes.’

- (62) *di-ze-la guruška b-uʹrʔ-uʹb(-\*ra).*  
 I-INTER-EL cup(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘A cup broke on me.’

This strict subject orientation of agreement allows us to distinguish between transitive and intransitive uses of P-labile verbs, as shown in the following examples.

- (63) a. *nu quli-w w-aʹld-un-na.*  
 I(ABS) house-M(ESS) M-hide:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘I hid in the house.’  
 b. *nu quli-w w-aʹld-un.*  
 I(ABS) house-M(ESS) M-hide:PF-AOR  
 ‘They hid me in the house.’

In (63a), the presence of the agreement marker on the verb indicates that the first person singular pronoun *nu* is in the subject position, and that the sentence therefore instantiates the intransitive use of the labile verb. The absence of agreement in (63b) can only indicate that the absolutive pronoun is in the direct object position and that we are thus dealing with the transitive use of the labile verb.

### 3.2 Dative subject verbs

Unlike subjects of intransitive, transitive, and locative subject verbs, dative subjects do not trigger overt person agreement.

- (64) *nab rasul {w-ig-an / \*w-ig-as}.*  
 I(DAT) Rasul(ABS) M-love:IPF-HAB / M-love:IPF-HAB.EGO  
 ‘I love Rasul.’

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- (65) *nab ʔaχ-il q'immat {b-ik-ib /*  
 I(DAT) good-ATR grade(ABS) N-happen:PF-AOR /  
*\*b-ik-i-ra}.*  
 N-happen:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I got a good grade.'
- (66) *nab rasul eba {uh-ub / \*uh-ub-ra}.*  
 I(DAT) Rasul(ABS) bore (M)become:PF-AOR / (M)become:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I got bored with Rasul.'
- (67) *nab ʔali urče-w {le-w / \*le-w-ra}.*  
 I(DAT) Ali(ABS) in.heart-M(ESS) be-M / be-M-EGO  
 'I remember Ali.'
- (68) *nab hel deh<sup>w</sup> urče {b-ak'-ib /*  
 I(DAT) this word(ABS) in.heart(LAT) N-come:PF-AOR /  
*\*b-ak'-i-ra}.*  
 N-come:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'Rasul recalled that word.'
- (69) *nab {b-ik-ib / \*b-ik-i-ra} ʔali*  
 I(DAT) N-happen:PF-AOR / N-happen:PF-AOR-EGO Ali(ABS)  
*w-ebk'-i-le ile.*  
 M-die:PF-AOR-CVB COMP  
 'I thought (it occurred to me) that Ali was dead.'

The contrast between locative and dative subject verbs is clearly seen in sentences with the verb *qumartes* 'forget'. Recall that this verb allows both locative and dative subjects. With a first person locative subject, the verb has optional person agreement, as with other locative subject verbs. With a first person dative subject, the verb cannot show overt person marking, as is usual with dative subject verbs.

- (70) a. *di-ze ʔali qum-art-ur(-ra).*  
 I-INTER(LAT) Ali(ABS) forget-LV:PF-AOR-EGO  
 b. *nab ʔali qum-art-ur(-\*ra).*  
 I(DAT) Ali(ABS) forget-LV:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I forgot Ali.'

In sentences with dative subjects, absolutive direct objects do not trigger person agreement either, as shown in examples (71) to (74).

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- (71) *madina-s nu {w-ig-an / \*w-ig-as}.*  
 Madina-DAT I(ABS) M-love:IPF-HAB / M-love:IPF-HAB-EGO  
 ‘Madina loves me.’
- (72) *madina-s nu eba {uh-ub / \*uh-ub-ra}.*  
 Madina-DAT I(ABS) bore (M)become:PF-AOR / (M)become:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘Madina got bored with me.’
- (73) *madina-s nu urče-w {le-w / \*le-w-ra}.*  
 Madina-DAT I(ABS) in.heart-M(ESS) be-M / be-M-EGO  
 ‘Madina remembers me.’
- (74) *rasuj-s nu urče {b-ak’-ib /  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT I(ABS) in.heart(LAT) N-come:PF-AOR /  
 \*b-ak’-i-ra}.*  
 N-come:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘Rasul recalled me.’

The absence of agreement with the absolutive argument is unexpected given the fact that many of the dative subject verbs clearly go back to intransitive structures where absolutive arguments diachronically go back to intransitive subjects, and thus could act as agreement triggers, contrary to fact.

- (75) a. *X Y eba b-uh-es*  
 DAT ABS bore N-become:PF-INF  
 ‘For X, Y becomes boring.’
- b. *X Y urče-b le-b*  
 DAT ABS in.heart-N(ESS) be-N  
 ‘To X, Y is on heart.’
- c. *X Y urče b-ak’-as*  
 DAT ABS in.heart(LAT) N-come:PF-INF  
 ‘To X, Y comes to heart.’

The clear contrast between intransitive and dative subject constructions with respect to person agreement is observed in a construction with the verb *haraq’e bak’as* (lit. ‘come forward’), which denotes illusionary seeing like in dreams or hallucinations, as in (76).

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- (76) *rasuj-s tamaša-l si-k'al-t haraq'e*  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT surprising-ATR what-INDEF-PL forward  
*d-ik'-uwe le-r.*  
 NPL-come:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL  
 'Rasul sees something bizarre.' (lit. 'Something bizarre is coming forward to Rasul.')

Like in other dative subject structures, neither of the two arguments, the dative subject or the absolutive direct object, is able to trigger person agreement on the verb.

- (77) a. *nab tamaša-l si-k'al-t haraq'e {d-ak'-ib*  
 I(DAT) surprising-ATR what-INDEF-PL forward NPL-come:PF-AOR  
 / \**d-ak'-i-ra*}.  
 / NPL-come:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'Something bizarre appeared to me.'
- b. *rasuj-s nu haraq'e {w-ak'-ib /*  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT I(ABS) forward M-come:PF-AOR /  
 \**w-ak'-i-ra*}.  
 M-come:PF-AOR-EGO  
 'I appeared to Rasul (in a hallucination).'

Overt person marking on the verb *bak'as* 'come' in the latter example is grammatical only in the literal sense of physical movement.

- (78) *rasuj-s nu haraq'e {w-ak'-i-ra /*  
 Rasul+OBL-DAT I(ABS) forward M-come:PF-AOR-EGO /  
 \**w-ak'-ib*}.  
 M-come:PF-AOR  
 'I came forward to Rasul.' (not: 'I appeared to Rasul (in a hallucination).')

We therefore have a minimal pair: in the same construction with *haraq'e bak'as* 'come forward', person agreement with the first person absolutive argument is obligatorily required when denoting physical movement and completely banned when referring to imaginary visions.

To sum up, neither of the two arguments of a dative subject verb – the dative subject or the absolutive direct object – can control person agreement on their own. Strikingly enough, overt person marking on a finite dative subject verb is nevertheless possible in constructions where both the dative subject and the

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absolutive direct object are first person (i.e. in reflexive constructions with the first person subject).

- (79) *nab nu=wal w-ig-as.*  
 I(DAT) I(ABS)=EMPH M-love:PF-HAB.EGO  
 ‘I love myself.’

The syntax of dative subject constructions and the way they interact with person agreement require further syntactic analysis.

### 3.3 Agreement in the Present Progressive

Present Progressive forms exhibit a different pattern of person agreement in sentences with transitive and locative subject verbs. Unlike other indicative forms, not only the person feature of the subject is taken into account here, but also the person feature of the direct (absolutive) object.

The descriptive generalization is that overt person agreement with the first person subject is only possible (and obligatory) when the absolutive direct object is a locutor (first or second person). Otherwise, with third person direct objects, person agreement is ungrammatical, and the finite verb is in the unmarked form.<sup>3</sup>

- (80) a. *nu-ni kung luč'-uwe le-b(\*-ra).*  
 I-ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N-EGO  
 ‘I am reading a book.’  
 b. *nu-ni ħu ulc-uwe le-w-\*(ra).*  
 I-ERG you.sg(ABS) (M)catch:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-EGO  
 ‘I am catching you (male).’  
 (81) a. *di-ze sinka irg-uwe le-b(\*-ra).*  
 I-INTER(LAT) bear(ABS) see:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N-EGO  
 ‘I am seeing a bear.’

<sup>3</sup> In transitive clauses with third person direct objects, such as (80a), first person marking is marginally accepted by some native speakers. It is not clear where such marginal acceptability stems from. One option could be that optional person agreement in these configurations is actually a part of Mehweb grammar. Another option, however, is that it arises from confusion with bi-absolutive constructions where person agreement with the subject is obligatory in the Present Progressive (see §6). Indeed, many speakers, when accepting person agreement in examples like (80a), tend to re-phrase the ergative construction of (80a) into the corresponding bi-absolutive construction with the absolutive subject, with subject-controlled person and gender agreement on the auxiliary. Note that with locative subject verbs which are not easily allowed in bi-absolutive constructions, person agreement in the Present Progressive is definitely rejected by all speakers, see (80a).

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- b. *di-ze hu irg-uwe le-w-\*(ra).*  
 I-INTER(LAT) you.sg(ABS) see:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-EGO  
 ‘I am seeing you.’

Examples (80a) and (81a) show that agreement with first person subjects is impossible in the presence of a third person absolutive direct object. By contrast, agreement is obligatory when the direct object is also a locutor. Relative specification of the subject and the direct object for number plays no role in availability of person agreement.

- (82) a. {*nu-ni* / *nuša-jni*} *huša b-ulc-uwe*  
 I-ERG / we-ERG you.pl(ABS) HPL-catch:IPF-CVB.IPFV  
*le-b-\*(ra).*  
 AUX-HPL-EGO  
 ‘{I am / we are} catching you all.’
- b. *nuša-jni hu ulc-uwe le-w-\*(ra).*  
 we-ERG you.sg(ABS) (M)catch:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-EGO  
 ‘We are catching you.’
- (83) a. {*nu-ni* / *nuša-jni*} *ul-e b-ulc-uwe*  
 I-ERG / we-ERG child-PL(ABS) HPL-catch:IPF-CVB.IPFV  
*le-b-(\*ra).*  
 AUX-HPL-EGO  
 ‘{I am / we are} catching the kids.’
- b. *nuša-jni qazam b-iz-uwe le-b-(\*ra).*  
 we-ERG cauldron(ABS) N-wash:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N-EGO  
 ‘We are washing the cauldron.’

## 3.4 Matrix infinitival questions

One exception to the generalization that only second, but not first, person subjects trigger person agreement in interrogative sentences concerns agreeing Future forms, which may co-occur with first person subjects in interrogatives, yielding questions with modal semantics.

- (84) *nu-ni had sija g-iša?*  
 I-ERG you.sg(DAT) what(ABS) give:PF-FUT.EGO+Q  
 ‘What should I give you?’ (not: ‘What will I give you?’)

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- (85) *nu u<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-iša?*  
 I(ABS) (M)go:PF-FUT.EGO+Q  
 'Should I go?' (not: 'Will I go?')

Examples like (84) and (85) are remarkable in two respects. First, they are only available in the Future, but not in other tense-aspect forms.

- (86) *\*nu-ni ħad sija g-i-ra?*  
 I-ERG you.sg(DAT) what(ABS) give:PF-AOR-EGO+Q  
 intended: 'What should I have given you?' (or 'What did I give you?')

Second, the modal interpretation of the questions in (84) and (85) only arises with first person subjects, but never with second person subjects, cf. the contrast between (87) and (88).

- (87) *nu kuda u<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-iša?*  
 I(ABS) where (M)go:PF-FUT.EGO+Q  
 'Where should I go?' (not: 'Where will I go?')
- (88) *ħu kuda u<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-iša?*  
 you.sg(ABS) where (M)go:PF-FUT.EGO+Q  
 'Where will you go?' (not: 'Where should you go?')

This contrast raises the question whether the two sentences in (87) and (88) contain the same verb form or two different ones. This question is especially relevant in the light of the fact that the infinitive in Mehweb is formally identical to non-agreeing future forms, which appear, for example, in declarative sentences with second/third person subjects, as shown in (89).

- (89) a. *ʔali ša<sup>ʕ</sup>-ba<sup>ʕ</sup>ħ u<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-es.*  
 Ali(ABS) village-ALL (M)go:PF-FUT  
 'Ali will go to the village.'
- b. *ʔali-s<sub>i</sub> [pro<sub>i</sub> ša<sup>ʕ</sup>-ba<sup>ʕ</sup>ħ u<sup>ʕ</sup>q'-es] dig-uwe le-b.*  
 Ali-DAT ABS village-ALL (M)go:PF-INF want:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 'Ali wants to go to the village.'

The infinitive and the future are normally distinguished in contexts with overt person marking (e.g. declarative sentences with first person subjects). The Future takes the overt person marking, while the infinitive never does so, as shown in (90).



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- (90) a. *nu šaʔ-baʔh uʔqʔ-iša.*  
 I(ABS) village-ALL (M)go:PF-FUT.EGO  
 ‘I will go to the village.’
- b. *nab<sub>i</sub> [pro<sub>i</sub> šaʔ-baʔ<sub>H</sub> uʔqʔ-es] dig-uwe le-b.*  
 I(DAT) ABS village-ALL (M)go:PF-INF want:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 ‘I want to go to the village.’

Now note the fact that across Dargwa languages, the modal semantics found in the Mehweb examples in (84), (85), (87) is commonly expressed by a special form with a first person marker added on top of the infinitive, as seen in (91) from Chirag Dargwa.

- (91) Chirag Dargwa  
*di-c:e χabar-e d-urs-i-da-j?*  
 I-ERG story-PL(ABS) NPL-tell:PF-INF-EGO-Q  
 ‘Should I tell the stories?’

The same modal semantics is cross-linguistically characteristic of matrix infinitival questions (cf. English *Where to go?* or German *Wohin gehen?*, Bhatt 2006: 108, 110).

It is natural to suggest that the Mehweb modal questions like in (84) and (85) actually involve a combination of the infinitive and overt person marking rather than the formally identical agreeing form of the Future: (i) the formal identity between the infinitive and the future in non-agreeing forms and (ii) the morphological evidence that the combination of infinitive with first person marking may yield the modal semantics of ‘should’ in other Dargwa languages.

### 3.5 Indexical shift and agreement shift in embedded reports

Person agreement as described above is only available in finite clauses: no non-finite clause can feature a person agreement marker. The following examples show that person agreement is unavailable in complements headed by nominalizations.

- (92) *rasuj-ze b-alh-an ...*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) N-know:IPF-HAB  
 ‘Rasul knows ...’
- a. *nu-ni kung {b-elčʔ-un-deš / \*b-elčʔ-un-na-deš}.*  
 I-ERG book(ABS) N-read:PF-AOR-NMLZ / N-read:PF-AOR-EGO-NMLZ  
 ‘... that I read (past) the book.’

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- b. *nu-ni ħu ulc-uwe {le-w-deš /*  
 I-ERG you.sg(ABS) (M)catch:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-NMLZ /  
*\*le-w-ra-deš}.*  
 AUX-M-EGO-NMLZ  
 ‘... that I am catching you.’
- c. *nu-ni kung-ane {luč'-an-deš / \*luč'-as-deš}.*  
 I-ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-HAB-NMLZ / read:IPF-HAB.EGO-NMLZ  
 ‘... that I read (habitual) books.’

Apart from the independent finite clauses described above, Mehweb also features finite complement clauses with the complementizer *ile*. Etymologically, the complementizer goes back (and is still synchronically identical) to the perfective converb of the verb *es* ‘say’. It is used with verbs of speech and thought to introduce reported speech (attitude reports).

- (93) a. *abaj-s b-ik-ib ca insan w-ak'-ib*  
 mother-DAT N-happen:PF-AOR one person(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR  
*ile.*  
 COMP  
 ‘Mother thought that someone came.’
- b. *abaj-ni b-urh-ib ca insan w-ak'-ib ile.*  
 mother-ERG N-tell:PF-AOR one person(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR COMP  
 ‘Mother said/told that someone came.’
- c. *abaj urux d-a<sup>h</sup>q-ib ca insan*  
 mother(ABS) be.afraid F1-LV:PF-AOR one person(ABS)  
*w-ak'-ib ile.*  
 M-come:PF-AOR COMP  
 ‘Mother feared that someone came.’

Personal pronouns and person agreement in embedded reports under the complementizer *ile* are subject to *PERSON SHIFT* (*INDEXICAL SHIFT* and *AGREEMENT SHIFT*, respectively), see [Schlenker \(2003\)](#), [Anand & Nevins \(2004\)](#), [Nikitina \(2012\)](#), [Shklovsky & Sudo \(2014\)](#) on indexical shift in a theoretical and typological perspective.

Indexical shift affects the interpretation of first and second person pronouns and is always optional. Personal pronouns in embedded reports may refer not only to the participants of the actual speech act, as in independent finite clauses, but also to the participants of the speech act denoted by the matrix clause. In

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the latter case, the first person pronoun refers to the reporter (attitude holder) expressed as the subject of the matrix clause, while the second person pronoun denotes the addressee of the matrix reporter.

- (94) *rasuj-ni ib di-la mašin b-uʳʔ-uʳb ile.*  
 Rasul+OBL-ERG say:PF+AOR I-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR COMP  
 a. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> said that my<sub>j</sub> car is broken.’ (unshifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)  
 b. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> said that his<sub>i</sub> car is broken.’ (shifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)
- (95) *madina-ini rasuj-ze ib ħa-la mašin*  
 Madina-ERG Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) say:PF+AOR you.sg-GEN car(ABS)  
*b-uʳʔ-uʳb ile.*  
 N-break:PF-AOR COMP  
 a. ‘Madina said to Rasul<sub>i</sub> that your<sub>j</sub> car is broken.’ (unshifted reading of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun)  
 b. ‘Madina said to Rasul<sub>i</sub> that his<sub>i</sub> car is broken.’ (shifted reading of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun)

With matrix verbs selecting for a complement clause with *ile* but lacking an addressee, such as matrix verbs of thought, only first person pronouns can be shifted, while second person pronouns only denote the addressee of the actual speech act.

- (96) *rasul uruχ w-aʳq-ib di-la mašin b-uʳʔ-uʳb*  
 Rasul(M) be.afraid M-LV:PF-AOR I-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR  
*ile.*  
 COMP  
 a. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> fears that my<sub>j</sub> car is broken.’ (unshifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)  
 b. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> fears that his<sub>i</sub> car is broken.’ (shifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)
- (97) *rasul uruχ w-aʳq-ib ħa-la mašin b-uʳʔ-uʳb*  
 Rasul(M) be.afraid M-LV:PF-AOR you.sg-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR  
*ile.*  
 COMP  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> fears that your<sub>j</sub> car is broken.’ (only unshifted reading of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun)

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Person agreement in finite embedded clauses is subject to obligatory *AGREEMENT SHIFT*. Only arguments denoting the participants of the reported speech act can control person agreement, while other arguments including those representing the participants of the actual speech act can never trigger agreement. In declarative embedded clauses, only embedded subjects denoting the closest reporter / attitude holder trigger overt agreement on the verb. One possibility is that the embedded subject is expressed by the shifted first person pronoun.

- (98) *rasul urux w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q-ib nu-ni mašin*  
 Rasul(ABS) be.afraid M-LV:PF-AOR I-ERG car(ABS)  
*b-u<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-aq-i-ra ile.*  
 N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO COMP  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> feared that he<sub>i</sub> broke the car.’

In (98), the subject is expressed by the first person pronoun that undergoes indexical shift; that is, it does not refer to the speaker of the actual speech act, but rather to the attitude holder (Rasul) expressed as the subject of the matrix clause. The embedded verb thus shows obligatory overt agreement for person.

Another possibility is that the embedded subject is expressed by the long-distance reflexive pronoun bound by the matrix subject representing the attitude holder. The long-distance reflexive thus ends up being co-referent with the attitude holder, and the verb obligatorily shows overt person marking.

- (99) *rasul urux w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q-ib sune-jni mašin*  
 Rasul(ABS) be.afraid M-LV:PF-AOR self-ERG car(ABS)  
*b-u<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-aq-i-ra ile.*  
 N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO COMP  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> feared that he<sub>i</sub> broke the car.’

No other argument can trigger person agreement on the finite verb in embedded reports, including unshifted first person pronouns denoting the speaker of the actual speech act. Example (100) illustrates.

- (100) *rasul urux w-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q-ib nu-ni mašina*  
 Rasul(ABS) be.afraid M-LV:PF-AOR I-ERG car(ABS)  
*{b-u<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-aq-ib / \*b-u<sup>ʕ</sup>rʔ-aq-i-ra} ile.*  
 N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR / N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO COMP  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> feared that I<sub>j</sub> broke the car.’

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Kozhukhar (2018) (in this volume) reports that overt person marking with unshifted first person pronoun is also possible in examples like (100). Indeed, consultants sometimes judge such sentences to be acceptable. I maintain, however, that overt person agreement with an unshifted first person pronoun is ungrammatical, and the judgments must stem from confusion. First person pronouns strongly tend to shift their reference in embedded reports, and consultants usually have a hard time recognizing that the pronoun could refer to the actual speaker. So, when presented with a sentence containing a first person pronoun and overt person marking on the verb, some consultants judge it acceptable due to the fact that they have a different reading in mind. Instead of the reference to the speaker of the actual speech act, they interpret the pronoun as denoting the attitude holder. However, if a suitable example is constructed where the confusion is not possible because of overt morphological marking, overt person marking with unshifted first person pronouns is uniformly judged unacceptable. Consider the following examples.

- (101) *abaj-s            b-ik-ib                    nu        usa?-uwe*  
 mother-DAT N-happen:PF-AOR I(ABS) (M)fall asleep:PF-AOR.CVB  
*le-w(-\*ra)        ile.*  
 AUX-M-EGO COMP  
 ‘Mother<sub>i</sub> thought that I<sub>j</sub> fell asleep.’
- (102) *abaj                    uruxk’-uwe                    le-r        nu        {arik-es        /*  
 mother(ABS) be.afraid:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F I(ABS) (M)fall:PF-FUT /  
 \**arik-iša}*                    ile.  
 (M)fall:PF-FUT.EGO COMP  
 ‘Mother<sub>i</sub> is afraid that I<sub>j</sub> am going to fall down.’

In (101) and (102), the first person pronoun in the embedded clause is unambiguously interpreted as denoting the actual speaker, since masculine gender marking appears on the embedded verb (both on the converb of the lexical verb and the auxiliary), indicating that the referent of the first person pronoun is a man. Since the attitude holder (‘mother’) is unambiguously female, the embedded first person pronoun may only receive a disjoint reference, and thus denote the speaker of the actual speech act. In this configuration, overt agreement was unanimously considered grossly ungrammatical.

Agreement shift thus makes various mismatches possible between the “lexical” person feature of an argument and verbal person agreement. On the one hand, third person reflexive pronouns trigger overt person marking, as in (99). On

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the other hand, first person pronouns referring to the actual speaker can never trigger overt person agreement, as in (100) through (102).

The examples above show that the attitude holder can be lexically expressed in the embedded clause by either a shifted first person pronoun or a long-distance reflexive pronoun. However, these two options cannot co-occur within the same embedded clause. In the presence of a long-distance reflexive bound by the matrix subject, first person pronouns are obligatorily interpreted as referring to the speaker of the actual speech act.

- (103) *rasul urux w-a<sup>ʃ</sup>q-ib nu-ni sune-la mašina*  
 Rasul(ABS) be.afraid M-LV:PF-AOR I-ERG self-GEN car(ABS)  
*b-u<sup>ʃ</sup>rʔ-aq-i-ra ile.*  
 N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO COMP

- i. \*'Rasul<sub>i</sub> feared that he<sub>i</sub> broke his<sub>i</sub> car.'
- ii. 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> feared that he<sub>i</sub> broke his<sub>j</sub> car.'
- iii. \*'Rasul<sub>i</sub> feared that I<sub>j</sub> broke his<sub>i</sub> car.'

In (103), the embedded clause includes both the first person pronoun in the ergative subject position and the possessive reflexive pronoun that modifies the direct object. The two cannot be interpreted as denoting the same participant, as shown by the ungrammaticality of reading (i). Two further options are logically possible: either the first person pronoun or the reflexive is interpreted as denoting the attitude holder. In the former case, the reflexive must have a disjoint reference (long-distance bound by an even higher subject or a free logophor, see Kozhukhar 2018, in this volume), as indicated in interpretation (ii). In the latter case, the first person pronoun must refer to the actual speaker, which is not possible in this sentence, since unshifted first person pronouns do not trigger verbal person marking, hence the ungrammaticality of reading (iii). Should the finite verb in the embedded report be in the unmarked form *bu<sup>ʃ</sup>rʔaqib*, reading (iii) becomes available.

In interrogative embedded clauses, a similar distribution is observed: only arguments co-valued with the addressee of the reporter (expressed as the addressee argument of the matrix verb) show overt person marking on the embedded verb, whereas unshifted second person pronouns cannot trigger overt person marking.

- (104) *rasuj-ni madina-ze xarba-ib hu kuda*  
 Rasul-ERG Madina-INTER(LAT) ask:PF-AOR you.sg(ABS) where

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{*d-aš-as-a* / \**d-aš-an-a*} *har barhi ile.*  
 F1-walk:IPF-HAB.EGO-Q / F1-walk:IPF-HAB-Q every day COMP  
 ‘Rasul asked Madina<sub>i</sub> where she<sub>i</sub> goes every day.’

- (105) *rasuj-ni madina-ze xarba-ib ħu kuda*  
 Rasul-ERG Madina-INTER(LAT) ask:PF-AOR you.sg(ABS) where  
 {*w-aš-an-a* / \**w-aš-as-a*} *har barhi ile.*  
 M-walk:IPF-HAB-Q / M-walk:IPF-HAB.EGO-Q every day COMP  
 ‘Rasul asked Madina where you go every day.’

Again, in examples like (105), the second person pronoun in the embedded clause may only be interpreted disjoint from the matrix addressee argument, due to a gender mismatch between the feminine gender of the matrix addressee and the masculine gender agreement on the embedded verb. When this is the case, overt person agreement is ungrammatical with a second person pronoun in interrogative embedded clauses.

For the sake of completeness, a few words are in order about the availability of indexical shift and agreement shift. As said above, both are only possible in finite complement clauses with the complementizer *ile* under verbs of speech and thought, but not in other types of complements. The examples below demonstrate that indexical shift and agreement shift are possible in the finite complement of the verb *arɁes* ‘hear’, but not in the factive non-finite (nominalized) complement with the same verb.

- (106) *rasuj-ze arɁ-ib di-la mašin*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) understand:PF-AOR I-GEN car(ABS)  
*b-uʳʔ-uʳb ile.*  
 N-break:PF-AOR COMP

- a. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> realized that my<sub>j</sub> car is broken.’ (unshifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)
- b. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> realized that his<sub>i</sub> car is broken.’ (shifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)

- (107) *rasuj-ze arɁ-ib di-la mašin*  
 Rasul+OBL-INTER(LAT) understand:PF-AOR I-GEN car(ABS)  
*b-uʳʔ-uʳb-deš ile.*  
 N-break:PF-AOR-NMLZ COMP

- a. ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> realized that my<sub>j</sub> car is broken.’ (unshifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)

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- b. \*'Rasul<sub>i</sub> realized that his<sub>i</sub> car is broken.' (shifted reading of the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun)

Whether or not a matrix verb combines with *ile*-complements is not lexically determined, but rather depends on the semantics of the matrix verb (speech or thought report). This is clearly seen in cases like those shown in the following examples.

- (108) *rasuj-ze*                      *b-ah-ur*                      *abaj*                      *iz-uwe*  
 Rasul-INTER(LAT) N-know:PF-AOR mother(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CVB.IPFV  
 {*le-r-deš* / \**le-r ile*}.  
 AUX-F-NMLZ / AUX-F COMP  
 'Rasul found out that mom was sick.'

- (109) *madina-ini*    *rasuj-ze*                      *b-ah-aq-ib*                      *abaj*  
 Madina-ERG Rasul-INTER(LAT) N-know:PF-CAUS-AOR mother(ABS)  
*iz-uwe*                      {*le-r-deš* / *le-r ile*}.  
 be.sick:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F-NMLZ / AUX-F COMP  
 'Madina let Rasul know that mom was sick.'

Example (108) shows that the factive matrix verb *bahes* 'know' does not combine with finite *ile*-complements. In (109), the causative *bahaqas* of the same verb is normally understood as denoting a speech act ('let know, inform'), and therefore is compatible with an *ile*-complement.

## 4 Reciprocals

Reciprocal pronouns consist of two instances of the numeral *ca* 'one' adjacent to one another.

- (110) *uz-be-ni*                      *ca-li-ni*                      *ca-li-če*                      *b-a?-aq-ib*.  
 brother-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-SUPER(LAT) N-hit-LV:PF-AOR  
 'The brothers hit each other.'

As can be seen in the example above, the two components of the reciprocal bear independent case marking. One component is always in the case of the subject, while the other component bears the case of the second argument of the reciprocal construction. The distribution of case marking on the two components of the reciprocal pronoun depends on a particular argument/case combination.



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Absolutive case, whether it corresponds to the subject or to the direct object, is always marked on the second component of the reciprocal. The first component therefore bears the case of the other argument participating in the reciprocal construction.

- (111) *uz-be ca-li-če ca ħule b-iz-ur.*  
 brother-PL(ABS) one-OBL-SUPER(LAT) one(ABS) look HPL-LV:PF-AOR  
 ‘The brothers looked at each other.’
- (112) *uz-be-ni ca-li-ni ca b-a<sup>h</sup>bʔ-ib.*  
 brother-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:PF-AOR  
 ‘The brothers killed each other.’

In (111), the intransitive verb *ħule* CL-izes ‘look’ is used in the reciprocal construction. The absolutive case of the subject is marked on the second part of the reciprocal, whereas the case of the oblique argument is marked on the first part. In (112), the transitive verb *ba<sup>h</sup>bʔas* ‘kill’ participates in the reciprocal construction. Again, the absolutive case, which is the case of the direct object here, is marked on the second part of the reciprocal pronoun, while the ergative case of the transitive subject is marked on the first part.

When no absolutive argument participates in a reciprocal construction, the case marking on the reciprocal pronoun is determined by structural prominence. The first component is in the case of the higher argument, while the second component is in the case of the lower argument, as in (110) above and in the following examples.

- (113) *ul-e-jni ca-li-ni ca-li-s kumak b-aq'-ib.*  
 child-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR  
 ‘The kids helped one another.’
- (114) *ul-e-jni ca-li-ni ca-li-ze-la arc*  
 child-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-INTER-EL money(ABS)  
*ar-is-an.*  
 away-take:IPF-HAB  
 ‘The kids take money away from one another.’

The case of the overt antecedent NP also depends on the presence of an absolutive argument in the construction. As a rule, the overt antecedent bears the case of a more structurally prominent argument. Examples (110) and (112) through (114) above show that in the reciprocal construction with transitive verbs, the

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overt antecedent is in the ergative case. Example (111) shows that the reciprocal construction with intransitive verbs requires the overt antecedent in the absolutive case. Example (115) below illustrates the reciprocal construction with locative subject verbs.

- (115) *uz-be-ze*                      *ca-li-ze*                      *ca*                      {*g-ub*                      /  
 brother-PL-INTER(LAT) one-OBL-INTER(LAT) one(ABS) see:PF-AOR /  
*b-ah-ur*                      / *b-arg-ib*                      / *qum-art-ur*}.  
 HPL-know:PF-AOR / HPL-find:PF-AOR / forget-LV:PF-AOR  
 ‘The brothers {saw / recognized / found / forgot} each other.’

The only exception to this rule is dative subject verbs where the absolutive marking of the overt antecedent is preferred over the dative marking.

- (116) {*it-ti*                      / ?? *it-ti-li-s*}                      *ca-li-s*                      *ca*  
 this-PL(ABS) / this-PL-OBL-DAT one-OBL-DAT one(ABS)  
*b-ig-uwe*                      *le-b*.  
 HPL-love:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-HPL  
 ‘They love each other.’
- (117) {*it-ti*                      / ?? *it-ti-li-s*}                      *ca-li-s*                      *ca*                      *eba*  
 this-PL(ABS) / this-PL-OBL-DAT one-OBL-DAT one(ABS) bored  
*b-uh-ub*.  
 HPL-become:PF-AOR  
 ‘They got bored with each other.’

The absolutive marking of the overt antecedent is also possible in reciprocal constructions with two core arguments of two-place verbs.

- (118) *uz-be*                      *ca-li-ni*                      *ca*                      *b-aʔbʔ-ib*.  
 brother-PL(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:PF-AOR  
 ‘The brothers killed each other.’
- (119) *uz-be*                      *ca-li-ze*                      *ca*                      {*g-ub*                      /  
 brother-PL one-OBL-INTER(LAT) one(ABS) see:PF-AOR /  
*b-ah-ur*                      / *b-arg-ib*                      / *qum-art-ur*}.  
 HPL-know:PF-AOR / HPL-find:PF-AOR / forget-LV:PF-AOR  
 ‘The brothers {saw / recognized / found / forgot} each other.’

Therefore, we have two possibilities of antecedent marking in constructions with the two core arguments of two-place verbs. The antecedent can be marked

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by the morphological case of the higher argument (i.e. the subject) or by the absolutive case, even though the absolutive is the morphological case of the lower argument (i.e. the direct object) in such configurations. With dative subject verbs, the first option is severely degraded and the second option is preferred, while with other two-place verbs (transitive and locative subject), the two options are equally acceptable.

No other reciprocal construction allows the overt antecedent in the case of a lower argument. Example (120) illustrates this for a combination of the intransitive subject and an oblique argument, cf. (111). Example (121) shows a reciprocal construction with a transitive subject and a dative recipient, cf. (113).

- (120) \**uz-be-če*                      *ca-li-če*                      *ca*                      *hule*  
 brother-PL-SUPER(LAT) one-OBL-SUPER(LAT) one(ABS) look  
*b-iz-ur.*  
 HPL-LV:PF-AOR

‘The brothers looked at each other.’

- (121) \**ul-e-s*                      *ca-li-ni*                      *ca-li-s*                      *kumak*                      *b-aq’-ib.*  
 child-PL-DAT one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR

‘The kids helped one another.’

In transitive constructions where the absolutive direct object does not participate in the reciprocal relation, the absolutive case cannot be used to mark the overt antecedent either.

- (122) \**ul-e*                      *ca-li-ni*                      *ca-li-s*                      *kumak*                      *b-aq’-ib.*  
 child-PL(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR

‘The kids helped one another.’

Gender agreement in reciprocal constructions works according to the general rule of agreement with the absolutive argument. In structures with an overt absolutive NP this is straightforward, as shown in examples (111) and (116) through (119). In structures with no overt absolutive NP, as in (112) and (115), the verb shows the gender and number features of the overt antecedent.

Person agreement also works as usual in constructions where the overt antecedent is in the morphological case of the subject; that is, first person intransitive absolutive, transitive ergative, and locative subjects trigger overt person marking on the finite verb.

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- (123) *nuša ca-li-če ca ħule b-iz-ur-ra.*  
 we(ABS) one-OBL-SUPER(LAT) one(ABS) HPL-LV:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘We looked at each other.’
- (124) *nuša-jni ca-li-ni ca b-iʔbʔ-iša.*  
 we-ERG one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:IPF-FUT.EGO  
 ‘We will kill each other.’
- (125) *nuša-ze ca-li-ze ca {g-ub-ra /*  
 we-PL-INTER(LAT) one-OBL-INTER(LAT) one(ABS) see:PF-AOR-EGO /  
*b-ah-ur-ra}*  
 HPL-know:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘We {saw / recognized} each other.’

In structures with the overt antecedent in the absolutive case, as in (116) through (119), first person pronouns also trigger obligatory person marking.

- (126) *nuša ca-li-ni ca b-iʔbʔ-iša.*  
 we(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:IPF-FUT.EGO  
 ‘We will kill each other.’
- (127) *nuša ca-li-ze ca {g-ub-ra /*  
 we(ABS) one-OBL-INTER(LAT) one(ABS) see:PF-AOR-EGO /  
*b-ah-ur-ra}*  
 HPL-know:PF-AOR-EGO  
 ‘We {saw / recognized} each other.’

The reciprocal construction with the absolutive marking of the antecedent thus behaves like an intransitive structure with respect to person agreement.

## 5 Causative construction<sup>4</sup>

Morphologically, the causative construction is formed by means of the suffix *-aq-* (*-aħaq-*) attached to an aspectual stem of the causativized verb, as described by Daniel (2018). Syntactically, the causative morpheme introduces an additional participant which is interpreted as the causer of the event described by the lexical stem. The causer is always marked by ergative case. Case marking of the causee depends on the class of the causativized verb. Absolutive subjects of intransitive

<sup>4</sup>The description of case marking in causative constructions in this section is based on Ageeva (2014).

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verbs always remain in the absolutive case. The causative construction based on an intransitive verb thus features two arguments: the ergative causer and the absolutive causee, as with regular transitive verbs.

- (128) a. *ʔali w-alh-un.*  
 Ali(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-AOR  
 ‘Ali woke up.’  
 b. *pat’imat-ini ʔali w-alh-aq-ib.*  
 Patimat-ERG Ali(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Patimat woke up Ali.’

Ergative subjects of transitive verbs obligatorily receive locative (inter-lative) marking in the causative construction. Case marking of the causee with transitive causativized verbs does not depend on the degree of agentivity. Both agentive and non-agentive transitive causees are in the inter-lative.

- (129) a. *ʔali-ni ɁarɁa b-alc’-un.*  
 Ali-ERG stone(ABS) N-pick.up:PF-AOR  
 ‘Ali picked up a stone.’  
 b. *pat’imat-ini {ʔali-ze / \*ʔali-ni} ɁarɁa*  
 Patimat-ERG Ali-INTER(LAT) / Ali-ERG stone(ABS)  
*b-alc’-aq-ib.*  
 M-pick.up:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Patimat made Ali pick up a stone.’  
 (130) a. *ħark’w-i-ni urculi d-erb-ib.*  
 river-OBL-ERG wood(ABS) NPL-sweep.away:PF-AOR  
 ‘The river swept away the wood.’  
 b. *rasuj-ni {ħark’wi-ze / ??? ħark’w-ini} urculi*  
 Rasul+OBL-ERG river-INTER(LAT) / river-ERG wood(ABS)  
*d-erb-aq-ib.*  
 NPL-sweep.away:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Rasul floated the wood down the river.’ (literally: ‘Rasul made the river sweep away the wood.’)

Locative subjects of the verbs ‘see’, ‘hear, understand’, ‘find’, ‘know’, and ‘forget’ are marked with inter-lative case when they occur as a causee in causative construction. This is the same marking as in the baseline construction.

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- (131) *rasuj-ni di-ze sune-la-l qali*  
 Rasul+OBL-ERG I-INTER(LAT) self-GEN-EMPH house(ABS)  
*g<sup>w</sup>-aχaq-ib.*  
 see:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Rasul showed me his house.’
- (132) *t’ahil-li di-ze χabar b-ah-aq-ib.*  
 Tahir-ERG I-INTER(LAT) news(ABS) N-know:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Tahir let me know the news.’
- (133) *rasuj-ni di-ze dars arb-aq-ib.*  
 Rasul+OBL-ERG I-INTER(LAT) lesson(ABS) understand:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Rasul explained the lesson to me.’
- (134) *ʔali-ni di-ze urx-ne d-arg-aq-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG I-INTER(LAT) key-PL(ABS) NPL-find:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Ali made me find the keys.’
- (135) *ʔali-ni di-ze hel deh<sup>w</sup> qum-art-aq-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG I-INTER(LAT) this word(ABS) forget-LV:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Ali made me forget that word.’

It is not quite clear whether the locative case of the causee in causative constructions with locative subject verbs reflects the inter-lative subject marking assigned by the lexical verb or the inter-lative causee marking assigned in the causative construction.

Causatives of two locative subject verbs exhibit special behavior as they can denote a situation with no additional causer of the event. Instead, the experiencer subject acquires a higher degree of agentivity and is marked by ergative case, cf. examples (21) and (29) above.

- (136) *ʔali-ni q’urʔan b-alh-aq-uwe le-b.*  
 Ali-ERG Qur’an(ABS) N-know:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 ‘Ali is studying Qur’an.’
- (137) *ʔali-ni uzi qum-art-aq-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG brother(ABS) forget-LV:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Ali forgot the brother (as a result of a conscious intention to do so).’

When a dative subject verb is causativized, the experiencer participant can either remain in the dative, as in the original construction, or bear inter-lative marking assigned to the causee in the causative construction.

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- (138) a. *nab it deh<sup>w</sup> urče b-ik-ib.*  
 I(DAT) this word(ABS) in.heart(LAT) N-happen:PF-AOR  
 ‘I recalled that word.’
- b. *abaj-ni {di-ze / nab} it deh<sup>w</sup> urče*  
 mother-ERG I-INTER(LAT) / I(DAT) this word(ABS) in.heart(LAT)  
*b-ik-aq-ib.*  
 N-happen:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Mother reminded me that word.’

The interpretational difference between the two variants of causee marking relates to the degree of control exhibited by the causer over the caused situation. The dative marking implies a lesser degree of involvement of the causer, while the inter-lative marking indicates a more direct causation on the part of the causer.

The causative form of the verb *biges* ‘want, love’ does not normally have a causative interpretation. Neither the number of arguments nor their case marking change. The semantics is usually conveyed as ‘like’ rather than ‘love’ (as is the case with the underived forms of *biges*).

- (139) *nab it dursi d-ig-aq-uwe le-r.*  
 I(DAT) this girl(ABS) F1-love:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-F  
 ‘I like this girl.’

The causative reading of the causative form of the verb *biges* ‘want, love’ is also accepted by many speakers, though not by all of them, and often not without doubts. Like in causatives of other dative subject verbs, the causee can be marked by either dative or inter-lative case (with no sharp interpretational differences between the two variants).

- (140) *adaj-ni {di-ze / ?nab} it dursi*  
 father-ERG I-INTER(LAT) / I(DAT) this girl(ABS)  
*d-ig-aq-uwe le-r.*  
 F1-love:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-F  
 ‘Father makes me love this girl.’

Gender and person agreement in the causative construction follows the rules operative in transitive clauses. Gender agreement on the lexical verb is always with the absolutive argument. Gender agreement on the auxiliary in progressive verb forms is also with the absolutive argument.

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- (141) a. *pat'imat-ini ʔali w-alh-aq-ib.*  
 Patimat-ERG Ali(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 'Patimat woke up Ali.'
- b. *ʔali-ni pat'imat d-alh-aq-ib.*  
 Ali-ERG Patimat(ABS) F1-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 'Ali woke up Patimat.'
- (142) a. *nu-ni urši-li-ze inc b-uk-aq-uwe*  
 I-ERG boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) apple(ABS) N-eat:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV  
*le-b.*  
 AUX-N  
 'I am making the boy eat an apple.'
- b. *nu-ni urši-li-ze inc-be d-uk-aq-uwe*  
 I-ERG boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) apple-PL(ABS) N-eat:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV  
*le-r.*  
 AUX-N  
 'I am making the boy eat apples.'

Person agreement is controlled by the ergative causer according to the rules described above in §3.1 and 3.3. This includes the restriction on overt marking in the Present Progressive, as shown in (142). The inter-lative causee or the absolutive argument can never control person agreement.

- (143) *nu-ni c'a {d-uš-aq-i-ra /*  
 I-ERG fire(ABS) NPL-die.out:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO /  
*\*d-uš-aq-ib}.*  
 NPL-die.out:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 'I extinguished the fire.'
- (144) *pat'imat-ini nu {w-alh-aq-ib /*  
 Patimat-ERG I(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR /  
*\*w-alh-aq-i-ra}.*  
 M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO  
 'Patimat woke me up.'
- (145) *pat'imat-ini di-ze ʔarʔa {b-alc'-aq-ib /*  
 Patimat-ERG I-INTER(LAT) stone(ABS) M-pick.up:PF-CAUS-AOR /  
*\*b-alc'-aq-i-ra}.*  
 M-pick.up:PF-CAUS-AOR-EGO  
 'Patimat made me pick up a stone.'



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Note, however, that despite the absence of an overt ergative argument in causative constructions based on transitive verbs, it is possible to show that they do contain an unexpressed ergative subject of the lexical verb. This is seen from case marking that appears on reciprocal pronouns. As explained in §4 above, the two parts of the reciprocal pronoun always bear two different morphological cases corresponding to the case marking of the arguments in the reciprocal relation. When used in a causative construction describing a reciprocal relationship between the causee and the absolutive direct object, one part of the reciprocal pronoun shows up in the ergative case, even though no overt ergative argument appears on the surface.

- (146) *madina-jni* {*ul-e* / *ul-e-ze*} *ca-li-ni*  
 Madina-ERG child-PL(ABS) / child-PL-INTER(LAT) one-OBL-ERG  
*ca* *b-az-aq-ib.*  
 one(ABS) HPL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR  
 ‘Madina made the kids wash one another.’

Note that in example (146), the causee in the causativized reciprocal construction of the transitive verb can be expressed by the absolutive or by the inter-lative. This corresponds to two possibilities observed in non-causativized reciprocals: (i) the overt subject is marked by the absolutive, and the whole construction behaves as an intransitive structure, or (ii) the overt subject is marked by the ergative, and the whole reciprocal construction is a transitive structure. Under causativization, the intransitive variant (i) of the reciprocal construction yields the absolutive marking of the causee, whereas the transitive variant (ii) of the reciprocal construction yields the inter-lative marking of the causee.

## 6 Bi-absolutive construction

Periphrastic verbal forms with durative semantics (present and past progressive) allow for an alternative layout of argument case marking with transitive verbs. Instead of the standard transitive pattern with an ergative subject and an absolutive object, transitive verbs can participate in the *BI-ABSOLUTIVE CONSTRUCTION*, where both the subject and the direct object are expressed in the absolutive case.<sup>5</sup> Changes in argument case marking are accompanied by a change in gen-

<sup>5</sup> See Forker (2012) for an overview of the bi-absolutive across Nakh-Daghestanian. Gagliardi et al. (2014) present a minimalist analysis of the bi-absolutive construction in the Nakh-Daghestanian languages Lak and Tsez. Harris and Campbell discuss the diachrony of the bi-absolutive construction (1995: 187–189).

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der agreement of the auxiliary, which is controlled by the absolutive subject; gender agreement of the lexical verb is invariably controlled by the absolutive direct object.

- (147) Q: *sija b-iq'-uwe le-w-a rasul?*  
 what(ABS) N-do:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-Q Rasul(ABS)  
 'What is Rasul doing?'  
 A: *rasul kung luč'-uwe le-w.*  
 Rasul(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
 'Rasul is reading a book.'

Unlike ergative constructions with periphrastic forms, the bi-absolutive construction shows no restrictions on person agreement of the absolutive subjects. Overt person marking with the absolutive subject is obligatory, as shown in (148a), cf. the minimally different example (148b), where the ergative subject cannot agree with the finite verb.

- (148) a. *nu kung luč'-uwe le-w-ra.*  
 I(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-EGO  
 'I am reading a book.'  
 b. *nu-ni kung luč'-uwe le-b(\*-ra).*  
 I-ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-EGO  
 'I am reading a book.'

Unlike what is attested in related languages (Forker 2012), there seem to be no observable differences in semantics between the ergative and bi-absolutive alignment of the transitive clause. In fact, the bi-absolutive construction is often used as a resort when person agreement with the subject fails in certain subject-object combinations in periphrastic forms, see §3.3.

Synthetic verbal forms with imperfective semantics do not allow the bi-absolutive construction.

- (149) {*nu-ni* / \**nu*} *kung-ane luč'-as.*  
 I-ERG / I(ABS) book-PL(ABS) read-HAB.EGO  
 'I read books (every day).'
- (150) {*nu-ni* / \**nu*} *kung-ane luč'-iša.*  
 I-ERG / I(ABS) book-PL(ABS) read-FUT.EGO  
 'I will be reading books.'

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Only clauses with agentive subjects normally participate in the bi-absolutive construction, whereas clauses with non-agentive subjects are either considerably degraded or completely ungrammatical.

- (151) *ʔʔ<sup>w</sup>aʔr but'-be šiš d-uk'-aq-uwe le-b.*  
 wind(ABS) tree-PL(ABS) move NPL-LV:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 'The wind is waving trees.'
- (152) *\*c'a qul-le ig-uwe le-b.*  
 fire(ABS) house-PL(ABS) burn:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 'A fire is burning houses.'
- (153) *\*zab mura d-aʔlh<sup>w</sup>-aʔq-uwe le-r.*  
 rain(ABS) hay(ABS) NPL-moisten:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL  
 'The rain is moistening the hay.'

Similarly, non-agentive subjects of locative-subject verbs are not allowed to participate in the bi-absolutive construction for many speakers, though some sentences are judged to be more acceptable. The acceptability of locative-subject verbs in the bi-absolutive construction may depend on semantic and pragmatic factors and requires further investigation.

- (154) *\*nu sinka irg-uwe le-w-ra.*  
 I(ABS) bear(ABS) see:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-EGO  
 'I see a bear.'
- (155) *?\*urši d-aʔld-un-i arc d-urg-uwe*  
 boy(ABS) NPL-hide:PF-AOR-PTCP money(ABS) NPL-find:IPF-CVB.IPFV  
*le-w.*  
 AUX-M  
 'The boy finds the hidden money.'
- (156) *ʔʔrasul het deh<sup>w</sup> b-alh-uwe le-b.*  
 Rasul(ABS) this word(ABS) N-know:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 'Rasul knows that word.'

The dative subject verb *biges* 'love, want' can occasionally participate in the bi-absolutive construction.

- (157) *nu het urši w-ig-uwe le-l-la.*  
 I(ABS) this boy(ABS) M-love:IPF-CVB.IPFV AUX-F-EGO  
 'I love this boy.'

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Despite initial appearances, the bi-absolutive construction contains an unexpressed ergative argument of the lexical verb which can be seen in reciprocal constructions. Similar to what is found in causative constructions, one of the two components of the reciprocal pronoun in the bi-absolutive always bears the ergative case licensed by the lexical verb, despite the phonological absence of an ergative argument, compare (158) with (113) above.

- (158) *ul-e ca-li-ni ca-li-s kumak b-iq'-uwe*  
 child-PL(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:IPF-CVB.IPFV  
*le-b.*  
 AUX-HPL  
 'The kids help one another.'

Syntactically, the bi-absolutive construction may thus be analyzed as consisting of two layers. The lower layer is headed by the lexical verb and contains the lexical verb itself and all of its arguments in their respective cases. The higher layer is headed by the copula and contains the absolutive subject. The bi-absolutive construction thus has two important properties: (i) it requires the subject to have the agent theta-role, and (ii) it includes an unexpressed ergative argument which is obligatorily interpreted as having the same reference as the overt absolutive subject. The two properties make the bi-absolutive construction look like an obligatory control construction. The schematic representation of the syntactic structure of the bi-absolutive construction is given in (159).

- (159) a. [*rasul<sub>i</sub>* [<sub>PRO<sub>i</sub></sub> *kung luč'-uwe*] *le-w*].  
 Rasul(ABS) ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-CVB.IPFV COP-M  
 'Rasul is reading a book.'  
 b. [<sub>CopP</sub> NP<sub>ABS</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> PRO<sub>ERG</sub> NP<sub>ABS</sub> V] COP]

The causative construction may also be transformed into a bi-absolutive construction. With causatives of intransitive verbs, the bi-absolutive construction works the same way as with bi-absolutives of ordinary transitive verbs: both the causer and the causee are in the absolutive case. The former controls gender and person agreement on the copula, while the latter controls gender agreement on the lexical verb.

- (160) *rasul c'a d-uš-aq-uwe le-w.*  
 Rasul(ABS) fire(ABS) NPL-die.out:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV COP-M  
 'Rasul is extinguishing the fire.'

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With causatives of transitive verbs, there are three options of case marking in the bi-absolutive construction. One option is to mark the causer with absolutive case, like with causatives of intransitive verbs above. Gender and person agreement on the copula are determined by features of the higher absolutive, in this case the causer. Example (161) shows the baseline causative construction in (a) and the bi-absolutive construction with the absolutive marking of the causer in (b).

- (161) a. *abaj-ni urši-li-ze kung*  
 mother-ERG boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) book(ABS)  
*luč'-aq-uwe le-b.*  
 read:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-N  
 b. *abaj urši-li-ze kung*  
 mother(ABS) boy-OBL-INTER(LAT) book(ABS)  
*luč'-aq-uwe le-r.*  
 read:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV COP-F  
 'Mother makes the boy read the book.'

The second option is to mark the causee with the absolutive case, whereas the causer bears its usual ergative case. Again, gender and person agreement on the copula are determined by features of the higher absolutive, which is the causee in this case.

- (161) c. *abaj-ni urši kung luč'-aq-uwe le-w.*  
 mother-ERG boy(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV COP-M  
 'Mother makes the boy read the book.'

Finally, the third option is to mark both the causer and the causee by absolutive case. We therefore have three absolutive arguments in the same clause. Again, gender and person agreement on the copula is determined by the highest absolutive, that is, the subject causer.

- (161) d. *abaj urši kung luč'-aq-uwe le-r.*  
 mother(ABS) boy(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CAUS-CVB.IPFV COP-F  
 'Mother makes the boy read the book.'

The possibilities of case marking shown in (161c-d) require further investigation. In standard bi-absolutive constructions as described in this section, the absolutive marking of the transitive subject apparently becomes available due to the presence of a second clausal layer headed by the copula. It is not quite

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clear how the copula in the progressive could license the absolutive marking of the transitive causee in (161c) and, especially, the absolutive marking of both the ergative causer and the transitive causee in (161d). Any syntactic speculations on this question, however, require more specific assumptions about the clause structure and mechanisms of case licensing which lay outside of the scope and goal of the present work. I therefore leave this issue for another occasion.

## 7 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed major morphosyntactic properties of monoclausal sentences in Mehweb, including case marking, gender and person agreement. The paper describes the system of Mehweb verbal (valency) classes on the basis of their arguments' morphosyntactic behavior and ability to bind reflexive pronouns. I distinguish (i) intransitive verbs with absolutive subjects, (ii) transitive verbs with ergative subjects, (iii) verbs with inter-lative subjects, (iv) verbs with dative subjects, and (v) one verb with the inter-elative subject. Gender agreement operates on the ergative-absolutive basis, whereas person agreement has nominative-accusative syntax.

Mehweb person agreement is unique in that it is sensitive to the illocutionary force of the utterance. Like in other Daghestanian languages with person agreement, verbal person marking is also sensitive to the syntactically introduced logophoric center, as in finite logophoric clauses with the complementizer *ile*. In such environments, personal pronouns undergo optional indexical shift, whereas person marking is obligatorily shifted to the perspective of the syntactic logophoric center.

Although traditionally Mehweb person agreement is considered to be purely subject-oriented, this chapter argues that several constructions, such as agreement in sentences with dative subject verbs and agreement in the Present Progressive, reveal a sensitivity of person agreement to the person feature of the absolutive direct object.

I also describe case marking and agreement in causative and bi-absolutive constructions. Despite overall semantic and syntactic difference between the two, they demonstrate a similar behavior with respect to the ergative subject of the lexical verb, which can still be diagnosed when it is absent from the phonological expression, by means of case marking on reciprocal pronouns. Finally, I identify a previously unattested construction with three absolutive arguments.

## List of abbreviations

ABS	absolute
ALL	motion directed towards a spatial domain
AOR	aorist
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
COMP	complementizer
COP	copula
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
EMPH	emphasis (particle)
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
INDEF	indefinite particle
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPF	imperfective (derivational base)
IPFT	imperfect
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PF	perfective (derivational base)

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PL	plural
PTCP	participle
Q	question (interrogative particle)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark

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## Chapter 8

# Specialized converbs in Mehweb

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This paper describes the semantic inventory and morphosyntactic properties of specialized converbs in Mehweb. The data for the description were collected during field trips to the village of Mehweb (Megeb). Converbs with the following meanings are described: anteriority, immediacy, inceptivity, simultaneity, posteriority, hypothetical conditionality, counterfactuality, concessivity (and another meaning close to concessivity), causality, purpose and graduality. A participle-based form with semantics of a locative converb is discussed.

**Keywords:** East Caucasian languages, adverbial subordination, converbs, specialized converbs, verbal morphology.

## 1 Introduction

Specialized converbs are a subtype of converbs that specify the semantic relation between the main and the dependent clauses (e.g. purposive or causal); for the definition see §2.2. This paper describes the inventory and morphosyntactic properties of specialized converbs in Mehweb. The structure of the paper is as follows. §2 introduces the subject of this study and defines the terms. §3 describes specialized converbs in Mehweb. §4 summarizes the morphology of the forms in two tables. §5 is the conclusion.

## 2 Defining the terms

### 2.1 Converb

According to [Haspelmath \(1995b: 3\)](#), a converb is “a non-finite verb form whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination”. In other words, one can un-



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derstand converbs as “verbal adverbs, just like participles are verbal adjectives”. The definition of converb in Nedjalkov (1995) is similar: “as a first approximation, we can define a converb as a verb form which depends syntactically on another verb form, but is not its syntactic actant, i.e., it does not realize its semantic valencies”. In an example of a canonical converb by Nedjalkov (1), the verb form *uleta-des* ‘crossing’ is dependent on the main verb *poordus* ‘turned’, but is not an argument of it.

- (1) Estonian (Nedjalkov 1995)  
*uleta-des joge poordus ratsanik ulati paremale.*  
 cross-CVB river turned horseman always right  
 ‘Crossing the river, the horseman always turned right.’

Both definitions agree in that a converb: 1) is a form of a verb, and 2) marks adverbial subordination (i.e. is not a semantic argument of the main verb).

## 2.2 Specialized converbs

Some languages distinguish specialized and general (contextual) converbs. As formulated in Haspelmath (1995a), unlike general converbs, which “leave the precise nature of the semantic link between the clauses open”, specialized converbs have “a quite specific adverbial meaning”, i.e. establish a specific semantic relation between the matrix and the converbal clauses. Lezgian sentences (2) and (3) taken from Haspelmath (1995a) exemplify, correspondingly, general (contextual in Haspelmath 1995a) and specialized converbs.

- (2) *Am ajwandi-k gasket k’el-iz aq̄waz-nawa*  
 he:ABS balcony-SBESS [newspaper read-CVB] stand-PRF  
 ‘He is standing on the balcony, reading a newspaper.’
- (3) *Dide Annidi ğülü-z fi-daldi muallimwil-e*  
 mother Anni(ERG) [husband-DAT go-PSTR] teachership-INNESS  
*k’walax-na.*  
 work-AOR  
 ‘My mother Anni worked as a teacher until she got married.’

While the imperfective general converb *k’el-iz* ‘reading’ simply describes an additional action, the posterior specialized converb *fi-daldi* ‘after going’ expresses an action immediately preceding the action in the main clause.

## 8 Specialized converbs in Mehweb

The relations expressed by specialized converbs can be of temporal, locative or logical relation nature. Converbs of logical relation normally also have a temporal meaning. Specialized converbs are never used in clause chaining<sup>1</sup> or periphrasis, which are two other common functions of general converbs. For a discussion of general converbs in Mehweb, see [Kustova \(2018\)](#).

## 2.3 Problems in defining specialized converbs

After distinguishing between specialized and general converbs, problems remain with the definition of the specialized converbs per se. This includes distinguishing specialized converbs from other non-finite verb forms which introduce subordinate clauses with adverbial semantics. I discuss three verb forms that are problematic in this way, namely infinitives, participles and action nominals inflected for case.

Distinguishing an infinitive clause from verbal clauses is problematic when the infinitive has purposive semantics. Here, the infinitive formally fits the definition of a converb. The issue is discussed in [Haspelmath \(1995b\)](#). According to Haspelmath, prototypical infinitives have a crucial property that converbs lack: they are primarily used in complement clauses, e.g. as arguments of modal or phasal verbs.

The issue of participles and is not so easy to solve. In this paper, I consider inflected participles heading subordinate clauses, such as *wak'ibičela* in the example below, to be specialized converbs.

- (4) *ʔaχul w-ak'-ib-i-če-la* *ur-uwe* *le-r*  
 guest M-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP-SUPER-EL rain:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-NPL  
 'From the moment the guest has come, it was raining.'

However, I do not count case-marked action nominals, like *berχ<sup>w</sup>rilizela* in the example below, as specialized converbs.

- (5) *šahal-li-če* *b-uħna*  
 town-OBL-SUPER(LAT) HPL-inside(LAT)  
*b-erχ<sup>w</sup>-ri-li-ze-la* *d-iq'-es*  
 HPL-enter:PFV-NMLZ-OBL-INTER-EL NPL-do:IPFV-INF  
*d-aʔ-ib* *zab*  
 NPL-begin:PFV-AOR rain  
 'As soon as they entered the town, it began to rain.'

<sup>1</sup> In [Haspelmath \(1995b\)](#) clause chaining is defined as a sequence in which each converb depends on the verb that follows it immediately and which contain only one fully finite final verb.

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There are two main reasons why participles and action nominals are treated differently. The first is the fact that case-inflected participles seem to be a more frequent source for specialized converbs (see e.g. [Creissels 2010](#)). Second, in adverbial subordination, case-inflected action nominals are in their prototypical syntactic position, similar to nominal adjuncts. Case-inflected participles, on the other hand, are not. Participles are prototypically used in adnominal position and are not inflected for case. To be used as heads of adverbial clauses, they thus need to change category, from an attribute to a nominal head. Although this is a productive syntactic process, its use to produce adverbial subordination may be considered evidence for grammaticalization. This separation is to a certain extent arbitrary, in that it only provides a proxy for measuring grammaticalization. Note that there is no systematic data available on case inflection of headless participles; it seems that they are not frequent in the corpus.

### 3 Specialized converbs in Mehweb

This section provides a description of specialized converbs in Mehweb. For each converb, I provide examples that show that the form can be used both when the subject of the converb is coreferent with the subject of the main clause and when the two clauses have different subjects. Some examples also show that the converb clause can be embedded into the main clause; this is considered to be a proof of its subordinate status.

The section focuses on temporal converbs and converbs expressing logical relations. There is one corpus occurrence of what seems to be a locative converb, discussed at the end of the section, but this form needs further investigation. In §4, I provide a table showing the availability of each converb for perfective and imperfective verbal stems and provide examples of the relevant word forms.

#### 3.1 Temporal converbs

##### 3.1.1 Anterior converb

A converbal clause with an anterior converb expresses an event that takes place before the event in the main clause and can be translated as ‘when P happened’ or ‘after P happened’. There is a number of variant markers of this converb – *-arɖle*, *-aɖle*, *-aɖe*, *-arɖ*, *-aɖ*, *-ɖale*, *-ɖela* – added to the participle. The speakers vary in the extent to which they consider each variant acceptable. Only *-aɖle* is equally accepted by all speakers. It is possible that there are slight semantic differences between these markers, but I was unable to establish them. In general, a

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speaker accepts several variants considering them to be interchangeable without any change in meaning. The form is derived from participles formed from both perfective and imperfective stems. In perfective forms, a hiatus between the *-i* of the participle and the *-a* of the marker is eliminated by a more or less clearly articulated prothetic *j* (not reflected in the transcription).

- (6) *iχi-šu, barhi b-uq-un-i-aḡle, dursi*  
 this-AD(LAT) sun N-enter:PFV-AOR-PTCP-ANTE girl  
*d-ak'-ib*  
 F1-come:PFV-AOR  
 'When the sun rose, a girl came to him.'
- (7) *unna-li-šu b-ak'-ib-i-ḡale iχ-di*  
 neighbor-OBL-AD(LAT) HPL-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP-ANTE this-PL  
*cenḡe b-ik-ib*  
 together(LAT) HPL-happen:PFV-AOR  
 'They met when they came to their neighbour.'
- (8) *il w-ik'-ul-aḡle, ʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>χ-le le-b-re*  
 this M-come:IPFV-PTCP-ANTE, good-ADVZ be-N-PST  
 'Every time he came, it was good.'

## 3.1.2 Immediate anterior converb

The immediate anterior converb encodes an event which immediately precedes the event in the matrix clause. Its semantics is comparable to that of the English construction 'as soon as P happened'. The marker of the immediate anterior converb is the suffix *-rijal* attached to the perfective stem followed by the suffix of irrealis.

- (9) *do<sup>ʕ</sup>hi, iχ unna-li-šu w-ak'-a-rijal, b-iq'-es*  
 snow this neighbor-OBL-AD(LAT) M-come:PFV-IRR-IMM N-do:IPFV-INF  
*b-aʔ-ib.*  
 N-begin:PFV-AOR  
 'Just after he got to his neighbour's, it began to snow.'
- (10) *sudi-če w-aʔ-a-rijal, šalʔu na<sup>ʕ</sup>ḡ=ra*  
 court-SUPER(LAT) M-arrive:PFV-IRR-IMM in.the.bosom(LAT) hand= ADD  
*b-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q-i-le, sudiʔa-li-s haraq'e-r ʔarḡ-ube*  
 N-hit:PFV-AOR-CVB judge-OBL-DAT in.front-NPL(ESS) stone-PL

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*χ<sup>w</sup>arčara d-iz-aq-i-le le-r.*  
shake NPL-LV:IPFV-CAUS-AOR-CVB AUX-NPL

‘As soon as he got to the court, putting his hand to the bosom, he shook the stones behind the judge.’ (Magometov 1982: p. 147, sentence 27)

The form can not be derived from the imperfective irrealis stem, cf. \**wik’arijal*, \**urcarijal*.

There is another way of expressing the same meaning using an action nominal in the inter-relative form:

- (11) *šahal-li-če b-uħna*  
town-OBL-SUPER(LAT) HPL-inside(LAT)  
*b-erχ<sup>w</sup>-ri-li-ze-la, d-iq’-es*  
HPL-enter:PFV-NMLZ-OBL-INTER-EL NPL-do:IPFV-INF  
*d-aʔ-ib zab*  
NPL-begin:PFV-AOR rain

‘As soon as they entered the town, it began to rain.’

### 3.1.3 Inceptive converb

The event encoded by the inceptive converb is the initial boundary of the event described by the main clause. It can be translated into English as ‘from the moment when’ or ‘since’. The marker of the inceptive converb is *-čela*, which is attached to the perfective participle. The converb marker originates as a combination of the nominal suffixes *-če-la* (SUPER-EL), which literally means ‘from above’.

- (12) *dus, nu-ni kaʁar b-arx-ib-i-čela, ʔaʁ-b-aʔq’-un*  
year I-ERG letter N-send:PFV-AOR-PTCP-INCP away-N-go:PFV-AOR

‘A year passed since I sent the letter.’

- (13) *iχ w-ak’-ib-i-čela i<w>aʁħaʔd, iχ*  
this M-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP-INCP <M>back this  
*duči-rk’-uwe le-w*  
laugh-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M

‘From the moment he came back he laughed.’

The form is impossible with the imperfective stem, cf. \**wik’uličela* (participle *w-ik’ul* ‘coming’), \**urculičela* (participle *urcul* ‘flying’).



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## 3.1.4 Simultaneous converb

Simultaneity is expressed by a converb marker *-ija(da)l* attached to the imperfective participle or to the aorist in the perfective. The form is probably related to one of the nominal elative markers *-adal*, with an *-i* of unclear origin and prothetic *-j-*. In the examples below *-da-* can be dropped without any change in the semantics.

- (14) *nu, di-la uzi luč'-ul-ijadal, čaj*  
 I(NOM) I.OBL-GEN brother read:IPFV-PTCP-SMLT tea  
*b-už-uwe le-l-la.*  
 N-drink:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-F-EGO  
 'I drink tea while my brother reads.'
- (15) *nu luč'-ul-ijadal, čaj b-už-uwe le-l-la.*  
 I.NOM read:IPFV-PTCP-SMLT tea N-drink:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-F-EGO  
 'I drink tea while reading.'

When/if formed from a perfective participle, the converb is semantically different from the imperfective one in that it acquires semantics of immediateness:

- (16) *predloženiye b-elč'-un-ijadal, perewod b-aq'-ib*  
 sentence N-read:PFV-AOR-SMLT translation N-do:PFV-AOR  
 'As soon as (s)he read the sentence, (s)he translated it.'

Note however that not all speakers accepted (16).

## 3.1.5 Posterior converb

The posterior converb either marks the final boundary of the event in the main clause or indicates that the event in the converb clause happens after the event in the main clause. It could be translated into English as 'before'. The form can be used with both perfective and imperfective verb stems. This converb is formed by the affix *-če* added to the perfective stem followed by a vowel, either *a*, like in (19) or *e*, as in (17), (18) and (20). The distribution of the vowel is phonetic and is exactly the same as the distribution of the vowel of the infinitive in the same verbs (see [Daniel 2018](#)), which suggests derivation of the converb from the infinitive stem. The suffix of the converb can be identified with the nominal marker *-če* (SUPER).

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- (17) *zab, iχ-di šahal-li-ħe b-erχ<sup>w</sup>-eče,*  
rain this-PL town-OBL-IN(LAT)(LAT) HPL-enter:PFV-PSTR  
*d-aʔ-ib d-iq'-es*  
NPL-begin:PFV-AOR NPL-do:IPFV-INF  
‘It started raining before they entered the town’
- (18) *iχ-di-li-ni karawat b-aq'-ib hil-b-ix-eče*  
this-PL-OBL-ERG bed HPL-do:PFV-AOR PV-HPL-lie.down:PFV-PSTR  
‘They made the bed before going to bed’
- (19) *iχ-di šahal-li-ze b-ak'-ače*  
this-PL town-OBL-INTER(LAT)(LAT) HPL-come:PFV-PSTR  
*iχ-di-li-ze hun-ħe-di d-aq-il si-k'al*  
this-PL-OBL-INTER(LAT) road-IN-TRANS NPL-much-ATR what-PTCL  
*gu-b*  
see-AOR  
‘They saw a lot before they entered the town.’
- (20) *luk'-eče, nuša-jni deč' b-aq'-i-ra*  
write:IPFV-PSTR we-ERG song N-do:PFV-AOR-EGO  
‘Before writing, we sang a song.’

### 3.2 Conditional and counterfactual converbs

In this section I present a brief description of the morphosyntactic properties of the conditional and counterfactual converbs. For more information on the semantics of conditional forms see [Dobrushina \(2018\)](#), which is the source of most examples in in this section.

#### 3.2.1 Hypothetical conditional converb

The marker of the conditional converb *-k'a* attaches to the irrealis stem. The form is used with both perfective and imperfective verb stems.

- (21) *nu-ni ʔat' g-a-k'a, ħu-ni na-b t'ult'*  
you.sg-ERG flour give:PFV-IRR-COND you-ERG I.OBL-DAT bread  
*b-aq'-iša=w*  
N-do:PFV-FUT.EGO=Q  
‘If I bring the flour, will you make bread for me?’

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- (22) *nu, di-la urši-li-ni xunul k-a-k'a,*  
 I I.OBL-GEN boy-OBL-ERG wife bring:PFV-IRR-COND  
*iχ-di-li-šu-r d-uʔ-es-i*  
 that-PL-OBL-AD-HPL(ESS) F1-be-INF-ATR  
 'If my son marries, I will live at their place.' (Dobrushina 2018)

In the following example, the main clause and the converb clause share the subject:

- (23) *anwar w-ak'-i-le w-arg-a-k'a, abaj-šu*  
 Anwar M-come:PFV-AOR-CVB M-find:PFV-IRR-COND mother-AD(LAT)  
*u'q'-es-i*  
 M.go:PFV-INF-ATR  
 'If Anwar comes, he will go to his mother.' (Dobrushina 2018)

The conditional quasi-grammaticalized use of 'find' in (23) is discussed in Maisak & Daniel (2018).

The following example shows the same converb formed from the imperfective stem:

- (24) *d-aq-il kung-ane luč'-a-k'a, d-aq-il*  
 NPL-much-ATR book-PL read:IPFV-IRR-COND NPL-much-ATR  
*si-k'al nuša-ze d-alh-ul*  
 what-INDEF we-INTER(LAT) NPL-know:IPFV-PTCP  
 'If we read many books, we will know many things.'

## 3.2.2 Counterfactual converb

The affix *-q'alle* forms the converb of counterfactual condition (that is, the event in the main clause could have taken place if the event in the converbal clause had taken place – but this did not happen). It attaches to the perfective stem or to the imperfective participle.

- (25) *ħu anawaje w-aq'-un-q'alle, nuša-jni muħammad*  
 you.sg(NOM) fast.ADVZ M-do:PFV-AOR-CTRF we-ERG Muhammad  
*ulc-a-re.*  
 M.catch:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If you had driven fast, we would have caught Muhammad.'

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- (26) *nu=ra iχ w-ebk'-ib-q'alle, d-ubk'-a-re*  
 I(NOM)=ADD this M-die:PFV-AOR-CTRF F1-die:IPFV-IRR-PST  
 'If (he) had died, I would have also died.' (Dobrushina 2018)

The following example shows this converb formed from the imperfective stem:

- (27) *iχ išbari ?a's-w-irk-ul-q'alle ?a'χ-le b-u?-a-re*  
 this today PV-M-come.back:IPFV-PTCP-CTRF good-ADVZ N-be-IRR-PST  
 'If he had come today, it would have been good.' (Dobrushina this volume)

### 3.2.3 Concessive converb

The concessive converb is formed by the complex suffix *-k'a-ra* (-COND-ADD) preceded by the irrealis suffix *-a-*.

- (28) *iχ-ini, iχ-di-li-ni ?at ĥa-g-a-k'ara, pirog*  
 this-ERG this-PL-OBL-ERG flour NEG-give:PFV-IRR-CONC pie  
*b-aq'-ib*  
 N-do:PFV-AOR  
 'Although they haven't given her flour, she baked a pie'
- (29) *dunijal zab-li ur-a-k'ara nuša quli*  
 world rain-OBL(ERG) rain:IPFV-IRR-CONC we home(LAT)  
*ĥa'-b-a'q'-un-na*  
 NEG-HPL-go:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'Although it was raining, we didn't go home.'
- (30) *nu-ni b-iq'-a-k'ara, ĥu razi ĥa-rh<sup>w</sup>-an*  
 I.ERG N-do:IPFV-IRR-CONC you.NOM agree NEG-M.become:IPFV-HAB  
 'Although I do (this), you are not happy.' (Magometov 1982)

### 3.2.4 Converb in *-le?ur*

The marker *-le?ur* conveys semantics close to concession and causality. It is used when the event described by the converbal clause was unlikely to happen and probably undesirable; but since it nevertheless did happen, the action in the main clause takes place. The structure of the form is unclear. In regular verbs, it may be analysed as the participle followed by the suffix *-le?ur*. For the auxiliary *-le-cl*, however, the suffix seems to attach directly to the finite form (*le-cl-le?ur*). This form is attested in Magometov's texts but is, at best, marginal. My examples

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are all elicited. Not all speakers accept this form and even those who find it acceptable with some verbs are unable to think of examples with other verbs.

- (31) *ħu w-ak'-i-leʔur, nuša-ni ħa-d*  
 you.sg(NOM) M-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP?-CONC2 we-ERG you-DAT  
*ʔoʃħlad-deš d-aq'-iša*  
 hospitable-NMLZ NPL-do:PFV-FUT.EGO  
 'As you came here, we will treat you.'
- (32) *ħu b-ak'-i-leʔur, b-ug-e*  
 you.sg(NOM) N-come:PFV-AOR-CVB-CONC2 N-eat:PFV-IMP  
 'Since you came here, eat.' (addressed to an animal)
- (33) *χ<sup>w</sup>e ħar-b-ulq-u-leʔur, b-uc-a.*  
 dog PV-N-flee:IPFV-CVB-IPFV-CONC2 N-catch:PFV-IMP.TR  
 'Since the dog is running away, catch it!'

## 3.3 Other converbs of logical relations

## 3.3.1 Causal converb

The causal converb describes an event which is the cause of the situation described in the main clause. The affix of the causal converb *-na* is attached to the general converb. The converb is formed from both perfective and imperfective stems.

- (34) *iχ, doʃħi b-aq'-i-le-na, ruzi-li-šu*  
 his snow N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB-CAUSAL sister-OBL-AD(LAT)  
*w-aʃq'-un.*  
 M-go:PFV-AOR  
 'Because it started to snow, he went to his sister.'
- (35) *xunuj-ni sual-t xar d-i-uwe le-l-le*  
 wife.OBL-ERG question-PL ask NPL-LV:IPFV-CVB-IPFV AUX-NPL-PST  
*iχi-ze, quli ʔaraba w-ak'-i-le-na*  
 he-INTER(LAT) home(LAT) late M-come:PFV-CVB-CAUSAL  
 'His wife asked him questions, because he came home late.'
- (36) *murad w-ik'-uwe-na, nuša ħule b-uʔ-i-ra*  
 Murad M-come:IPFV-CVB-IPFV-CAUSAL we eye HPL-be:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'We were waiting, because Murad had to come.'

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### 3.3.2 Purposive converb

The purposive converb expresses an event conceptualized as the purpose of the action described in the main clause ('in order to'). It is formed by the affix *-alis* added to the bare verb stem and can be formed with both perfective and imperfective stems. The marker is likely to originate from *-a-li-s* (-IRR-OBL-DAT). Indeed, cross-linguistically, the dative often expresses a purposive meaning (see for example, [Haspelmath 1995a](#)), and the purposive meaning is related to the domain of irrealis (see for example [Palmer 2001](#): 131).

- (37) *iχ-di-li, dursi hil-d-iχ-alis, buruš b-aq'-ib*  
 this-PL-ERG girl PV-F1-lie.down:PFV-PURP bed N-do:PFV-AOR  
 'They made the bed so that the girl could go to sleep.'
- (38) *dursi-li-ni buruš b-aq'-ib, hil-d-iχ-alis.*  
 girl-OBL-ERG bed N-do:PFV-AOR PV-F1-lie.down:PFV-PURP  
 'The girl made the bed in order to go to sleep.'
- (39) *ʒali w-ik'-alis nu-ni igruš-une as-i-ra*  
 Ali M-come:IPFV-PURP I-ERG toy-PL take:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'I brought the toys so that Ali would come.'

The semantics of purpose can also be expressed by the infinitive; this construction may have the same subject as in the main clause or a different one.

- (40) *iχ-di-li buruš b-aq'-ib dursi hil-d-iχ-es.*  
 this-PL-OBL bed N-do:PFV-AOR girl PV-F1-lie.down:PFV-INF  
 'They made the bed for the girl to go to sleep.'
- (41) *dursi-li-ni buruš b-aq'-ib, hil-d-iχ-es*  
 girl-OBL-ERG bed N-do:PFV-AOR PV-F1-lie.down:PFV-INF  
 'The girl made the bed in order to go to sleep.'

However, for the reasons discussed above in §2, I do not count the infinitival construction as a converbal one, though, in this case, it fits the definition from a functional point of view. For further detailed discussion, see [Haspelmath \(1995b: 28\)](#).

### 3.3.3 Gradual converb

The affix *-cad(i)* attaches to the participle to express graduality. Clauses with this converb can be translated into English using the expression 'the more ..., the

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more ...'. This affix also exists in standard Dargwa as a nominal marker expressing the meaning 'as much as, about' (called "equative" in [van den Berg 2001: 25](#)). It also occurs with verb forms and in this case shows nearly the same semantics as in Mehweb. Historically, the first part of this marker (-*ca*-) may derive from the spatial marker meaning 'from the speaker' (translocative), though the origins of the second part -*di* is not clear. A possible cognate of this affix is -*cat* in Tanti Dargwa, which conveys the semantics of approximation and similarity ([Sumbatova & Lander 2014](#)). The form is derived from both perfective and imperfective participle.

- (42) *urši, d-aqnal dursi luč'-ul-cadi, w-aqnal*  
 boy F1-often girl read:IPFV-PTCP-GRAD M-often  
*uk-uwe le-w*  
 M.eat:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
 'The more the girl reads, the more the boy eats.'
- (43) *it kung b-elč-un-i-cad, nab b-elč-es*  
 this book N-read:PFV-AOR-PTCP-GRAD I.DAT N-read:PFV-INF  
*dig-an*  
 want:IPFV-HAB  
 'The more I read this book, the more I want to read.'

Apart from the semantics described above, this form may also have a temporal interpretation of simultaneity, as shown in (44):

- (44) *dursi ša<sup>č</sup>-ba<sup>č</sup>H q'-u<sup>č</sup>we le-r-cad, iχija pikru-me*  
 girl village-ALL go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-F-GRAD this.GEN thought-PL  
*le-l-le ruzi-li-če-r*  
 be-F-PST sister-OBL-SUPER-F(ESS)  
 'While going to the village, the girl was thinking about her sister.' (lit. her thoughts were about the sister)

## 3.4 Locative converb

The locative converb has been found in the corpus already after the field phase of the research has been completed:

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- (45) *nu q'-o'j-ħe w-arg-a-k'a*  
you.sg(NOM) go:IPFV-PTCP-IN(LAT) M-find:PFV-IRR-COND  
*uk-iša.*  
M.bring:PFV-FUT.EGO  
'If it turns out that (you are going) where I am going, I will give you a ride.'

It only occurs in the corpus two more times (e.g. *dig-uj-ħe* 'to where one wants', 'wherever one wants (to go)'), also based on the imperfective participle (*-uj < -ul*). Under elicitation, the locative converb has been produced for the perfective stem, too:

- (46) *nu-ni uʔaʃ b-ix-ib-i-ħe-w it kajʔ-ib.*  
I-ERG cheese M-put:PFV-AOR-PTCP-IN-M(ESS) this M.sit:PFV-AOR  
'He sat down where I have put the cheese.'

## 4 Examples of the forms

This section contains two tables. Table 1 shows the compatibility of converbal markers with different stems and the verb forms serving as the base for the corresponding converbs, with references to the examples above. Table 2 provides instances of each of the specialized converb forms.

Table 1: Compatibility of converbal markers with perfective or imperfective verb stems

converb	marker	perfective		imperfective	
		example	base	example	base
IMM	<i>-a-rijal</i>	(6), (7)	irrealis stem	–	–
PURP	<i>-a(-)lis</i>	(34), (35)	irrealis stem	(36)	irrealis stem
COND	<i>-k'a</i>	(18), (19), (20)	irrealis stem	(21)	irrealis stem
CONC	<i>-k'a-ra</i>	(25)	irrealis stem	(26), (27)	irrealis stem
PSTR	<i>-a/e(-)če</i>	(15), (16)	infinitive stem	(17)	infinitive stem
SMLT	<i>-ijadal</i>	(13)	aorist	(11), (12)	participle
CTRF	<i>-q'alle</i>	(22), (23)	aorist	(24)	participle
INCP	<i>-čela</i>	(9), (10)	participle	–	–
LOC	<i>-ħe</i>	(46)	participle	(45)	participle
ANTE	<i>-a(r)ʋle, -aʋe,</i> <i>-a(r)ʋ, -ʋale,</i> <i>-ʋela</i>	(3), (4)	participle	(5)	participle



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Table 1: Compatibility of converbal markers with perfective or imperfective verb stems (continued)

converb	marker	perfective		imperfective	
		example	base	example	base
GRAD	<i>-cad(i)</i>	(39)	participle	(40)	participle
CAUSAL	<i>-na</i>	(31), (32)	general converb	(33)	general converb
CONC2	<i>-leʔur</i>	(28), (29)	general converb	(30)	general converb

Table 2: Examples of specialized converbs

	PFV	IPFV
IMM	<i>w-ak'-a-rijal</i> (6) M-come:PFV-IRR-IMM 'just after he came'	—
PURP	<i>hil-d-ix-alis</i> (34), (35) PV-F1-lie.down:PFV-PURP 'in order for her to go to sleep'	<i>w-ik'-alis</i> (36) M-come:IPFV-PURP 'in order for him to come'
COND	<i>g-a-k'a</i> (18) give:PFV-IRR-COND 'if (s)he gave'	<i>luč'-a-k'a</i> (21) read:IPFV-IRR-COND 'if (s)he gave'
CONC	<i>ħa-g-a-k'ara</i> (25) NEG-give:PFV-IRR-CONC 'though (s)he did not give'	<i>b-iq'-a-k'ara</i> (27) N-do:IPFV-IRR-CONC 'though (s)he does'
PSTR	<i>b-ak'-ače</i> (16) HPL-come:PFV-PSTR 'before they came'	<i>luk'-eče</i> (17) write:IPFV-PSTR 'before reading'
SMLT	<i>b-elč'-un-ijadal</i> (13) N-read:PFV-AOR-SMLT 'as soon as (s)he reads'	<i>luč'-ul-ijadal</i> (12) read:IPFV-PTCP-SMLT 'while (s)he reads'
CTRF	<i>w-aq'-un-q'alle</i> (22) M-do:PFV-AOR-CTRF 'if he had done'	<i>ʔaʔš-w-irk-ul-q'alle</i> (24) PV-M-come.back:IPFV-PTCP-CTRF 'if he comes'
INCP	<i>w-ak'-ib-i-čela</i> (10) M-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP-INCP 'since the moment he came'	—
LOC	<i>b-ix-ib-i-ħe-w</i> (46) N-put:PFV-AOR-PTCP-IN-M(ESS) 'where I put it'	<i>q'oʔ-j-ħe</i> (45) go:PFV-PTCP-IN(LAT) 'to where (s)he goes'

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Table 2: Examples of specialized converbs (continued)

	PFV	IPFV
ANTE	<i>b-ak'-ib-i-kale</i> (4) HPL-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP-ANTE 'when they came'	<i>w-ik'-ul-able</i> (5) M-come:IPFV-PTCP-ANTE 'when he came'
GRAD	<i>b-elč-un-i-cad(i)</i> (40) N-read:PFV-AOR-PTCP-GRAD 'the more (s)he has read'	<i>luč'-ul-cad(i)</i> (39) read:IPFV-PTCP-GRAD 'the more (s)he reads'
CAUSAL	<i>d-ak'-i-le-na</i> (32) F1-come:PFV-AOR-CVB-CAUSAL 'because she came'	<i>w-ik'-uwe-na</i> (33) M-come:IPFV-CVB/IPFV-CAUSAL 'because he came'
CONC2	<i>w-ak'-i-ležur</i> (28) M-come:PFV-AOR-PTCP?-CONC2 'since he came'	<i>har-b-ulq-u-ležur</i> (30) PV-N-flee:IPFV-PTCP?-CONC2 'since it is running away'

## 5 Conclusion

Mehweb has a relatively rich inventory of specialized converbs, with five temporal converbs (anterior, immediate anterior, inceptive, simultaneous and posterior), seven converbs expressing logical relations (hypothetical conditional, counterfactual, concessive, converb expressing another meaning close to concessive, causal, purposive and gradual) and, probably, a locative converb. There is a strong phonetic variation of the anterior converb marker. Other variants of converb markers include two variants for the marker of the simultaneous converb (*-jadal/-jal*) and two variants for the gradual converb (*-cad/-cadi*).

Specialized converbs are formed in several different ways, with the converb marker attached to:

- 1) irrealis stem: immediate, anterior, concessive converbs and possible also the purposive converb;
- 2) infinitive stem: probably, posterior converb;
- 3) aorist in the perfective and participle in the imperfective: simultaneous and counterfactual converbs);
- 4) participle in both perfective and imperfective: anterior, gradual converbs and locative converb;
- 5) general converb: causal and second concessive converbs.

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These types may be interpreted as reflecting increasing degree of grammaticalization of the forms. The irrealis and the infinitive stems are bound. The third pattern is unpredictably selective (aorist in the perfective, participle in the imperfective). The fourth type forms converbs from stems that also function as free forms (participles). However, as discussed in the introduction, participles do not typically function as nominal adjuncts in the clause, and their inflection is different from the converb markers, so a certain degree of grammaticalization is still present. Finally, in the fifth type, converb markers are attached to the forms that are already marked for adverbial subordination (general converb). These converb markers (causal and second concessive) are closest to particles, but as they seem to be bound they may be considered as derivational suffixes.

**List of abbreviations**

ABS	absolutive
AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
ALL	motion directed towards a spatial domain
ANTE	anteriority converb
AOR	aorist
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CAUSAL	causal (case form)
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
CONC	concessive
CONC2	concessive
COND	conditional
CTRF	counterfactual
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future

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GEN	genitive
GRAD	gradual converb
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IMM	immediate converb
IMP	imperative
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INCP	inceptive converb
INDEF	indefinite particle
INESS	location inside
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
IRR	irrealis (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LOC	locative converb
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PRF	perfect
PST	past
PSTR	posterior converb
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PURP	purposive converb
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question (interrogative particle)
SBESS	subessive (location under)
SMLT	simultaneous converb
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
TRANS	motion through a spatial domain

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## Chapter 9

# General converbs in Mehweb

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This paper deals with the morphological and syntactic properties of general converbs in Mehweb. I discuss the markers used to form general converbs, periphrastic converbs, independent uses of converbs, their behaviour in combination with verbs in the imperative, different strategies of argument sharing between the converb clause and the main clause, and coordination/subordination properties of the general converb. The description of the syntactic properties of the converbs is based on both elicited examples and corpus evidence.

## 1 Introduction

According to [Haspelmath \(1995: 3\)](#), “a converb is a nonfinite verb form whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination”; in other words, “converbs are verbal adverbs, just like participles are verbal adjectives”. In Mehweb, there are specialized converbs, which specify the semantic relation between the main and the converb clause (e.g. causal, immediate precedence in time, other temporal relations and so on – [Sheyanova 2018](#), in this volume). This paper is devoted to general converbs which do not specify this relation – or, at least, do it in a more subtle way, leaving some room for contextual interpretation (hence an alternative label for this category is *contextual* converbs).

In §2, the basic uses and the morphology of perfective and imperfective converbs will be discussed, §3 describes periphrastic converbs, and §4 deals with independent use of general converbs in Mehweb. §5 discusses different strategies of how the converb clause can share its main arguments with the main clause. Finally, in §6 I discuss the coordination and subordination properties of the Mehweb general converb.



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## 2 Perfective and imperfective converbs: background information

General converbs in Mehweb Dargwa are derived from perfective and imperfective stems. Below I will refer to them as perfective and imperfective converbs respectively. The perfective converb is formed by adding the converb marker *-le* to the verb in the aorist (Magometov 1982: 110); the affix undergoes morphonological alternations (see Moroz 2018, in this volume; Daniel 2018, in this volume). The formation of perfective converbs is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: The formation of the perfective converb

	1 <sup>st</sup> conjugation class	2 <sup>nd</sup> conjugation class	3 <sup>rd</sup> conjugation class
Aorist	<i>b-at-ur</i>	<i>b-ic-ib</i>	<i>b-elč'-un</i>
	N-leave:PFV-AOR 'left'	N-sell:PFV-AOR 'sold'	N-read:PFV-AOR 'read'
Perfective converb	<i>b-at-ul-le</i> (< <i>b-at-ur-le</i> )	<i>b-ic-i-le</i> (< <i>b-ic-ib-le</i> )	<i>b-elč'-uwe</i> (< <i>b-elč'-ul-le</i> )
	N-leave:PFV-AOR-CVB 'having left'	N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB 'having sold'	N-read:PFV-AOR-CVB 'having read'

The imperfective converb is formed by adding *-uwe* to the imperfective stem. Here, the process is the same for all the verbs and could be interpreted as a combination of the participle suffix *-ul* and the converb suffix *-le* (Magometov 1982: 112). The formation of imperfective converbs is presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: The formation of the imperfective converb

	1 <sup>st</sup> conjugation class	2 <sup>nd</sup> conjugation class	3 <sup>rd</sup> conjugation class
Present participle	<i>b-alt-es</i>	<i>b-ilc-es</i>	<i>luč'-es</i>
	N-leave:IPFV-INF 'leaving'	N-sell:IPFV-INF 'selling'	N-read:IPFV-INF 'reading'
Imperfective converb	<i>b-alt-uwe</i>	<i>b-ilc-uwe</i>	<i>luč'-uwe</i>
	N-leave:IPFV-CVB.IPFV '(while) leaving'	N-sell:IPFV-CVB.IPFV '(while) selling'	read:IPFV-CVB.IPFV '(while) reading'

The perfective converb is used to describe an event that precedes the situation denoted in the main clause. Situations that take place simultaneously with the main event are described by the imperfective converb. Both imperfective and



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perfective converbs can be combined with finite verbs with present or past time reference, cf.:

- (1) *deč'=ra b-aq'-i-le musa w-a<sup>h</sup>q'-un quli*  
 song=ADD N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB Musa M-go:PFV-AOR house(LAT)  
 'Having sung a song, Musa went home.'
- (2) *deč'=ra b-iq'-uwe musa w-a<sup>h</sup>q'-un quli*  
 song=ADD N-do:IPFV-CVB.IPFV Musa M-go:PFV-AOR house(LAT)  
 'Singing a song, Musa went home.'
- (3) *deč'=ra b-aq'-i-le musa ʔa<sup>h</sup>r-q'-uwe le-w*  
 song=ADD N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB Musa away-go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
*quli*  
 house(LAT)  
 'Having sung a song, Musa is going home.'
- (4) *deč'=ra b-iq'-uwe musa ʔa<sup>h</sup>r-q'-uwe le-w*  
 song=ADD N-do:IPFV-CVB.IPFV Musa away-go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
*quli*  
 house(LAT)  
 'Singing the song, Musa is going home.'

In sentence (1), a perfective converb is combined with a finite verb in aorist, in (2) an imperfective converb is combined with a verb in aorist, in (3) a perfective converb is combined with a verb in present tense, and in (4) an imperfective converb is combined with a verb in present tense.

### 3 Periphrastic converbs

Apart from the perfective and imperfective converbs described above, most speakers of Mehweb allow forms consisting of a converb and a copula in the converb form, which essentially are converbs formed from periphrastic verb forms. Below I refer to such forms as periphrastic converbs.

A periphrastic converb that consists of a perfective converb and a copula in the converb form corresponds to the resultative, a finite periphrastic form composed of a perfective converb and a tensed copula.

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- (5) *jaʕbu b-ic-i-le le-b-le maʕHmud-ini χʷe*  
 horse N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB AUX-N-CVB Mahmud-ERG dog  
*as-ib*  
 take:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Having sold a horse, Mahmud bought a dog.’

The same construction with an imperfective converb corresponds to the present progressive, which was described in Magometov (1982: 87) as “definite imperfect”.

- (6) *jaʕbu b-ilc-uwe le-b-le maʕHmud le-w*  
 horse N-sell:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N-CVB Mahmud AUX-M  
*w-is-uwe*  
 M-weep:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 ‘While selling a horse, Mahmud is crying.’

The speakers also allow sentences like (7) and (8), where the copula in the converb form is preceded by a perfective or an imperfective infinitive. Morphologically, these forms correspond to the future resultative (composed of a perfective converb and a copula in the converb form) and the future progressive (an imperfective converb and a copula in the converb form). The semantic difference between the two periphrastic converbs remains unclear.

- (7) *jaʕbu b-ic-es le-b-le maʕHmud-ini χʷe as-ib*  
 horse N-sell:PFV-INF AUX-N-CVB mahmud-ERG dog take:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Going to sell a horse, Mahmud bought a dog.’
- (8) *jaʕbu b-ilc-es le-b-le maʕHmud le-w w-is-uwe*  
 horse N-sell:IPFV-INF AUX-N-CVB mahmud AUX-M M-weep-CVB  
 ‘Going to sell a horse, Mahmud is crying.’

## 4 Independent use

In most cases, converbs are used in complex clauses that also contain main finite clauses. However, some speakers allow sentences that contain only converbal predication.

When used independently, the perfective converb can have resultative semantics.

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- (9) *urši-ni di? b-erk-uwe*  
 boy-ERG meat N-eat:PFV-AOR.CVB  
 ‘A boy has eaten the meat (he finished it, so there is none left for me).’

Imperfective converbs can have the same semantics as habitual forms, i.e. sentences (10) and (11) have the same meaning.

- (10) *urši-ni di? b-uk-uwe*  
 boy-ERG meat N-eat:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 ‘A boy eats meat.’
- (11) *urši-ni di? b-uk-an*  
 boy-ERG meat N-eat:IPFV-HAB  
 ‘A boy eats meat.’

The examples which have only converbal predication are allowed by some Mehweb speakers and sometimes can be elicited, but the corpus (about 900 sentences) does not contain any instances of such sentences.

## 5 Argument sharing

In Mehweb, the S, A, P or other argument of the converb clause may – but does not have to – be referentially identical to the S, A, P or other argument of the main clause. This shared argument can be expressed in any of the two clauses. Below I will refer to such situations as *argument sharing*. In this part I discuss sharing of core arguments, including S, A and P. Logically, a large list of different argument sharing configurations could be derived by alternating syntactic parameters including the grammatical relation in the main clause, the grammatical relation in the converb clause and the locus of expression. However, not all of them are grammatical. Below I classify different argument sharing strategies in accordance with the consultants’ ability to interpret them. Note that some of the sentences may be grammatical when interpreted in a different way, so I checked not just grammaticality but also the availability of the intended interpretation with shared arguments.

Generally, all configurations which include sharing of two S-arguments or an S-argument and an A-argument, regardless of the clause where it is expressed (the main or the converb clause), are interpretable, cf. (12), (13).

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- (12) *musa w-ak'-i-le rasuj-če b-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q-ib*  
 Musa M-come:PFV-AOR-CVB Rasul-SUPER(LAT) N-hit:PFV-AOR  
 'When Musa came, (he) hit Rasul.' <sup>1</sup> (The S-argument of the intransitive  
 converb clause is coreferent to the A-argument of the transitive main  
 clause and is expressed in the converb clause.)
- (13) *dag χ<sup>w</sup>e har-b-uq-uwe išbari ʔa<sup>ʕ</sup>š-b-a<sup>ʕ</sup>q-ib*  
 yesterday dog PV-N-flee:PFV-AOR.CVB today back-N-come:PFV-AOR  
 'Yesterday the dog ran away, today it returned.' (Two intransitive clauses  
 sharing their S-argument, which is expressed in the converb clause)

In example (12), the fact that the shared argument is expressed in the converb clause is obvious from case marking. The verb *=ak'es* 'to come' is intransitive and takes an S-argument, while *=a<sup>ʕ</sup>qas* 'to hit' is transitive, with its A-argument in the ergative. Since the shared argument takes S-marking (nominative), it is a dependent of the converb, not of the main verb. Therefore, it belongs to the converb clause.

As for (13), this fact can be established on the basis of word order. The word *dag* 'yesterday' belongs to the converb clause, and the shared argument stands between the converb and its dependent. Therefore, I conclude that the shared argument belongs to the converb clause.

Sentences that include no argument sharing at all, like (14) and (15), are perfectly grammatical as well.

- (14) *ma<sup>ʕ</sup>ħmud-ini diʔ as-i-le pat'imat-ini χ<sup>w</sup>e dub*  
 Mahmud-ERG meat take:PFV-AOR-CVB Patimat-ERG dog eat  
*a<sup>ʕ</sup>ʔ-aq-ib*  
 LV:PFV-CAUS-AOR  
 'Mahmud bought some meat, Patimat fed the dog.'
- (15) *adami-li-ni q'ar b-i<sup>ʕ</sup>šq-i-le xunu.j-ni buruš*  
 husband-OBL-ERG hay N-mow:PFV-AOR-CVB wife.OBL-ERG bed  
*b-aq'-ib*  
 N-make:PFV-AOR  
 'The husband mowed the hay, the wife made the bed.'

<sup>1</sup> The verb *=aq<sup>ʕ</sup>as* 'to hit' takes the instrument as S, though it may not be expressed in the sentence. This is why the noun *Rasul* is not marked as S and the verb has a neutral gender agreement marker.

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Sharing that involves P-arguments and/or no sharing of S-arguments, like (16) and (17), seem to have different readings among the speakers (i.e. intended vs. other).

In (16), both clauses are transitive, the P-argument of the converb clause is coreferent to the A-argument of the main clause, the shared argument is expressed in the main clause (which can again be seen from the case marking of the shared argument):

- (16) *ma<sup>h</sup>ḡmud-ini as-i-le                      gatu-ini waca b-uc-ib*  
 Mahmud-ERG take:PFV-AOR-CVB cat-ERG mouse N-catch:PFV-AOR  
 'Mahmud bought a cat and it caught a mouse.'

Note that in (16) the P-argument of the main clause cannot be shared with the converb one, i.e. the example cannot mean that Mahmud bought a mouse.

In (17), both clauses are transitive and share their A- and P-arguments, the shared A-argument is expressed in the converb clause, the shared P-argument belongs to the main clause (evidence based on word order, as in (13)):

- (17) *dag ḡamzat-ini as-i-le                      iṣbari k<sup>w</sup>iha*  
 yesterday Hamzat-ERG take:PFV-AOR-CVB today lamb  
*b-erh-un*  
 N-slaughter:PFV-AOR  
 'Yesterday Hamzat bought a lamb, today he slaughtered it.'

Sentences where A- and P-arguments of one transitive clause were coreferent to the P- and A-arguments of the other transitive clause were not interpreted in the way we would expect by any of the speakers. Cf. (18) where A- and P-arguments of one clause are coreferent to the P- and A-arguments of the other and in each clause its own P-argument is expressed:

- (18) *rasul uc-i-le                      musa w-a<sup>h</sup>b<sup>h</sup>-ib*  
 Rasul M.catch:PFV-AOR-CVB Musa M-kill:PFV-AOR  
 \* 'Musa caught Rasul, Rasul killed Musa.'  
 Possible translation: 'Rasul was caught, Musa was killed.'

Table 3 below shows the distribution of different argument sharing strategies according to the native speakers' ability to interpret them in the intended way.

Note that not all the imaginable configurations are included in the resulting table. It appears that configurations where the X-argument of the converb clause is coreferent to the Y-argument of the main clause behave in exactly the same way

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Table 3: The acceptability of different core argument sharing strategies

configurations that were always interpreted correctly	configurations that were ambiguous for some speakers	configurations that were never understood in the intended way
S=S	S=P	A=P & P=A
S=A	A=A	
no sharing	P=P	
	A=P	
	A=A & P=P	

as those where the X-argument of the main clause coincides with the Y-argument of the converb clause. The locus of expression did not seem to matter, either. The configurations in the table are thus only represented by the arguments which are shared.

6 Coordination and subordination properties

An English translation equivalent for a converb construction is often coordination (Haspelmath 1995: 8). The syntactic status of this parallel is treated in Kibrik (2007). Below I will explore syntactic properties of the Mehweb converb construction in terms of coordination vs. subordination.

6.1 Three syntactic tests

To find out whether the converbal construction in Mehweb is subordinate to the main verb or not, three syntactic tests were applied to sentences (19) and (20), including changing the linear order (6.1.1), embedding the converb clause inside the main one (6.1.2), and relativization (6.1.3) (the tests were described in Creissels 2012: 143–145).

To run the tests, I will use two sentences. In sentence (19), the converb clause shares its A argument with the main clause, while sentence (20) has no argument sharing.

- (19) *musa-ini qali b-ic-i-le iz-es w-a?-ib*  
Musa-ERG house N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB be.ill:IPFV-INF M-begin:PFV-AOR  
'Musa, having sold the house, became ill.'

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- (20) *adami-li-ni q'ar b-iʃq-i-le xunu.j-ni buruš*  
 husband-OBL-ERG hay N-mow:PFV-AOR-CVB wife.OBL-ERG bed  
*b-aq'-ib*  
 N-do:PFV-AOR  
 'The husband mowed the hay, the wife made the bed.'

## 6.1.1 Linear order of the clauses

When two or more coordinate clauses describe a sequence of events, their order is iconic and cannot be changed without changing the sense of the entire sentence. In contrast, if one of the clauses is subordinate, the order can be changed with no influence on the general meaning. For instance, *I came, I saw, I conquered* is not semantically identical to *I came, I conquered, I saw*. However, sentences *Having seen, I conquered* and *I conquered, having seen* are both possible and have identical meaning. In this respect, Mehweb general converbs seem to behave more like English subordinate clauses:

- (21) *iz-es w-aʔ-ib musa-ini qali b-ic-i-le*  
 be.ill:IPFV-INF M-begin:PFV-AOR Musa-ERG house N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 'Musa became ill, because he had sold the house.'
- (22) *xunu.j-ni buruš b-aq'-ib, adami-li-ni q'ar*  
 wife.OBL-ERG bed N-make:PFV-AOR husband-OBL-ERG hay  
*b-iʃq-i-le*  
 N-mow:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 'The wife made bed, because the husband had mowed the hay.'

As it can be seen from the examples above, in both cases the main and the converb clause can change places. It does not affect the order of the events, which is the same as in the original sentences (21) and (22). However, note that the translations provided by native speakers for both modified sentences included the word 'because'. This fact will be discussed further in the paper.

## 6.1.2 Embedding

Another evidence for subordination analysis is the possibility of embedding the converb clause into the main one.

In Mehweb, it is perfectly fine to place a converb clause that shares its A-argument with the main clause between the main verb and its dependents, cf. (23):

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- (23) *musa qali b-ic-i-le iz-es w-aʔ-ib*  
 Musa house N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB be.ill:IPFV-INF M-begin:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Musa, as he sold the house, became ill.’

In this sentence, it is clear that the shared argument belongs to the main clause because of its case marking. The verb *izes =aʔes* ‘to become ill’ is intransitive, which is why its only argument stands in absolutive. If the noun belonged to the converb clause, it would be marked by ergative, cf. (24):

- (24) *musa-ini qali b-ic-ib*  
 Musa-ERG house N-sell:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Musa sold the house.’

In the absence of argument sharing, however, embedding is severely degraded: speakers tend to either assign another interpretation or judge it as unacceptable:

- (25) *xunuj-ni adami-li-ni q’ar b-iʃq-i-le, buruʃ*  
 wife.OBL-ERG husband-OBL-ERG hay N-mow:PFV-AOR-CVB bed  
*b-aq’-ib*  
 N-make:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The wife and the husband, having mowed the hay, made the bed.’

In (25), the converb clause with no argument sharing is embedded into the main clause. When the ergative arguments of the different clauses are placed one after the other as in (25), they are interpreted as belonging to one and the same clause (which can be either the converb clause or the main clause). As a result, the whole sentence is re-interpreted.

### 6.1.3 Relativization

Generally, clause coordination tends to place much more severe restrictions on the use of relativization strategies than clause subordination. For instance, English sentence *The boy cried when his sister punched him* can be relativized as *The boy, who cried when his sister punched him, came in*, whereas no such construction is possible with a sentence like *The boy’s sister punched him, and he started crying* (\**The boy, whose/who sister punched (him) and cried, came in*). Thus, where the relative construction is allowed, I will consider this an argument for the subordinate status of the converb. Unavailability of relativization will be considered as evidence in favor of coordination.

In Mehweb, relativization is allowed if the converb clause shares its S- or A-argument with the main one:



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- (26) *qali b-ic-i-le iz-es w-aʔ-ib-i musa*  
 house N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB be.ill:IPFV-INF M-begin:PFV-AOR-ATR Musa  
*w-ebk'-ib*  
 M-die:PFV-AOR  
 'Musa, who became ill because of selling the house, died.'

As for the sentence without argument sharing, none of the speakers suggested the expected interpretation ('The wife, who made bed after her husband mowed the grass, came here').

- (27) *adami-li-ni q'ar b-iʃq-i-le buruʃ*  
 husband-OBL-ERG hay N-mow:PFV-AOR-CVB bed  
*b-aq'-ib-i xunul iʃe r-ak'-ib*  
 N-make:PFV-AOR-ATR wife here F-come:PFV-AOR  
 'The husband mowed the hay and made bed (for his wife), the wife came here.'  
 \* 'The wife, who made bed after her husband mowed the grass, came here'

I conclude that, with respect to relativization, sentences with no argument sharing display more coordinate properties, while those with sharing tend to behave more like subordinate. With respect to clause order, the constructions behave similarly regardless of the presence or absence of a shared argument: they both allow main clause – converb clause order, but the speakers then specify the causal relation between the two events.

## 6.2 Semantic properties of the converb clause

If two or more clauses are coordinated, each of them has a range of properties of their own, which means that features like tense, aspect and mood (and some others) are assigned to each predicate independently. The subordinate clause can, however, inherit some features from the main clause – or, in other words, fall under their scope. In this section, I will explore some of the converb clause properties which can potentially be inherited from the main clause. For each of the (non-)shared features, I will suppose that the inheritance of the feature implies that the construction behaves more in subordinate way, and the absence of such inheritance will make an argument for the coordination analysis.

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### 6.2.1 Tense and taxis

As it was mentioned in §2, the perfective converb describes the event that precedes the situation denoted in the main clause, whereas the imperfective converb describes an event which takes place simultaneously with the main event. To put it in other words, the converb clause usually does not have a tense of its own, and its time reference fully depends on that of the main clause.

Sentences which imply the presence of independent time reference within the converb clause can nevertheless be accepted as fully grammatical, cf. (28):

- (28) *išbari duči-rk'-uwe dag pat'imat pašmaje le-l-le*  
 today laugh-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV yesterday Patimat sad.ADVZ be-F-CVB  
 'Today Patimat is smiling, yesterday she was sad.' ('Today smiling,  
 yesterday Patimat was sad.')

Note that, however, such sentences are judged ungrammatical if the converb clause is embedded into the main one, cf. (29):

- (29) *\*dag pat'imat išbari duči-rk'-uwe pašmaje le-l-le*  
 yesterday Patimat today laugh-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV sad.ADVZ be-F-CVB  
 'Today Patimat is smiling, yesterday she was sad.'

The same happens when the converb clause is placed after the main one: sentence (30) is ungrammatical as well.

- (30) *\*dag pat'imat pašmaje le-l-le išbari duči-rk'-uwe*  
 yesterday Patimat sad.ADVZ be-F-CVB today laugh-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 'Today Patimat is smiling, yesterday she was sad.'

Overall, it seems that the Mehweb converb is capable of having a tense of its own, i.e. be tensed independently of the main clause. However, converbs inflected for a different tense than the main verb can not be embedded into the main clause or placed after it. In other words, they fail the test on subordination. In this case, the converb clause is less clearly subordinate to the main verb.

### 6.2.2 Illocutionary force

When a subordinate predication depends on an imperative, it may or not inherit the illocutionary force of the main clause. This means that the situation described in that predication can either be a part of the situation that the speaker wants to happen, or not. For instance, English sentence *Having drunken the wine, don't*

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*drive* does not mean that the speaker wants the addressee to drink the wine and then not to drive, which means that *Having drunken the wine* does not inherit the illocutionary power of the main predication. On the contrary, the sentence *Having cut the tomatoes, add them to the salad*, which can easily be a part of a bigger instruction, does imply that the speaker wants the addressee both to cut the tomatoes and to add them into the salad. In this case, the subordinate clause inherits the main clause's illocutionary force.

In Mehweb, a converb depending on an imperative form may or may not inherit the illocutionary force of the main clause.

- (31) *aquli huji-s nuša-la ša<sup>ʕ</sup>-ba<sup>ʕ</sup>H w-ak'-i-le,*  
 next time.OBL-DAT we-GEN village-ALL M-come:PFV-AOR-CVB  
*nuša-šu quli w-ak'-e*  
 we-AD(LAT) house(LAT) M-come-IMP  
 'When you arrive at our village next time, come at our place.'
- (32) *kaltuška d-i<sup>ʕ</sup>q-i-le ħarši d-aq'-a*  
 potato NPL-peel:PFV-AOR-CVB soup NPL-do:PFV-IMP  
 'Having peeled the potatoes, cook the soup.'

In the contexts where the converb falls under the scope of the main verb's illocutionary force, using another imperative instead of the converb is possible. Thus, sentence (33) has almost the same reading as sentence (32).

- (33) *kaltuška d-i<sup>ʕ</sup>q-a<sup>ʕ</sup> ħarši d-aq'-a*  
 potato NPL-peel:PFV-IMP soup NPL-cook:PFV-IMP  
 'Peel the potatoes and cook the soup.'

The meaning of the two, however, is slightly different. Some speakers claim that (32) implies that potatoes should be peeled and then added to the soup, whereas (33) does not have this implication. Probably, using converbs with imperatives implies that there is a closer semantic link between the two events than there would be in a sentence with two imperatives. A similar phenomenon is described in [Dobrushina \(2008\)](#) for Archi.

## 6.2.3 Negation

Another feature to be analysed is negation. As with other properties, the converb can either inherit it from the main predicate or not, cf. (34–35).

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- (34) *quli w-ak'-i-le urši-li-ni di?*  
 house(LAT) M-come:PFV-AOR-CVB boy-OBL-ERG meat  
*ħa-b-erk-un*  
 NEG-N-eat:PFV-AOR

‘Having come home, the boy did not eat the meat.’

- (35) *ʔali-ni arc ħa-s-i-le šamil*  
 Ali-ERG money NEG-take:PFV-AOR-CVB Šamil  
*ʔaʳ-ħaʳ-wqʳ-es*  
 away-NEG-M.go:PFV-INF

‘Ali not having taken the money, Šamil will not go.’ (= ‘Unless Ali takes the money, Šamil will not go.’)

In sentence (34), the scope of negation on the main predicate does not spread to the converb clause. Thus, in most cases the sentence is translated like *Having come home, the boy did not eat the soup*, i.e. the fact that the boy came home is not negated. On the contrary, sentence (35) displays a case where the converb falls under the scope of the negation attached to the main verb. Since the converb clause has a negation of its own, its meaning doubles, which renders the meaning *Unless Ali takes the money, Šamil will not go*. If the main clause negation scope did not spread over the converb clause (i.e. if both clauses had a negation of their own), the meaning would change, and the translation would be ‘Ali did not take the money, and Šamil will not go’, which is not the case here.

### 6.3 Coordination vs. subordination

According to [Creissels \(2010\)](#), when it comes to constructions whose syntactic status is difficult to determine within the coordination vs. subordination dichotomy, there is a number of analytic possibilities. In particular, if one and the same construction within the same sentence can show both co-ordinate and subordinate properties, this would represent an instance of what he calls co-subordination. If a construction shows either co-ordinate or subordinate properties depending on the context, this is analysed as co-ordination in some of its uses and subordination in others.

After applying the tests to different sentences containing converbal predication, it seems that Mehweb converbal construction displays different coordination/subordination properties under different circumstances. I will take a closer look at the conditions that influence the syntactic properties of the constructions.

First, as it can be seen from examples (21)–(23) and (26), in all the cases where the subordination tests worked, some sort of causal relation between the main

and the converb clause is implied. I suggest that the coordinate or subordinate characteristics of the construction mostly depend on the semantic relationship between the main and the converb clauses. In other words, when a semantic link between the two appears, the converb construction is very likely to become subordinate.

Another important factor seems to be the presence of argument sharing between the main and the converb clause. Examples (25) and (27) show that if the embedding test and the relativization test are applied to sentences with no argument sharing, the results may include the re-interpretation of the intended syntactic structure and lead to a different semantic interpretation. Relativisation and embedding of converb clauses without argument sharing is ungrammatical.

All in all, it seems that the behavior of the converb construction depends on (a) the semantic relation between the main and the converb clause and (b) the absence of argument sharing between the clauses.

This seems very similar to the situation in Tsakhur as described by Kazenin & Testelefs (2004). In this paper, the authors applied several tests on coordination vs. subordination to sentences containing general converbs. The tests turned out to give different results for one and the same sentence, depending on whether there was a causal relation between the converb and the main clauses. If a Tsakhur sentence contains a converb construction and its semantics may imply some causal relation between the main and the converb clause, then embedding the converb clause into the main one is only possible with causal interpretation. To put it differently, subordination tests produce positive results only if there exists a causal relation between the main and the converb clauses. However, center embedding can also work with no causal relation between the clauses, if they both have the same subject.

## 7 Conclusion

In this paper I considered the properties of general converbs in Mehweb Dargwa. I described the converb marker and its morphophonological features, the distribution of perfective and imperfective converbs, the use of periphrastic converbs, independent use of converbs, the way they can combine with imperatives and share their S, A or P arguments with the main clause. Coordination and subordination properties of the Mehweb general converb were discussed. The syntactic status of converb clauses is either coordinate or subordinate depending on (a) whether there is a causal relation between the main and the converb clause and (b) whether the converb clause shares its main argument with the main clause

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or not. Which of the principles (a) and (b) is prior, however, is still a question to be discussed.

## List of abbreviations

ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
ALL	motion directed towards a spatial domain
AOR	aorist
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
ERG	ergative
F	feminine (gender agreement)
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitive
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark

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## Chapter 10

# The self-pronoun in Mehweb

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This study deals with the phenomenon of the pronominal multifunctionality in Mehweb language. The pronominal stem glossed as ‘self’ has four functions (reflexive, logophoric, intensifier, and resumptive) which are described in some detail.

*Keywords:* logophoricity, reflexivization, long-distance reflexives

## 1 Introduction

In many typologically distinct languages, a formal relationship between reflexive, logophoric pronouns and intensifiers is attested (see [König et al. 2013](#)). In Mehweb these functions are fulfilled by the pronominal stem *sa<CL>i*, ‘self’, which can also be used as a resumptive.

In this paper I will describe the formal and functional aspects of the pronoun *sa<CL>i*, starting with a description of the structure of the relevant forms in §2. In §3 I will discuss their reflexive and logophoric usages, followed by a description of free logophors in §4. §5 is dedicated to the usage of *sa<CL>i* as an intensifier and in §6 some examples of the resumptive function will be discussed.

## 2 Morphology

The pronoun *sa<CL>i* can appear in the form of what I refer to as a “bare pronoun”, consisting of a pronominal stem inflected for number and case. A “complex pronoun” can be formed by adding the suffix *-al* to the bare pronoun. Both forms are described below.



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2.1 Bare stem

Mehweb employs the bare pronoun to refer to the antecedents in the long-distance domain (see §3.3) and possessive domain (see §3.2). The pronoun *sa<CL>i* agrees in number, person and gender with the antecedent and can attach case suffixes; see Table 1.

Table 1: The paradigm of the bare pronoun

number	gender <sup>1</sup>	NOM	ERG	DAT	GEN	INTER-LAT	COMIT
SG	M	<i>sa&lt;w&gt;i</i>					
	F	<i>sa&lt;r&gt;i</i>	<i>sune-jni</i>	<i>sune-s</i>	<i>sune-la</i>	<i>sune-ze</i>	<i>sune-ču</i>
	N	<i>sa&lt;b&gt;i</i>					
PL	HPL	<i>sa&lt;b&gt;i</i>	<i>ču-ni</i>	<i>ču-s</i>	<i>ču-la</i>	<i>ču-ze</i>	<i>ču-ču</i>
	NPL	<i>sa&lt;r&gt;i</i>					

Bare pronoun has three suppletive allomorphs. The first, *sa<CL>i* is the nominative stem which is the same in the singular and in the plural and carries a gender marker infix, agreeing with the antecedent of the pronoun. The second, *sune-* is the oblique stem of the third person singular and can attach case suffixes. The third, *ču-* is the oblique stem of the third person plural and can attach case suffixes.

2.2 Complex pronouns

The stem *sa<CL>i* may attach the particle *-al*. The particle functions as emphatic when attached to nominal stems and demonstratives<sup>2</sup>:

- (1)

*it*

*dursi-li-če=l*

*ħule*

*w-iz-ur*

this girl-OBL-SUPER(LAT)=EMPH look M-LV:PFV-AOR

‘He looked only at this girl.’
- (2)

*urši*

*iti-če=l*

*ħule*

*w-iz-ur*

boy this-SUPER(LAT)=EMPH look M-LV:PFV-AOR

‘The boy<sub>i</sub> looked only at him<sub>y</sub>/her<sub>y</sub>.’

<sup>1</sup>In Table 1 the genders are given as abbreviations that stand for: M – masculine (i.e. men), F – feminine (i.e. women), N – neutral (i.e. all inanimate objects and animate non-human objects), HPL – human plural objects, NPL – non-human plural objects.

<sup>2</sup> Suffix *-al* also marks cardinal numerals (Magometov 1982: 58).

A partial paradigm of the complex pronoun is given in Table 2. For the sake of comparison, inflected forms of the first and second person pronouns are also presented.

Table 2: The paradigm of the complex pronoun

num- ber	per- son	gen- der	NOM	ERG	DAT	GEN	INTER-LAT	COMIT
SG	1	-	<i>nu-wal</i>	<i>nu-ni-jal</i>	<i>nab-al</i>	<i>di-la-l</i>	<i>di-ze-l</i>	<i>di-ču-wal</i>
	2	-	<i>ħu-wal</i>	<i>ħu-ni-jal</i>	<i>ħ</i>	<i>ħu-la-l</i>	<i>ħu-ze-l</i>	<i>ħu-ču-wal</i>
	3	M	<i>sa&lt;w&gt;i-jal</i>					
		F	<i>sa&lt;r&gt;i-jal</i>	<i>sune-jni-jal</i>	<i>sune-s-al</i>	<i>sune-la-l</i>	<i>sune-ze-l</i>	<i>sune-ču-wal</i>
		N	<i>sa&lt;b&gt;i-jal</i>					
	1	-	<i>nuša-l</i>	<i>nuša-jni-jal</i>	<i>nušab-al</i>	<i>nuša-la-l</i>	<i>nuša-ze-l</i>	<i>nuša-ču-wal</i>
PL	2	-	<i>ħuša-l</i>	<i>ħuša-jni-jal</i>	<i>ħušad-al</i>	<i>ħuša-la-l</i>	<i>ħuša-ze-l</i>	<i>ħuša-ču-wal</i>
	3	HPL NPL	<i>sa&lt;b&gt;i-jal</i> <i>sa&lt;r&gt;i-jal</i>	<i>ču-ni-jal</i>	<i>ču-s-al</i>	<i>ču-la-l</i>	<i>ču-ze-l</i>	<i>ču-ču-wal</i>

The suffix *-al* is preceded by an epenthetic consonant or deletion of the vowel in the suffix. If the last vowel of the stem is *-u-*, the epenthetic consonant is *-w-* (e.g. *nuwal*). If the last vowel of the stem is *-i-*, the epenthetic consonant is *-j-* (e.g. *sawijal*). If *-al* follows *-e-* or *-a-* then the vowel in the suffix is dropped (e.g. *ħušal* and *sunezel*). In the dative case, *-al* is simply attached to the case suffix. The distribution of these forms is discussed in the following sections.

3 Logophoric and reflexive contexts

In this section, I will discuss the reflexive and logophoric function of the pronominal stem.

Reflexives are typically used to show the coreference of the non-subject argument of the clause to another clause-mate argument (König et al. 2013). Testelets & Toldova (1998) argue that reflexives may be bound by a higher syntactic priority position (i.e. subject) which occurs in the same sentence. Logophoric pronouns are used to indicate “coreferentiality or conjoint reference with the argument of a higher predicate of communication or mental experience” (Sells 1987).

3.1 Local domain

The reflexive is bound within the local domain if it occurs within the same clause as its antecedent. Mehweb demonstrates no constraints on the syntactic position

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a reflexive can take in the clause. It can occupy the position of P as in (3) and (6), the indirect object position as in (4), or it can fulfill the role of adjunct (5). The antecedent, however, has to be the subject (cf. infelicitous (7)). This means it requires ergative marking with a transitive predicate, nominative for intransitive and dative, inter-lative or inter-relative for experiential predicates (cf. examples (3), (4) and (6)). Within the local domain, the form of the pronoun is constrained: a bare pronoun with an antecedent in the local domain is considered ungrammatical and can only be interpreted as having logophoric meaning (compare (3) and (8)).

- (3) *rasuj-ni sa<w>i-jal w-it-ib*  
 rasul.OBL-ERG <M>self-EMPH M-beat:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> beat himself<sub>i</sub>.’
- (4) *rasul sune-če-l ħule w-iz-ur*  
 Rasul self.OBL-SUPER(LAT)-EMPH look M-LV:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> looked at himself<sub>i</sub>.’
- (5) *rasul sune-če-w-al duč’i-rq’-uwe le-w*  
 Rasul self.OBL-SUPER-M(ESS)-EMPH laugh-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> laughed at himself<sub>i</sub>.’
- (6) *rasuj-ze sa<w>i-jal da<sup>ħ</sup>mic’aj-ħe-w gu-b*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) <M>self-EMPH mirror-IN-M(ESS) see:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> saw himself<sub>i</sub> in the mirror.’
- (7) a. *\*sune-jni-jal rasul w-it-ib*  
 self.OBL-ERG-EMPH Rasul M-beat:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> beat himself<sub>i</sub>.’  
 lit. ‘Himself<sub>i</sub> beat Rasul<sub>i</sub>.’  
 b. *\*sune-ze-l rasul gu-b*  
 self.OBL-INTER(LAT) Rasul.OBL-ERG see:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul saw himself.’  
 lit. ‘Himself<sub>i</sub> saw Rasul<sub>i</sub>.’
- (8) *\*rasuj-ni sa<w>i w-it-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG <M>self <M>-beat:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> beat himself<sub>i</sub>.’

Because Mehweb is a pro-drop language, the reflexive can get a zero-antecedent, which is obligatorily in the subject position, as in (9).

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- (9) a. *it-ini sune-s-al ja<sup>ʃ</sup>bu as-ib*  
 that-ERG self.OBL-DAT-EMPH horse take:PFV-AOR  
 b. *sune-s-al ja<sup>ʃ</sup>bu as-ib*  
 self.OBL-DAT-EMPH horse take:PFV-AOR  
 ‘(He<sub>i</sub>) bought himself<sub>i</sub> a horse.’

The reflexive pronoun can be bound by a quantified NP.

- (10) *har-il urši-li-ni sune-s-al ja<sup>ʃ</sup>bu as-ib*  
 each-ATR boy-OBL-ERG self.OBL-DAT-EMPH horse take:PFV-AOR  
 ‘Each boy<sub>i</sub> bought himself<sub>i</sub> a horse.’

Subordinate clauses work the same way. In a subordinate clause, the bare pronoun cannot be bound within the subordinate clause (11), while the complex pronoun has to be bound within it (12).

- (11) *rasuj-s dig-uwe le-w adaj-ze sa<w>i*  
 Rasul.OBL-DAT want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M father-INTER(LAT) <M>self  
*da<sup>ʃ</sup>Hmic’aj-ħe-w g<sup>w</sup>-es*  
 mirror-IN-M(ESS) see:PFV-INF  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> wants his father<sub>y</sub> to see him<sub>i</sub> in the mirror.’
- (12) *rasuj-s dig-uwe le-w adaj-ze*  
 Rasul.OBL-DAT want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M father-INTER(LAT)  
*sa<w>i-jal da<sup>ʃ</sup>Hmic’aj-ħe-w g<sup>w</sup>-es*  
 <M>self-EMPH mirror-IN-M(ESS) see:PFV-INF  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> wants his father<sub>y</sub> to see himself<sub>y</sub> in the mirror.’

In example (12) the antecedent of the reflexive is within the local domain, whereas in (11) it is located in the distant domain (the latter will be discussed further in §3.3). The two domains differ as to which pronoun is used: the local domain employs the complex pronoun, whereas for an antecedent in the distant domain the bare pronoun is used.

### 3.2 Possessive domain

The possessive domain contains contexts where a genitive reflexive occurs in an NP within the same clause as its antecedent. In Mehweb, this domain is distin-

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guished from the local domain in that both bare pronouns and complex pronouns can be employed<sup>3</sup>, as in (13).

- (13) a. *sune-la quli-w ħa-jz-ur*  
 self.OBL-GEN house-M(ESS) NEG-live-AOR  
 ‘(He<sub>i</sub>) did not live in his<sub>i</sub> house.’  
 b. *sune-la-l quli-w ħa-jz-ur*  
 self.OBL-GEN-EMPH house-M(ESS) NEG-live-AOR  
 ‘(He<sub>i</sub>) did not live in his<sub>i</sub> house.’  
 (14) *sune-la xunul quli-r r-aq’-a*  
 self.OBL-GEN woman house-F(ESS) F-leave:PFV-IMP  
 ‘Leave your wife at home.’

(corpus, Brother and Sister: 1.34 (Magometov 1982))

- (15) *hel-di zamaj-ze-b ib urši-li-ni*  
 this-PL time-INTER-N(ESS) say:PFV.AOR boy-OBL-ERG  
*sune-la-l gurda-li-ze*  
 self.OBL-GEN-EMPH fox-OBL-INTER(LAT)  
 ‘Then the boy<sub>i</sub> said to his<sub>i</sub> fox.’

(corpus, Two Sons: 1.86 (Magometov 1982))

Consider also the following examples where the complex and the bare pronoun are used in similar contexts by the same speaker:

- (16) *sunela ħalmic’ir-t-ičuw>ijal urši helle w-erχ-ur*  
 self.OBL-GEN animal-PL-COMIT<M> boy here(LAT) M-enter:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The boy<sub>i</sub> entered with his<sub>i</sub> animals.’

(corpus, Two Sons: 1.126 (Magometov 1982))

- (17) *habala-habal sune-la-l ħalmic’ir-t d-aχ-un*  
 start-start self.OBL-GEN-EMPH animal-PL NPL-feed:PFV-AOR  
 ‘First he<sub>i</sub> fed all his<sub>i</sub> animals.’

(corpus, Two Sons: 1.198 (Magometov 1982))

<sup>3</sup> This fact may serve as evidence for the idea that the possessive domain is a transition point between the local domain and the distant domain.

Examples (14) to (17) prove that in natural texts the bare pronoun is available in possessive contexts. Consultants provide contradictory grammaticality judgements of constructed stimuli with the reflexive genitive. The majority consider (13a) and (13b) to have the same meaning and to be fully grammatical. Some consultants suggest that *sunelal* adds emphatic meaning ('his own'), whereas *sunela* simply indicates possession. Other consultants suggest that the bare pronoun *sunela* is not bound within the sentence (for further discussion see §4), i.e. (13a) can be translated as 'He is living in his (someone else's) house'. Finally, some consultants consider *sunela* to be ungrammatical, apparently extending the constraints on the occurrence of bare pronouns in the same clause as their antecedents to possessive NPs.

### 3.3 Distant domain

Distant domain contexts are sentences in which the pronoun and its antecedent occur in different clauses. In Mehweb, the order of the antecedent and the pronoun is relevant within the local domain. The pronoun cannot precede its antecedent, otherwise it gets the free logophoric reading (more on free logophors in §4). The distant domain requires using the bare pronoun (see (18)).

- (18) *sune-s*            *dig-uwe*                      *le-w*    *adaj-ze*                      *rasul*  
 self.OBL-DAT   want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV   AUX-M   father-INTER(LAT)   Rasul  
*da<sup>h</sup>mic'aj-he-w*   *g<sup>w</sup>-es*  
 mirror-IN-M(ESS)   see:PFV-INF  
 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> wants his father<sub>y</sub> to see him<sub>i</sub> in the mirror.'  
 lit. 'Himself<sub>i</sub> wants his father<sub>y</sub> to see Rasul<sub>i</sub> in the mirror.'

The bare stem can take subject and non-subject positions (P, IO, adjunct) in the subordinate or main clause and can be used in both finite and non-finite subordinate clauses, as shown in the following section.

#### 3.3.1 Finite subordinate clauses

Mehweb employs finite subordinate clauses with predicates of speech and thought. Finite subordinate clauses in Mehweb may or may not be followed by the converb *ile* 'having said' and utilize either personal pronouns or a bare pronoun.

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- (19) *adaj-ni ib sune-ze žanawar gu-b*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR self.OBL-INTER(LAT) wolf see:PFV-AOR  
 (ile)  
 say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’
- (20) *adaj-ni ib sune-ze žanawar*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR self.OBL-INTER(LAT) wolf  
*gu-b-ra (ile)*  
 see:PFV-AOR-EGO say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’

Considering Chechen and Ingush, [Nichols \(2000\)](#) refers to such contexts as (20) as semi-direct speech. In semi-direct speech “quoted matter is identical to the reported speech act except that coreferents to the speaker are reflexivized and the clause is marked with a quotative particle” ([Nichols 2000](#)). According to Nichols, Chechen uses reflexives to refer to the speaker, i.e. the subject of the main clause, only if subordinate finite clauses marked by quotation clitic *eanna*, while direct speech contexts use personal pronouns (1SG pronouns) and do not use the clitic.

In Mehweb, the quotative converb *ile* is optional with both types of reference. Compare the pronouns in (19) and (20) to those in (21) and (22); in all of these cases, the use of *ile* is optional.

- (21) *adaj-ni ib di-ze žanawar gu-b*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR I.OBL-INTER(LAT) wolf see:PFV-AOR  
 (ile)  
 say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’
- (22) *adaj-ni ib di-ze žanawar gu-b-ra*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR I.OBL-INTER(LAT) wolf see:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 (ile)  
 say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’

Table 3 provides a summary of options for a pronoun used in a subordinate finite clause. It shows that *dize* behaves as a personal pronoun, since it can change its antecedent between the actual and the reported speaker. The pronoun *suneze* on the other hand, behaves as a logophoric pronoun and always refers to the subject of the main clause; cf. the following examples:



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- (23) *adaj-ni ib rasuj-ze di-ze*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) I.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*žanawar gu-b (ile)*  
 wolf see:PFV-AOR say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said to Rasul that he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’
- (24) *adaj-ni ib rasuj-ze di-ze*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) I.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*žanawar gu-b-ra (ile)*  
 wolf see:PFV-AOR-EGO say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said to Rasul that he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’
- (25) *adaj-ni ib rasuj-ze sune-ze*  
 father-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.ERG-INTER(LAT) self.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*žanawar gu-b-ra (ile)*  
 wolf see:PFV-AOR-EGO say:PFV.CVB  
 ‘Father<sub>i</sub> said to Rasul that he<sub>i</sub> saw a wolf.’

Table 3: Summary on the stimuli and antecedents

stimulus	antecedent of the pronoun
<i>adajni ib dize žanawar gub</i>	actual speaker
<i>adajni ib dize žanawar gubra</i>	subject of the main clause
<i>adajni ib suneze žanawar gub</i>	subject of the main clause
<i>adajni ib suneze žanawar gubra</i>	subject of the main clause

Examples (26) and (27) additionally show subordinate clauses headed by different matrix predicates.

- (26) *it-ini pikri b-aq-ib sa<w>i q'am uh-ub-le*  
 that-ERG thought N-do:PFV-AOR <M>self late become:PFV-AOR-CVB  
*le-w (ile)*  
 AUX-M say:PFV-CVB  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> had a thought that he<sub>i</sub> was late.’
- (27) *iti-s b-ik-ib sa<w>i q'am uh-ub-le le-w*  
 that-DAT N-think:PFV-AOR <M>self late become:PFV-AOR-CVB AUX-M  
*(ile)*  
 say:PFV-CVB  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> thought that he<sub>i</sub> was late.’

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### 3.3.2 Non-finite subordinate clauses

Non-finite subordinate clauses in Mehweb can employ converbs, nominalizations or infinitives, depending on the predicate of the matrix clause. Non-finite clauses can occur with a bare pronoun or with a zero pronoun in the subject position. Grammaticality of first person personal pronouns referring to the subject of the main clause in non-finite subordinate clauses is a matter of variation among the consultants (cf. 28 and 31). In non-finite subordinate clauses, the self-pronoun can occupy subject and non-subject positions (cf. 32).

Examples (28) and (29) demonstrate the use of the self-pronoun in subject and non-subject position in a subordinate clause headed by an infinitive.

- (28) *it urux k'-uwe le-w sa<w>i (?nu) ba<sup>h</sup>m-le*  
 this be.afraid LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M <M>self (?I) wrong-ADVZ  
*w-ik-es (ile)*  
 M-become:PFV-INF say:PFV.CVB  
 'He is afraid of making a mistake.'
- (29) *rasuj-s dig-uwe le-b adaj*  
 Rasul.OBL-DAT want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N father  
*sune-če-l ħule w-iz-es*  
 self.OBL-SUPER(LAT)-EMPH look M-LV:PFV-INF  
 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> wants his father<sub>y</sub> to look at himself<sub>y</sub> in the mirror.'

Subordinate clauses with an infinitive in Mehweb are employed as a strategy for marking sentential arguments, and can also express an aim (see (30)–(32)). In (31), the personal pronoun *nu* 'I' is grammatical.

- (30) *ʔali-ni g-ib rasuj-ze arc il*  
 Ali-ERG give:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) money that  
*armi-li-ze u<sup>h</sup>q'-es*  
 army-OBL-INTER(LAT) M.go:PFV-INF  
 'Ali bribed Rasul so that he (Rasul or another person) go to the army.'  
 lit. 'Ali gave money to Rasul in order that Rasul (or another person) went to the army.'
- (31) *ʔali-ni g-ib rasuj-ze arc nu*  
 Ali-ERG give:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) money I  
*armi-li-ze u<sup>h</sup>q'-es*  
 army-OBL-INTER(LAT) M.go:PFV-INF  
 'Ali bribed Rasul to go the army.'

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lit. 'Ali gave money to Rasul in order Ali went to the army.'

- (32) *ʔali-ni g-ib rasuj-ze arc sa<w>i*  
 Ali-ERG give:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) money <M>self  
*armi-li-ze uʔq'-es*  
 army-OBL-INTER(LAT) M.go:PFV-INF  
 'Ali bribed Rasul to go the army.'  
 lit. 'Ali gave money to Rasul in order Ali went to the army.'

Examples (33) and (34) demonstrate the self-pronoun in a subordinate clause headed by a specialized converb.

- (33) *abaj-ni g-ib dursi ruzi-li-ze sune-s*  
 mother-ERG give:PFV-AOR girl sister-OBL-INTER(LAT) self.OBL-DAT  
*ʔaʔχ-le b-uʔ-alis*  
 good N-be:PFV-PURP  
 'Mother<sub>i</sub> gave her<sub>i</sub> daughter<sub>y</sub> to her<sub>i</sub> sister<sub>z</sub> in order she<sub>i</sub> felt good.'
- (34) *baba uruχ k'-uwe le-r sa<r>i*  
 grandmother be.afraid LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-F <F>self  
*ar-d-ik-ala (ile)*  
 PV-F1-fall:IPFV-APPR say:PFV.CVB  
 'Grandmother<sub>i</sub> is afraid of falling down.'

Examples (35), (36) and (37) show the use of the bare pronoun in a subordinate clause headed by an action nominal (masdar). In Mehweb there are two suffixes available for the derivation of action nominals: *-ri* and *-deš*. In most cases, these suffixes are interchangeable.

- (35) *ʔali-ze b-ah-ur rasuj-ze-la sune-s premia*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) N-know:PFV-AOR Rasul-INTER-EL self.OBL-DAT prize  
*b-ak'-ri*  
 N-come:PFV-NMLZ  
 'Ali<sub>i</sub> found out from Rasul that he<sub>i</sub> got money.'
- (36) *iti-ze-la b-ah-ur-ra sune-jni maza*  
 that-INTER-EL N-know:PFV-AOR-EGO self.OBL-ERG ram  
*b-erh-un-deš / b-erh-ri*  
 N-slaughter:PFV-AOR-NMLZ / N-slaughter:PFV-NMLZ  
 '(He<sub>i</sub>) found out from him<sub>y</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> killed a ram.'

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- (37) *it-ini pikri b-aq-ib sa<w>i q'am uh-ub-le*  
 that-ERG thought N-do:PFV-AOR <M>self late become:PFV-AOR-CVB  
*le-w-deš (ile)*  
 AUX-M-NMLZ say:PFV.CVB  
 'He<sub>i</sub> thought that he<sub>i</sub> was late.'

The purpose of the examples above is to show that bare pronouns can be used in non-finite subordinate clauses. This fact blurs the distinction between the two functions the bare pronoun fulfills – that of the long-distant reflexive and the logophoric pronoun.

### 3.3.3 Subject orientedness of the self-pronoun

In a finite subordinate clause, the bare pronoun occurring in subject position is subject oriented. This means it is co-referent to the subject of the main clause, as in (25). Non-finite subordinate clauses on the other hand, show variation in what is interpreted to be the referent of the pronoun, depending on the presence of the suffix *-al*.

Most consultants interpret the self-pronoun with the suffix *-al* as subject oriented as well (see §3.3). In the case of two embedded predications, both the bare pronoun and the personal pronoun *nu* choose the subject of the embedded matrix clause; cf. (38) and (39) to (40).

- (38) *ʔali-ni ib rasuj-ni ib sune-jni eža*  
 Ali-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-ERG say:PFV.AOR self.OBL-ERG goat  
*as-i-ra*  
 take:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'Ali<sub>y</sub> said that Rasul<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> bought a goat.'
- (39) *ʔali-ni ib rasuj-ni ib nu-ni eža*  
 Ali-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-ERG say:PFV.AOR I-ERG goat  
*as-i-ra*  
 take:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'Ali<sub>y</sub> said that Rasul<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> bought a goat.'
- (40) *ʔali-ni ib rasuj-ni ib sune-jni-jal*  
 Ali-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-ERG say:PFV.AOR self.OBL-ERG-EMPH  
*eža as-i-ra*  
 goat take:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 'Ali<sub>y</sub> said that Rasul<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> bought a goat.'

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If a demonstrative is used instead of the self-pronoun or a personal pronoun, it does not take an antecedent in the same sentence:

- (41) *ʔali-ni ib rasuj-ni ib il-ini=jal eža*  
 Ali-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-ERG say:PFV.AOR this-ERG=EMPH goat  
*as-i-ra*  
 take:PFV-AOR-EGO  
 ‘Ali<sub>i</sub> said that Rasul<sub>y</sub> said that he<sub>z</sub> bought a goat.’

The subject of the external embedded clause can be the antecedent of the logophoric pronoun if and only if the subject of the first embedded clause does not agree in person and/or number with the logophoric pronoun.

- (42) *ʔali-ni ib nu-ni ib sune-jni eža*  
 Ali-ERG say:PFV.AOR I-ERG say:PFV.AOR self.OBL-ERG-EMPH goat  
*asi-ra*  
 take:PFV-EGO  
 ‘Ali<sub>i</sub> said that I said that he<sub>i</sub> bought a goat.’

## 3.3.4 Non-subject orientedness: a hypothesis

A bare pronoun in subject position in a subordinate clause, whether it is finite or non-finite, is always ‘subject oriented’. This means it is coreferent to the subject of the closest embedded clause (unless there is a mismatch in person or number properties).

In some speakers, the complex pronoun behaves in the same way. In other speakers, however, the complex pronoun has to be coreferent to the non-subject argument of the matrix clause (when present) (cf. 43, 44, 45, 46).

- (43) *ʔali-ni ib rasuj-ze sa<w>i-jal q’ar*  
 Ali-ERG say:PFV.AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) <M>self(-EMPH) grass  
*iʃsq-es uʃq’-es-i*  
 mow:PFV-INF M.go:PFV-INF-ATR  
 ‘Ali<sub>i</sub> said to Rasul<sub>y</sub> that he<sub>y</sub> should go mow the grass.’
- (44) *ʔali-ze b-ah-ur rasuj-ze-la*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) N-know:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL  
*sune-s-al premia b-aq’-ri*  
 self.OBL-DAT(-EMPH) money N-do:PFV-NMLZ  
 ‘Ali<sub>i</sub> found out from Rasul<sub>y</sub> that he<sub>y</sub> got money.’

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- (45) *ʔali-ni g-ib rasuj-ze arc sa<w>i-jal*  
 Ali-ERG give:PFV-AOR Rasul-INTER(LAT) money <M>self(-EMPH)  
*armi-li-ze uʔq'-es*  
 army-OBL-INTER(LAT) M.go:PFV-INF  
 'Ali<sub>i</sub> gave Rasul<sub>y</sub> money for him<sub>y</sub> to go to the army.'
- (46) *abaj-ni g-ib dursi ruzi-li-ze*  
 mother-ERG give:PFV-AOR daughter sister-OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*sune-s-al ʔaʕ-le b-uʔ-alis*  
 self.OBL-DAT-EMPH good-ADVZ N-be:PFV-PURP  
 'Mother<sub>i</sub> gave her<sub>i</sub> daughter<sub>y</sub> to her<sub>i</sub> sister<sub>z</sub> in order for her<sub>y</sub> to feel good.'

In the four examples above, the self-pronoun takes the non-subject argument of the main clause as its antecedent. The referent of the embedded subject shifts from the subject to the non-subject argument of the embedding clause if the main clause contains more than one argument that can serve as an antecedent for the self-pronoun and matches it in person and number.

If all these conditions are satisfied, then the bare pronoun takes its reference from the subject of the main clause whereas the complex pronoun takes its reference from another argument of the main clause. These rules apply to all complementation strategies and all predicates of the main clause that allow a second argument or adjunct as a potential antecedent. If the main clause lacks other arguments or if the arguments of the main clause do not match the self-pronoun in person and number, the subject-to-non-subject shift does not occur.

The complex pronoun cannot take an argument outside the clause as its antecedent. The non-subject argument of the main clause thus may not be an immediate antecedent of the complex pronoun inside the subordinate clause. Examples (43) to (46) can be explained by introducing a zero pronoun in the subject position of the subordinate clause. This zero pronoun is non-subject-oriented (see Schema 1). On the other hand, the reference of the bare pronoun combined with an intensifier (*sunejni sunejnijal*), is always subject-oriented (that is, whenever the nearest subject matches the self-pronoun in person and/or number) – see (49).

Schema 1. Non-subject-oriented zero pronoun

[S intransitive predicate IO][self non-finite predicate]  
 [S intransitive predicate IO][∅ self-EMPH non-finite predicate]  
 [S intransitive predicate IO][self self-EMPH non-finite predicate]

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- (47) *ʔali-ze b-ah-ur rasuj-ze-la sune-s*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) N-know:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL self.OBL-DAT  
*premia b-aq'-ri*  
 money N-get:PFV-NMLZ  
 'Ali<sub>i</sub> found out from Rasul that he<sub>i</sub> got money.'
- (48) *ʔali-ze b-ah-ur rasuj-ze-la Ø*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) N-know:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL Ø  
*sune-s-al premia b-aq'-ri*  
 self.OBL-DAT-EMPH money N-get:PFV-NMLZ  
 'Ali<sub>i</sub> found out from Rasul<sub>y</sub> that he<sub>y</sub> got money.'
- (49) *ʔali-ze b-ah-ur rasuj-ze-la sune-s*  
 Ali-INTER(LAT) N-know:PFV-AOR Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL self.OBL-DAT  
*sune-s-al premia b-aq'-ri*  
 self.OBL-DAT-EMPH money N-get:PFV-NMLZ  
 'Ali<sub>i</sub> found out from Rasul<sub>y</sub> that he<sub>y</sub> got money.'

An alternative explanation is that the complex pronoun in the subject position in the subordinate clause serves as the real subject of the clause and, unable to be bound within the local domain, takes the closest argument outside its clause as an antecedent. However, there is no evidence that an intensifier can serve as a subject of the clause.

#### 4 Discourse usage

In discourse the bare pronoun<sup>4</sup> can be used to refer to the narrator of a story. In the following contexts, the bare pronoun is used in various syntactic positions and does not have an antecedent within the sentence<sup>5</sup>.

(corpus, Poisoning: 1.20)

- (50) *sa<r>i duc' d-uq-un-na k'wan ʔaʃj illi-ʃu*  
 <F>self run F1-lv:PFV-AOR-EGO QUOT perhaps that-AD(LAT)  
 'I<sub>i</sub> (the narrator) ran to her<sub>y</sub>.'

<sup>4</sup> There is evidence that the bare pronoun in its free logophoric function can be intensified with the suffix -al without changing the reference of the pronoun. The corpus, however, does not provide appropriate examples.

<sup>5</sup> It can also be hypothesized that the bare pronoun in its free logophoric function may refer to other participants of the narrative. The texts from the corpus do not provide any evidence in support of this, however, and the topic thus requires further investigation.

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(corpus, Poisoning: 1.8)

- (51) *sune-jni i-ra k'ʷan abaj-la heš dursi-ra*  
 self.OBL-ERG say:PFV-EGO QUOT mother-GEN this girl-and  
*d-aχ-uwe d-uʔ-a-k'a hu d-u-es*  
 F1-look.after:PFV-AOR.CVB F1-be-IRR-COND you.sg F1-be:PFV-INF  
*ʔaʔj*  
 perhars  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> (the narrator) said that, my<sub>y</sub> daughter, you<sub>y</sub> better take care of her daughter.’

(corpus, Poisoning: 1.17)

- (52) *sune-jni i-ra k'ʷan marijan had*  
 self.OBL-ERG say:PFV-EGO QUOT marijan you.sg.DAT  
*d-ig-a-k'a d-uh-e ʔaʔj had*  
 F1-want:PFV-IRR-COND F1-become.pfv-IMP perhaps you.sg.DAT  
*ʔaʔχ-le b-uʔ-a-re*  
 good-ADVZ N-be:PFV-IRR-PST  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> (the narrator) said: Marijam<sub>y</sub>, if you<sub>y</sub> want (to do this) marry him, maybe it would be good for you<sub>y</sub>.’

(corpus, Poisoning: 1.32)

- (53) *sune-s k'ʷan ʔaʔj urče c'a aq'-ur*  
 self.OBL-DAT QUOT perhaps in.heart(LAT) fire pour:PFV-AOR  
 ‘She (the narrator) felt bad.’

(corpus, Speaking Lak: 1.14)

- (54) *hanna raχkʷar r-uh-ub-le umma r-uk'-uwe*  
 now man F-become:PFV-AOR-CVB kiss F-LV:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
*gʷa k'ʷan ʔaʔj sune-če hel xunul*  
 PTCL QUOT perhaps self.OBL-SUPER(LAT) this.here woman  
 ‘Then the woman started to kiss him (the narrator).’

## 5 Intensifier

The complex pronoun in Mehweb can be used as an intensifier. The intensifier is used in adposition to its head, which it emphasizes (cf. 55). This pronoun is



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formally identical to the reflexive pronoun<sup>6</sup>. The bare pronoun alone cannot be used as an intensifier (see 56).

- (55) *it-ini sune-jni-jal d-erk-un χinč'-e*  
 this-ERG self.OBL-ERG-EMPH N-eat:PFV-AOR khinkal-PL  
 'He<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub> ate all khinkals.'
- (56) *di-ze iti-ze-la b-ah-ur-ra žali-ni cula*  
 I.OBL-INTER(LAT) this-INTER-EL N-know:PFV-AOR-EGO Ali-ERG only  
*ahin-i it-ini sune-jni-jal=ra maza*  
 be:NEG-ATR this-ERG self.OBL-ERG-EMPH=and ram  
*b-erh-ri*  
 N-slaughter:PFV-NMLZ  
 'I found out from him<sub>i</sub> that not only Ali<sub>y</sub> but he<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub> slaughtered the ram.'
- (57) *\*di-ze iti-ze-la b-ah-ur-ra žali-ni cula*  
 I.OBL-INTER(LAT) this-INTER-EL N-know:PFV-AOR-EGO Ali-ERG only  
*ahin-i it-ini sune-jni-ra maza b-erh-ri*  
 be:NEG-ATR this-ERG self.OBL-ERG=and ram N-slaughter:PFV-NMLZ  
 Intended: 'I found out from him<sub>i</sub> that not only Ali<sub>y</sub> but he<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub> slaughtered the ram.'

The complex pronoun may intensify an overt NP (cf. 58), demonstratives (cf. 59), as well as pro-dropped pronouns in the subject position (cf. 60). Intensifier agrees in number, case and gender with its head. It can be used in all syntactic positions, including subject, P and other positions.

- (58) *rasuj-ni sune-s-al muhammadi-s eža*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG self.OBL-DAT-EMPH muhammad-DAT goat  
*as-ib*  
 take:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> bought to Muhammad<sub>y</sub> himself<sub>y</sub> a goat.'
- (59) *it-ini sune-jni-jal d-erk-un χinč'-e*  
 this-ERG self.OBL-ERG-EMPH N-eat:PFV-AOR khinkal-PL  
 'He<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub> ate all khinkals.'

<sup>6</sup> The functions of intensification and reflexivization are similarly combined in personal pronouns followed by the suffix -al; also cf. Table 2

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- (60) *sune-jni-jal d-erk-un χinč'-e*  
 self.OBL-ERG-EMPH N-eat:PFV-AOR khinkal-PL  
 '(He) himself ate the khinkals.'

Some speakers are reluctant to accept intensification of NPs with low animacy:

- (61) *ʔrasuj-ni muhammad-i-s sa<b>i-jal eža as-ib*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG muhammad-OBL-DAT <N>self-EMPH goat take:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul bought to Muhammad this the very goat.'

The intensifier may be preposed to its antecedent;  
 (corpus, The story of Akula Ali: 1.7)

- (62) *sa<w>i-jal wazil-li b-arg-ib kʷan žilla-ra*  
 <M>self-EMPH chief-OBL(ERG) N-find:PFV-AOR QUOT reason=and  
 'The chief<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub> found the reason.'

The intensifier can co-occur with complex pronouns used as reflexives, as in (63) and (64). In such contexts, they seem to show a free relative order. However, (65) shows that the compound consisting of two complex pronouns cannot be split.

- (63) *rasuj-ze sune-ze-l sa<w>i-jal*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) self.OBL-INTER(LAT)-EMPH <M>self-EMPH  
*gu-b*  
 see:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> saw himself<sub>i</sub>.'
- (64) *rasuj-ze sa<w>i-jal sune-ze-l*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) <M>self-EMPH self.OBL-INTER(LAT)-EMPH  
*gu-b*  
 see:PFV-AOR  
 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> saw himself<sub>i</sub>.'
- (65) *\*rasuj-ze sune-ze-l gu-b*  
 Rasul.OBL-INTER(LAT) self.OBL-INTER(LAT)-EMPH see:PFV-AOR  
*sa<w>i-jal*  
 <M>self-EMPH  
 'Rasul<sub>i</sub> saw himself<sub>i</sub>.'

The intensifier can also be combined with a bare pronoun and can either precede or follow it, with no semantic contrast (cf. (66) and (67)).

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- (66) *rasuj-s dig-uwe le-b sawi*  
 Rasul.OBL-DAT want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N <M>self  
*sune-če-l ħule w-iz-es*  
 self.OBL-SUPER(LAT)-EMPH look M-LV:PFV-INF  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> wants to look at himself<sub>i</sub>.’
- (67) *rasuj-s dig-uwe le-b sune-če-l*  
 Rasul.OBL-DAT want:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N self.OBL-SUPER(LAT)-EMPH  
*sa<w>i ħule w-iz-es*  
 <M>self look M-LV:PFV-INF  
 ‘Rasul<sub>i</sub> wants to look at himself<sub>i</sub>.’

The intensifier can take the subject position in the subordinate clause since subject pro-drop is also acceptable in subordinate clauses (cf. 43, 44, 45, 46 above). The reference of the intensifier in subject position is discussed in §3.3.4.

## 6 Resumptive

The resumptive function of the self-pronoun is discussed in [Lander & Kozhukhar \(2015\)](#). Resumptive pronouns are optionally used in the position that is relativized (cf. 68, 69).

- (68) *nu-ni ču-s kung gib-i ule b-a<sup>ʔ</sup>q'-un*  
 I-ERG self.PL.OBL-DAT book give:PFV-ATR child.PL HPL-go:PFV-AOR  
*uškuj-ħe*  
 school-IN(LAT)  
 ‘The children<sub>i</sub> to whom<sub>i</sub> I gave a book went to school.’
- (69) *šejtan ču-ze gu-b-i buk'unu-me urux*  
 demon self.PL.OBL-INTER(LAT) see:PFV-AOR-ATR shepherd-PL be.afraid  
*b-a<sup>ʔ</sup>q'-ib*  
 HPL-LV:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The shepherds<sub>i</sub> who<sub>i</sub> saw a demon were scared.’

In resumptive contexts, the self-pronoun may also attach the suffix *-al*. As a result, the relativized argument is emphasized (cf. 70 and 71).

- (70) *nu-ni sune-ze arc g-ib-i insaj-ni*  
 I-ERG self.OBL-INTER(LAT) money give:PFV-AOR-ATR man.OBL-ERG

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*nab arc ħa-lug-an*  
I.DAT money NEG-give:IPFV-HAB

‘The man<sub>i</sub> to whom<sub>i</sub> I gave the money doesn’t give it back to me.’

- (71) *nu-ni sune-ze-l arc g-ib-i insaj-ni*  
I-ERG self.OBL-INTER(LAT) money give:PFV-AOR-ATR man.OBL-ERG  
*nab arc ħa-lug-an*  
I.DAT money NEG-give:IPFV-HAB

‘This very man<sub>i</sub> to whom<sub>i</sub> I gave money doesn’t give me them back.’

Some consultants tend to use resumptives only with animate relative heads (72 and 73).

- (72) *?sune-s ħadidi ħark’w b-aš-uwe le-b-i qali*  
self.OBL-DAT behind river N-go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N-ATR house  
*le-b rasuj-ja*  
be-N Rasul.OBL-GEN

‘The house<sub>i</sub> behind which<sub>i</sub> the river flows belongs to Rasul.’

- (73) *ħadidi ħark’w b-aš-uwe le-b-i qali le-b*  
behind river N-flow:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-N-ATR house AUX-N  
*rasuj-ja*  
Rasul.OBL-GEN

‘The house<sub>i</sub> behind which<sub>i</sub> there is a river belongs to Rasul.’

For further discussion on resumptives see [Lander & Kozhukhar \(2015\)](#).

## 7 Conclusion

In this paper, I have considered the form and functions of the pronominal stem *sa<CL>i* in Mehweb. This stem has at least the following functions: reflexive and long-distant reflexive, logophoric (including free logophoric), intensifier and resumptive. These functions, which are distinct from both syntactic and semantic perspectives, show different constraints on their antecedents.

The complex pronoun functions as a locally bound reflexive and may occupy any non-subject slots. The intensifier pronoun is homophonous to the reflexive and receives the same case, number and gender values as its head. The possible antecedents of an intensifier include locally bound reflexives, long-distance reflexives and logophoric pronouns; it can also be pro-dropped.

According to Reuland (2011) and Sells (1987), logophoric pronouns are pronouns used in finite subordinate clauses embedded under predicates of speech and mental experience. For Clements (1975) and Toldova (1999), the main function of the logophoric pronoun is to define the point of view. There are no typologically universal constraints on the syntactic position the logophoric pronoun, but there is a strong tendency for the antecedent to be in the subject position of the embedded clause. Cole et al. (2000) however, discussing long-distance reflexives, argue that these take either subject or non-subject position within non-finite subordinate clauses. They also argue that long-distance reflexives manifest subject orientation: their antecedents have to be subjects of the main clause.

The pronoun *sa<CL>i* covers both functions and fits both the description of the logophoric pronoun and that of the long-distance reflexive. Therefore, I suggest that in Mehweb, there is neither a morphological nor a (sharp) syntactic distinction between logophorics and long-distance reflexives.

## List of abbreviations

AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADVZ	adverbializer
AOR	aorist
APPR	apprehensive
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
COMIT	comitative
COND	conditional
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
EMPH	emphasis (particle)
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)

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IMP	imperative
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
IRR	irrealis (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PURP	purposive converb
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
QUOT	quotative (particle)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark

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## Chapter 11

# Relative clause and resumptive pronouns in Mehweb

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East Caucasian relative clause constructions (RCCs) are sometimes viewed as constructed mainly on the basis of semantic and pragmatic information. In this paper, we consider RCCs in Mehweb and argue that, despite the fact that the interpretation of some of them may rely exclusively on semantics, syntactic mechanisms may also come into play in their organization. We present evidence that Mehweb has grammaticalized the resumptive use of reflexive pronouns, which thus can be contrasted with other uses of reflexive pronouns due to the restrictions on animate antecedents observed only in RCCs.

*Keywords:* relative clause, relativization, resumptive pronoun.

## 1 Introduction

Relativization is usually thought of as a mechanism which operates on an argument or an adjunct of a subordinate clause (see, for example, [De Vries 2002](#)). For example, in *the paper we are writing* \_\_ the relativized argument is the direct object of the verb, while *the person that* \_\_ *wrote this sentence* presupposes that the relativized argument is the verb's subject.<sup>1</sup> Note that many scholars of relative clause constructions (RCCs) think of relativized arguments and adjuncts as syntactic positions and not as semantic roles. Indeed, studies of RCCs have revealed a number of restrictions on their formation which clearly have syntac-

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<sup>1</sup> In both examples a gap is shown in the place of the relativized argument.



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tic nature. These restrictions include, for instance, the continuous distribution of relative constructions along the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH) SUBJECT > DIRECT OBJECT > INDIRECT OBJECT > OBLIQUE OBJECT > POSSESSOR > OBJECT OF COMPARISON (Keenan & Comrie 1977)<sup>2</sup> and non-relativizability of nominals embedded in syntactic islands, like indirect questions and parts of coordinating constructions (Ross 1967).

The universality of this conception was called into question by Comrie (1996; 1998), who proposed, following Matsumoto (1988; 1997), that some languages may construct what is, in their descriptions, usually considered an RCC on a semantic rather than on a syntactic basis. As was shown in the above-mentioned works and the subsequent literature (see especially the volume Matsumoto et al. 2017), such languages only need to establish a plausible semantic link between the head of the noun phrase and the subordinate clause which would be sufficient for the characterization of this head. This link sometimes involves an argument or an adjunct of the subordinate clause but it need not necessarily. Hence a new term was coined for this phenomenon, namely *generalized noun modifying clause constructions*. Naturally, such constructions do not display the syntactic restrictions proposed for languages with “canonical” relative clauses.

As we will see below, the contrast between RCCs proper and generalized noun-modifying clause constructions is not a clear-cut one. That is why in this paper we will use the terms *relative clause* and *relative clause construction* irrespectively of our stance as to the mechanisms behind the attributive patterns we discuss.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, we will distinguish between *syntactically-oriented RCCs* and *semantically-oriented RCCs* depending on whether or not in a given case or set of cases, the syntactic information is relevant. If a construction contains a grammaticalized means intended for determining the relativized argument and displays clear syntactic constraints, it is considered a syntactically-oriented RCC. Otherwise, it may be considered semantically-oriented.

This paper presents a preliminary description of Mehweb RCCs in the perspective outlined above. At the clause level, Mehweb, as other Dargwa languages, is double-marking: it has case marking and verb agreement. Both kinds of marking display the ergative system, a remarkable exception being person marking,

<sup>2</sup> This hierarchy was later extended and modified (for example, for ergative languages it was argued that the transitive undergoer has preference over the ergative argument); see Lehmann (1984: 211ff), Liao (2000), and specifically for Daghestanian languages, Lyutikova (1999; 2001).

<sup>3</sup> The terms *attributive clause* and *noun-modifying clause construction* used in literature are misleading, since cross-linguistically relatives do not always function as syntactic attributes/modifiers of nouns (cf. internally-headed RCCs or the amazingly wide use of RCCs without “head” nouns in some languages).

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the rules for which vary across Dargwa varieties (Sumbatova 2011; for discussion of the Mehweb system of personal agreement, see Ganenkov 2018, in this volume). As for word order, Mehweb can be characterized as left-branching, although showing considerable freedom in independent clauses.

This paper is based on our fieldwork in Mehweb in 2013, 2015 and 2016. Most data were obtained through elicitation sessions. The structure of the paper is as follows: in §2 we describe the context in which we discuss Mehweb RCCs; in §3 we provide background information on relative clauses in this language; §4 is devoted to certain aspects of Mehweb RCCs that point to their syntactic nature; and §5 discusses these data from a theoretical point of view. The last section presents conclusions.

## 2 East Caucasian relative clauses

As is typical for a left-branching language, the basic RCC in East Caucasian languages involves a relative clause preceding its head (if any).<sup>4</sup> In grammars, the form of the verbal predicate of the subordinate clause is traditionally described as a participle, although its real place in the verb paradigm varies. The difficulties in the attribution of these forms are related primarily to the fact that in many languages they coincide with some finite forms.

At first glance, East Caucasian RCCs seem like good candidates to be considered semantically-oriented. Kibrik (1980: 33) noticed that the syntactic characteristics of the relativized argument are not crucial for these constructions. Indeed, the role of the relativized argument cannot be deduced from the form of the predicate of the relative clause, neither can it be unambiguously recovered on the basis of any other grammatical property of the construction. There are no dedicated relative pronouns that mark the relativized argument, and the absence of a corresponding NP cannot serve as a reliable clue, since East Caucasian languages easily omit argument NPs even in independent clauses. Hence Comrie & Polinsky (1999), who analyzed RCCs in Tsez, argued that they may be constructed on the basis of semantic frames, and Comrie et al. (2017) continued this line of analysis for Hinuq and Bezhta, the languages of the same Tsezic branch of East Caucasian as Tsez. Daniel & Lander (2008; 2010) also proposed that RCCs in East Caucasian languages are not based on syntactic information. In this section we will illustrate the argumentation concerning these points with examples from Tanti Dargwa, a language belonging to the same branch of the family as Mehweb (see Sumbatova & Lander 2014 for details).

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<sup>4</sup> A survey of the data available for East Caucasian relatives can be found in Barylnikova (2015).

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In general, Tanti Dargwa does not show any restrictions on what grammatical role is relativized. In this language, not only does the RCC relativize all roles in NPAH, but it is also not sensitive to syntactic islands. The following examples (both elicited) demonstrate what should presumably be described as relativization out of relative clauses and coordination constructions:<sup>5</sup>

- (1) *dam č-ib-se k:ata b-ibš:-ib x:unul simi*  
 I.DAT bring:PFV-AOR-ATR cat N-run.away:PFV-AOR woman anger  
*r-ač'-ib*  
 F-enter:PFV-AOR  
 'The woman such that the cat that she brought to me ran away got angry.'
- (2) *aḥmad-li=ra sun-ni=ra mura d-ert:-ib admi dila*  
 Ahmad-ERG=ADD self-ERG=ADD hay NPL-mow:PFV-AOR man I.GEN  
*χ:ut:u=sa-j*  
 father.in.law=COP-M  
 'The man with whom Ahmad mowed the hay (lit., Ahmad and who mowed the hay) is my father-in-law.'

Therefore, it seems that lacks syntactic constraints on relativization. Moreover, a relative clause can appear even if there is no argument in the subordinate part that could be relativized. Cf. (3):<sup>6</sup>

- (3) *ʃuʳ dam muher-li-c:e-r r-iž-ib-se dila*  
 you.sg I.DAT dream-OBL-INTER-F(ESS) F1-sit:PFV-AOR-ATR I.GEN  
*ʃamru alžana=kuna=sa-t:e*  
 life heaven=like=COP-NPL+PST  
 'My life when I dreamt about you (lit., when you were sitting in my dream) was heaven-like.'

It is impossible to describe (3) as a result of any syntactic operation which deals with an argument of the relative clause. Hence, this RCC is likely to be semantically-oriented.

<sup>5</sup> For the reasons discussed in the paper, its glossing occasionally follows the rules that are different from other papers of the volume.

<sup>6</sup> The presence of the attributive suffix on the predicate of the relative clause in (3), which at first glance makes it different from the previous examples, is not related to any difference in the mechanisms of constructing the relation between the head and the relative clause. For a discussion of the distribution of the attributive suffix in Tanti Dargwa, see [Lander \(2014\)](#).

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Still, it is doubtful that East Caucasian relatives never rely on syntactic information. As [Daniel & Lander \(2013\)](#) argued, the frequency of relativization of a syntactic position may depend on whether a language displays ergative features or not, even within this family. It may be that syntax is still engaged, even though, sometimes, these relatives only rely on semantics and pragmatics.

In addition, constraints on relativization have been reported for some East Caucasian languages. For example, according to [Tatevosov \(1996: 215\)](#), Godoberi does not relativize possessors, objects of comparison and objects of postpositions. [Mutalov & Sumbatova \(2003\)](#) note that in Itsari Dargwa “[r]elativization is impossible only for constituents of coordinate clauses and at least doubtful for constituents of adverbial clauses”. Lyutikova ([1999; 2001](#)) reports that Tsakhur and Bagwalal prohibit relativization for the positions mentioned for Itsari as well. Moreover, although the syntactic limits of relativization are always quite loose, it is worth noting that informants do not always accept relativization of all syntactically peripheral participants without an appropriate context, even in languages whose RCCs are commonly believed to be semantically-oriented.

Another problem for a purely semantic treatment is posed by the fact that in many East Caucasian languages the relativized argument can be expressed within a relative clause by a reflexive pronoun, as in (4). Such pronouns look like resumptive pronouns, which directly point to the *syntactic* position that is relativized.

- (4) *du (sun-ni-š:u) q’<sup>w</sup>-a<sup>h</sup>n-se qali*  
 I self-OBL-AD(LAT) go:IPFV-PRS-ATR house  
 ‘the house where I am going’

Still, these pronouns differ from typical resumptives in various significant ways.

First, to refer to relativized arguments, East Caucasian languages use reflexive pronouns, while typical resumptives cited in the typological literature are non-reflexive.<sup>7</sup> Yet the appearance of reflexive pronouns in RCCs may be related to the fact that reflexive pronouns in this family have very wide distribution: for example, they are used as logophoric pronouns or in independent clauses both as intensifiers and as pronominals ([Testelet & Toldova 1998](#)). This suggests that reflexive pronouns in East Caucasian languages are much more neutral means

<sup>7</sup> Note, however, that reflexives used as resumptives are found outside the East Caucasian family as well. For example, [Lee \(2004\)](#) provides a detailed discussion of the resumptive use of a reflexive pronoun in Korean, [Csató & Uchurpani \(2010\)](#) describe reflexive resumptives in Uyghur, and [Johanson & Csátó \(1998: 219\)](#) report the resumptive function of reflexives in Turkish.

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of pronominal reference than their counterparts in Standard Average European languages.

Second, East Caucasian languages sometimes allow resumptive reflexive pronouns in the most privileged syntactic positions occupying the top of NPAH, such as those of the intransitive subject (5), transitive actor (6) and transitive undergoer (7). Cf. the following Tanti Dargwa examples:

- (5) (*sa<r>i*) *dam-š:u*      *r-ač'-ib*      *rurs:i*  
 self<F> I.OBL-AD(LAT) F-come:PFV-AOR girl  
 'the girl that came to me'
- (6) (*sun-ni*) *čut:u*    *b-erk:-un*      *umra*  
 self-ERG chudu N-eat:PFV-AOR neighbor  
 'the neighbor who ate chudu'
- (7) (*sa<b>i*) *umra-li*      *b-erk:-un*      *čut:u*  
 self<N> neighbor-ERG N-eat:PFV-AOR chudu  
 'the chudu (a kind of pie) that the neighbor ate'

Typical resumptive pronouns in relative clauses prefer the positions that occur lower in syntactic hierarchies (Keenan & Comrie 1977; Maxwell 1979: 92). Hence, East Caucasian resumptives are different from typical resumptives.<sup>8</sup>

Daniel & Lander (2008) suggested that reflexives in relatives do not serve to mark the relativized position, i.e. they are only anaphoric devices, independent of relativization (cf. also Comrie et al. 2017: 133). If so, their existence does not contradict the idea that East Caucasian RCCs do not apply to syntactic information. The data from Mehweb we proceed to present make the issue of the use of reflexives more intriguing and return us to the idea that, after all, these can be treated as resumptives.

### 3 Relatives in Mehweb: first glance

The basic RCC in Mehweb Dargwa involves a relative clause which precedes the head of the noun phrase, if there is one. The predicate of the relative clause is marked with an attributive suffix, which has allomorphs *-il*, *-i*, and *-l*. The same suffix is found with some other attributes, such as adjectival attributes. Some examples of RCCs are given in (8)–(9):

<sup>8</sup> Again, there do exist languages which allow resumptives in the subject position, but these uses are usually considered exceptional. We do not have information on the degree of markedness of such uses as (5)–(7) in East Caucasian languages.

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- (8) *naʕʔ iz-u-l                      insan*  
hand hurt:IPFV-PRS-ATR person  
'a person whose hand hurts'
- (9) *nu qʔ-oʕwe                      d-uʔ-ub-i                      huni*  
I go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV F1-be:PFV-AOR-ATR road  
'the road I was going with'

According to [Magometov \(1982: 112–115\)](#) and [Khajdakov \(1985: 105–107\)](#), Mehweb distinguishes between three types of participle with respect to the stem they are formed with and the variant of the attributive suffix they adjoin; cf. Table 1.

Table 1: Participles in Mehweb Dargwa

participle	base	marker
Past	aorist	-i
Present	bare verbal stem + epenthetic vowel -i-	-u-l
Future	infinitive	-i

While the past and future participles are morphologically transparent and include just the corresponding base and the attributive suffix, the present participle contains the former marker of the present tense -u, which is found in present converbs.<sup>9</sup> While it is glossed as PRS in this paper,<sup>10</sup> one should bear in mind that its distribution is limited to few non-finite forms and it can be used as a marker of a relative tense rather than as an absolute tense.<sup>11</sup>

We take the participles listed above as the canonical predicates of relative clauses. However, it should be noted that the predicates of relative clauses are not confined to these participles. For example, we have RCCs where the attributive suffix is added to the copula/existential verb, as in (10)–(11):

- (10) *kʷiha b-erh-u-we                      le-w-i                      adami-li-ze                      nu*  
ram N-slaughter:PFV-PRS-CVB AUX-M-ATR man-OBL-INTER(LAT) I

<sup>9</sup> Michael Daniel (pers. com.) noted that it is most likely that imperfective converbs are actually derived from imperfective participles.

<sup>10</sup> Note that in using this gloss for -u, our paper differs from other papers of this volume.

<sup>11</sup> The finite present tense is expressed periphrastically by a combination of the present converb with a copula.

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*g-ub*

see:PFV-AOR

‘The man who had slaughtered a ram saw me.’<sup>12</sup>

(11) *qali le-b-i dursi d-ak’-ib*

house be-N-ATR girl F1-come:PFV-AOR

‘The girl who has her own house came.’

As shown by examples, the relativized argument need not be expressed overtly within the relative clause. As in Tanti Dargwa, it is not difficult to construct an example where the relation between the relative clause and the head must be established by the context:

(12) *nu-ni b-erk-un-na itti b-urb-es*

I-ERG N-eat:PFV-AOR-EGO that HPL-fight:IPFV-INF

*b-aq-ib-i t’ult’*

HPL-let:PFV-AOR-ATR bread

‘I ate the bread which served as the reason for them to fight.’

If the relativized argument can be reconstructed, it usually can be expressed with a pronoun *sa<CL>i* (here CL is a gender marker), which has several suppletive forms and whose partial paradigm is given in Table 2. This pronoun also serves as a reflexive pronoun (both local and long-distance), as a logophoric pronoun, and as an intensifier (see Kozhukhar 2018, in this volume).

Table 2: Case-number-gender forms of the pronoun *sa<CL>i*

	NOM	ERG	GEN	DAT	INTER-LAT
3SG	M	<i>sa&lt;w&gt;i</i>	<i>sune-jni</i>	<i>sune-la</i>	<i>sune-s</i>
	F/F1	<i>sa&lt;r&gt;i</i>			
	N	<i>sa&lt;b&gt;i</i>			
3PL	HPL	<i>sa&lt;b&gt;i</i>	<i>ču-ni</i>	<i>ču-la</i>	<i>ču-s</i>
	NPL	<i>sa&lt;r&gt;i</i>			

<sup>12</sup> The example is additionally interesting because it relativizes one of the arguments of the so-called biabsolutive construction. Cf. the original independent construction:

(i) *adami k”iha b-erh-u-we le-w*

man ram N-slaughter:PFV-PRS-CVB AUX-M

‘The man slaughtered a ram.’



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Some examples of the use of *sa<CL>i* as a resumptive are given below. In (13) it appears in the indirect object position, in (14) it serves as the possessor of the intransitive subject, and in (15) it refers to the experiencer with the experiential verb:

- (13) *nu-ni ču-s kung gib-i ule b-a<sup>q</sup>'-un*  
 I-ERG self.PL.OBL-DAT book give:PFV-ATR child.PL HPL-go:PFV-AOR  
*uškuj-ħe*  
 school.OBL-IN(LAT)  
 ‘The children to whom I gave a book went to school.’
- (14) *sune-la k<sup>w</sup>ač' b-o<sup>r</sup>?-aq-ib-i gatu*  
 self.OBL-GEN leg N-break:PFV-CAUS-AOR-ATR cat  
 ‘the cat whose leg broke’
- (15) *šejtan ču-ze g-ub-i buk'unu-me uruχ*  
 demon self.PL.OBL-INTER(LAT) see:PFV-AOR-ATR shepherd-PL be.afraid  
*b-a<sup>q</sup>'-ib*  
 HPL-LV:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The shepherds who saw a demon were scared.’

## 4 Syntactic orientedness

Even though Mehweb data show considerable resemblance to Tanti Dargwa, there are important differences between the two Dargwa varieties which suggest that relativization in Mehweb may be syntactically-oriented.

## 4.1 Resumptives at the top of NPAH

Unlike in Tanti Dargwa, the Mehweb pronoun *sa<CL>i* is sometimes considered infelicitous at the top of NPAH. Cf. the following example where the position relativized into is the actor of a transitive clause:

- (16) (*\*sune-jni*) *k<sup>w</sup>iha b-erh-un-i adami-li-ze nu*  
 self.OBL-ERG ram N-slaughter:PFV-AOR-ATR man-OBL-INTER(LAT) I  
*g-ub*  
 see:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The man who slaughtered the ram saw me.’

When used as intensifier, *sa<CL>i* is normally accompanied by the emphatic clitic *=al* (with an allomorph *=jal* after vowels). Crucially, the same speaker who

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found the use of the resumptive in (16) infelicitous allows the pronoun followed by *=al* in the same position:

- (17) *sune-jni=jal k<sup>w</sup>iha b-erh-un-i*  
 self.OBL-ERG=EMPH ram N-slaughter:PFV-AOR-ATR  
*adami-li-ze nu g-ub*  
 man-OBL-INTER(LAT) I see:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The man who himself slaughtered the ram saw me.’

This example demonstrates that the impossibility of using *sa<CL>i* in this position cannot be attributed to any morphological rule that prohibits this pronoun in this position in general: after all, it occurs there as an intensifier.

As noted by an anonymous reviewer, it could be that the emphatic clitic changes the distribution of the pronoun. Yet there are also speakers who have no problems with the use of the resumptive (lacking the emphatic particle) in all core syntactic positions, including the positions of the intransitive subject (18) and transitive actor (19):

- (18) *sa<b>i dupi-če-b b-urh-u-we*  
 self<HPL> ball-SUPER-HPL(ESS) HPL-play:IPFV-PRS-CVB  
*b-uʔ-ub-i ule quli ʔaʔr-b-aʔqʔ-un*  
 HPL-be:PFV-AOR-ATR child.PL home.IN(LAT) away-HPL-go:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The children who played with the ball went home.’
- (19) *Haʔnči ču-ni b-aqʔ-ib-i xuhe*  
 work self.OBL.PL-ERG N-do:PFV-AOR-ATR woman.PL  
*ʔaʔr-b-aʔqʔ-un quli*  
 away-HPL-go:PFV-AOR house.IN(LAT)  
 ‘The women who did all their work went home.’

Our data concerning the possibility of the use of a resumptive at the top of NPAH are not definitive. The fact that some speakers are more restrictive in the use of *sa<CL>i* in the resumptive function suggests, however, that this function may be governed by syntactic rather than semantic rules.

## 4.2 Coordinate structure constraint

Mehweb does not allow relativization out of a conjunct in the coordination construction and hence follows one of the island constraints, namely the coordinate structure constraint. (20a) illustrates the coordination construction marked with

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the additive clitic *-ra*. (20b) demonstrates an unsuccessful attempt at relativizing one of the conjuncts.

- (20) a. *musa-ni=ra di-la uzi-li-ni=ra heš kung*  
 Musa-ERG=ADD I.OBL-GEN brother-OBL-ERG=ADD this book  
*b-elč'-un*  
 N-read:PFV-AOR  
 'Musa and my brother read this book.'
- b. \**nu-ni=ra sune-jni=ra heš kung b-elč'-un-i*  
 I-ERG=ADD self.OBL-ERG=ADD this book N-read:PFV-AOR-ATR  
*adami w-ak'-ib*  
 man M-come:PFV-AOR  
 (Expected: 'The man who read this book together with me (lit., I and who read this book) came.')

This contrasts Mehweb with Tanti Dargwa, where the coordinate structure constraint does not apply (cf. (2) above), and again suggests that syntactic rules might be at work here.

## 4.3 An argument for resumptive function

In general, reflexives in Dargwa languages and in Mehweb in particular are insensitive to the animacy or humanness of their antecedent. This is shown in (21)–(22), where in the first example *sunes* has an animate (human) antecedent and in the second example *sunela* has an inanimate antecedent:

- (21) *it-ini sune-s kung as-ib*  
 this-ERG self.OBL-DAT book take:PFV-AOR  
 'He bought a book for himself.'
- (22) *nu-ni g-i-ra mažar sune-la w-eħi-ze*  
 I-ERG give:PFV-AOR-EGO gun self.OBL-GEN M-owner-INTER(LAT)  
 'I returned the gun to its owner.'

However, by some consultants, the appearance of *sa<CL>i* in the resumptive function is claimed to be only possible if the head of the relative clause is animate. Examples (23)–(24) show the possibility of the use of the pronoun in RCCs with human and non-human animate antecedents:

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- (23) *nu-ni sune-s di? g-ib-i ħanq'aka-jni...*  
 I-ERG self.OBL-DAT meat give:PFV-AOR-ATR shepherd-ERG  
 'the shepherd to whom I gave the meat'
- (24) *sune-la k<sup>w</sup>ač' b-o<sup>r</sup>ʔ-aq-ib-i gatu*  
 self.OBL-GEN leg N-break:PFV-CAUS-AOR-ATR cat  
 'the cat whose leg broke' (= (14))

On the contrary, (25) demonstrates that a resumptive reflexive with an inanimate antecedent is infelicitous:

- (25) (<sup>???</sup>*sune-la*) *ba<sup>r</sup>H ark-ib-i qali*  
 self.OBL-GEN wall turn.into.ruin:PFV-AOR-ATR house  
 'the house whose wall crashed down'

Interestingly, this restriction is independent from the gender system of Mehweb which contrasts humans and non-humans rather than animates and inanimates (see Footnote 14).

The restriction of *sa<CL>i* to animates is crucial exactly because it is not observed in non-resumptive uses. As such, it separates the resumptive function from the other functions of the pronoun and goes against Daniel & Lander's (2008) hypothesis that reflexive pronouns in Daghestanian RCCs are not used as resumptives *per se*. If, according to some consultants' intuition, Mehweb has developed a dedicated resumptive use of pronouns characterized by specific restrictions, the RCCs involving such pronouns should be recognized as syntactically oriented. Again, no constraint of this kind is observed in Tanti Dargwa, where the reflexive pronoun easily occurs in the place of a relativized argument with an inanimate antecedent (4).

#### 4.4 Realizations of functions of *sa<CL>i*

In theory, when referring to a relativized argument within a relative clause, *sa<CL>i* may fulfill not only the resumptive function but also the intensifier function and the reflexive proper function. These functions could in theory be distinguished on the basis of (i) the restriction to animates in the resumptive function, and (ii) the presence of the clitic *=al* in the intensifier function. In reality, however, the picture is more complex.

The intensifier function of *sa<CL>i* is indeed observed, for example, in the following example:

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- (26) *barɸu-be ar-d-ik-ib sa<r>i\*(=jal) d-uʔ-ub-i*  
 stone-PL PV-NPL-fall:PFV-AOR self<CL>(\*=EMPH) NPL-be-AOR-ATR  
*merʔ-ani-če-la*  
 place-PL-SUPER-EL  
 ‘The stones rolled from their own places.’ (Lit., ‘The stones rolled from the place they themselves occupied.’)

In (26) *sari* refers to the intransitive subject and requires the emphatic clitic. Its inability to function as a resumptive (without the clitic) may be explained either by its high position in NPAH or by its inanimate reference. Importantly, the inanimate reference does not block its appearance in the intensifier function.

The realization of the reflexive function within a relative clause, on the other hand, turns out to be impossible, as (27) shows:

- (27) *nu-ni (\*sune-la) w-eɰi-ze g-ib-i maʒar*  
 I-ERG self.OBL-GEN M-owner-INTER(LAT) give:PFV-AOR-ATR gun  
*b-oʔrʔ-oʔb*  
 N-break:PFV-AOR  
 ‘The gun that I returned to its owner broke.’

In this example, *sunela* could be expected to mark the coreference of the possessor with the undergoer argument (which is then relativized), yet it does not. Since the reflexive is possible in the same position in the independent clause (22), we suspect that the effect observed in (27) is due to the fact that the pronoun is interpreted as a resumptive, in which case it violates the animacy restriction.

Thus the resumptive function blocks the reflexive interpretation. This rule is not likely to be based on any semantic principle independent of the grammar, so we take it to be another piece of evidence for grammaticalization of the resumptive function in this language.

## 5 Towards an explanation of the Mehweb pattern

To sum up, even though RCCs in Mehweb can be built on a semantic basis, in many cases their functioning relies upon strict syntactic mechanisms and constraints. At least when the relativized argument is animate, the construction resembles RCCs described for better known languages in a traditional fashion much more closely, since this argument can be expressed with a resumptive pronoun proper. These data support the conclusion made by [Daniel & Lander \(2013\)](#)

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that the borderline between RCCs involving syntactic mechanisms and RCCs which are based on the semantic information is not strict.

We have no obvious explanation for the Mehweb pattern we observed above. Nonetheless, below we present some speculations.

First, note that there are a number of languages where resumptive pronouns are found in RCCs mostly or even only when the relativized argument is animate; cf. Bošković (2009) on Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian (Slavic), Csató & Uchturpani (2010) for Uyghur (Turkic), Erteschik-Shir (1992: 104–105) for Hebrew (Semitic), Kawachi (2007) for Sidaama (Cushitic). It may be that the Mehweb system results from grammaticalization of a similar tendency. Still, there are languages where at least in some contexts resumptives tend to be used for inanimates rather than animates, such as Arabic (Al-Zaghir 2014). Sometimes this can be grammaticalized. Lyutikova (1999: 474–475) reports that in another East Caucasian language, Tsakhur, the construction relativizing the object of a postposition only requires a resumptive pronoun if the relativized argument is inanimate.

Second, we may suspect that the most typical uses of relatives are associated with high accessibility of the relativized argument. This is partly reflected in NPAH but can also manifest itself in other parameters such as animacy, which is said to correlate with conceptual accessibility (see some discussion in van Nice & Dietrich 2003). Since more typical uses are more likely to be grammaticalized (see Lander 2015 for discussion), it is expected that relativization based on syntactic (i.e. grammatical) information is found for more accessible arguments. Note, however, that the construction with resumptives retains considerable semantic transparency (Keenan 1975) and therefore is in a sense less grammaticalized than constructions with the most accessible arguments. In other words, the absence of resumptives at the top of NPAH may be explained by the fact that this top is less based on semantics, but the absence of resumptives for less accessible arguments may be explained by the fact that these constructions do not elaborate on syntactic information.

Still, this approach has a notable shortcoming. The evidence that relativization prefers animate arguments is somewhat scarce,<sup>13</sup> since most studies of the interaction between animacy and relativization are devoted to the way in which animacy affects the predictability of what is relativized. Moreover, things may be turned the other way round. The most accessible arguments are not normally described with a complex noun phrase with a modifier, since their accessibility

<sup>13</sup> For example, in Tsakhur, during elicitation the choice of what is relativized is sometimes influenced by animacy (Lyutikova 1999: 476–477), and for Turkish it is reported that headless RCCs by default have animate reference (Kerslake 1998). The latter, of course, may be just the property of headless relatives.

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allows them to be more economically expressed (such as by means of pronouns, proper names, simple noun phrases, etc.), cf. [Ariel \(1990\)](#). Since the inherent accessibility features of the antecedent and the relativized argument are (normally) identical, the very fact that the speaker has to use a highly complex phrase based on a RCC would imply that the target of relativization need not necessarily be accessible, at least as far as animacy is concerned. In any case, more research is needed on the issue of the interaction between animacy and relativization.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, we provided a sketch of relativization in Mehweb against the background of the remarkable freedom of relativization in (at least some) other East Caucasian languages. In particular, we gave preliminary evidence for the idea that this language has grammaticalized resumptives and relies on syntactic information during relativization.

To be sure, these conclusions should not be taken for granted. In fact, even for resumptives, which we specifically addressed above, it is not clear whether all their uses should be considered alike; as argued by [Erteschik-Shir \(1992\)](#) among others, there are different types of resumptives which occur even in one and the same language. A deeper investigation of the functioning of relatives in Mehweb and other East Caucasian languages, including both corpus analysis and psycholinguistic experiments, certainly may help to refine the conclusions presented here.

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## List of abbreviations

3PL	third person plural
3SG	third person singular
AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADD	additive particle
AOR	aorist

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ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
COP	copula
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
EMPH	emphasis (particle)
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
GEN	genitive
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PRS	present
PST	past
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
1PL	first person plural

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## Chapter 12

# The Mehweb “assertive” copula $g^w a$ : a sketch of a portrait

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Mehweb Dargwa features a particle  $g^w a$ , a peculiar element which is basically used for emphasizing the assertion. The paper explores some grammatical characteristics of this particle. It is shown that, in both verbal and non-verbal clauses,  $g^w a$  serves as a predicative marker forming a complete predication and is an equivalent of a copula (even though, unlike the neutral copula in Mehweb, it lacks inflection). Similarly to typical East Caucasian predicative markers,  $g^w a$  may occur in different positions, though its place is syntactically constrained (e.g., it cannot be embedded within syntactic islands). Still, Mehweb speakers allow  $g^w a$  not to be adjoined to either the predicate or the focus. This makes the distribution of the particle surprising as compared with similar predicative markers in well-described East Caucasian languages, where they may either occur on the predicate or immediately follow the focused element.

## 1 Introduction

This paper presents a preliminary description of the particle  $g^w a$  in Mehweb, a language of the Dargwa branch of the East Caucasian family. The following examples illustrate the use of this marker in a verbal clause (1) and in an equative clause (2):

- (1)  $\text{ʔudidi-li} \quad \text{ħark}^w\text{-li} \quad \text{ar-}\chi\text{-uwe} \quad \text{g}^w a$   
under.EL-ATR river-ERG away-bring:IPFV-CVB.IPFV ASRT

‘The river carries away the one who is downstream!’ (Molla Rasbaddin goes to the market place: 1.11)



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- (2) *hel čudu g<sup>wa</sup> di-la*  
 this chudu ASRT I.OBL-GEN  
 ‘This chudu (a kind of pie) is mine.’

The function of *g<sup>wa</sup>* is not at all obvious. Etymologically, this particle is likely to originate from the imperative of the verb ‘see’ (which, as an imperative, is not fully felicitous – see Dobrushina 2018, in this volume). Magometov (1982: 128) translated *g<sup>wa</sup>* by the Russian particles *ved’* and *že*, whose semantics are by no means clear. The speakers often suggest that *g<sup>wa</sup>* is frequent in disputes and emphasizes a claim. Given this, I will label it an *assertive* marker. Further research is needed for an exhaustive description of the rules that govern its use. What I will argue are the following two specific points:

- (i) *g<sup>wa</sup>* is a copula,
- (ii) the position of *g<sup>wa</sup>* does not necessarily depend on the position of the predicate or of the focus.

The latter makes *g<sup>wa</sup>* look quite peculiar against the background of what we know about copulas in many East Caucasian languages and in Dargwa languages in particular.

The issue of copula-ness is addressed in §2. In §3, I discuss the use of the marker in verbal predications and describe syntactic restrictions on its position. §4 describes the use of *g<sup>wa</sup>* in non-verbal predications. The last section presents conclusions.

## 2 The assertive marker as a copula

Many East Caucasian languages have elements which are described as copulas or predicative markers, i.e. as markers which are normally added to some lexical material in order to form complete predications (finite, unless these copulas themselves take a subordinate form).<sup>1</sup> Although their individual morphological and syntactic properties vary, these elements are clearly distinguishable from verbs. There are typically several predicative markers in a single language: for

<sup>1</sup> Some important studies addressing the behaviour of predicative markers in East Caucasian (especially with respect to their interaction with focus) include Harris (2000; 2002) on Udi, Kazenin (2002) on Lak, Sumbatova (2011) and Sumbatova & Lander (2014) on Tanti Dargwa. Forker (2013) discusses question particles which typically represent a kind of predicative markers in these languages. Testelet (1998), Kalinina & Sumbatova (2007) and Forker & Belyaev (2016) describe the influence of the position of some predicative markers on the overall clause structure.

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example, many languages have dedicated predicative markers used in questions in addition to those used in simple declaratives.

Predicative markers appear both in verbal and non-verbal predications. Below I will illustrate their use with a few examples from Udi, a language belonging to the Lezgian branch of the East Caucasian family, thus only distantly related to Mehweb.<sup>2</sup>

Predicative markers in Udi are highly grammaticalized and now commonly described as clitics (Harris 2000, 2002). They include personal markers which usually show agreement with the subject (S or A) and the question marker, which only appears in interrogative contexts and is not discussed here (but see Harris 1992). The following examples illustrate the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural personal marker *=jan* in a non-verbal predication (3) and in verbal predications (4)–(5):<sup>3</sup>

- (3) *jan=al t:e χalg-aun mand-i χalg=jan*  
 we=ADD that nation-ABL remain-AOR(PTCP) nation=1PL  
 ‘We are the nation that continue (lit. remain from) that nation.’
- (4) *me äš-urχo lap mat mand-e=jan*  
 this affair-PL(DAT) very surprised remain-PRF=1PL  
 ‘We really remained surprised at these facts.’
- (5) *pajiz-e dirij-a=jan kaš<sup>ʕ</sup>-e*  
 autumn-DAT vegetable.garden-DAT=1PL dig-LV:PRS  
 ‘In autumn, we dig in the vegetable garden.’

Note that predicative markers attach not only to the lexical predicate (4) but also to the focused element (5). This can be viewed as a kind of competition for acquiring head properties between the semantic head (the predicate) and the most relevant element of the clause (i.e. focus).<sup>4</sup>

In Dargwa languages, predicative markers are less grammaticalized than in Udi. In particular, they show some properties of autonomous words. Many such markers readily constitute autonomous expressions (such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’). Some of them take attributive and adverbial morphology and hence are akin to content words.

<sup>2</sup> Here I omit some important details of the Udi system, including the existence of a series of dative clitics and a more verb-like copula-like element used in existential, possessive predication, and identificational clauses, which also takes a predicative marker.

<sup>3</sup> The Udi examples are from the corpus of text in the Nizh dialect of Udi collected by Dmitry Ganenkov, Timur Maisak and the author.

<sup>4</sup> See Lander (2009) for some discussion of competition between semantically obligatory elements and the most relevant elements for the head properties.

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The primary Mehweb predicative marker is the copula *le*-CL (for morphology, see [Daniel 2018](#), in this volume), with a gender agreement slot controlled by the absolutive argument. Its use in non-verbal predications is shown in (6)–(7), while its use in verbal predications is illustrated in (8)–(9).

- (6) *kača ha-la ahin, di-la le-b*  
 calf you.sg.OBL-GEN be:NEG I.OBL-GEN be-N  
 ‘The calf is not yours, (it) is mine.’ (A blind judge: 1.11)
- (7) *arci-ze-b le-b-re ha-la da<sup>s</sup>H-la surat*  
 money-INTER-N(ESS) be-N-PST you.sg.OBL-GEN face-GEN picture  
 ‘On the coin (lit., money), there was a picture of your face.’ (The Story of Akula Ali, 1.21)
- (8) *xunuj-s ruzi ha-d-ig-es d-aʔ-i-le*  
 wife.OBL-DAT sister NEG-F1-love:IPFV-INF F1-start:PFV-AOR-CVB  
***le-r***  
 AUX-F  
 ‘The wife disliked (her husband’s) sister.’ (A brother and sister: 1.6)
- (9) *wallahi, k’as le-b q’-o<sup>s</sup>we*  
 Allah big.fish AUX-N go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 ‘My God, a whale is going (here).’ (Two sons: 1.65)

Like in Udi, the Mehweb predicative marker in verbal clauses can follow either the verb or the focused constituent. However, unlike in Udi, the Mehweb copula requires that a verb *be* in a non-finite (participial or converbal) form, while finite verb forms do not combine with the predicative marker. In fact, combinations of a copula and a lexical verb look like periphrastic forms, although the issue of monoclausality of these constructions is tricky.<sup>5</sup>

Turning to the assertive marker *g<sup>w</sup>a*, it can be shown that it has the distribution of a copula. There are two pieces of evidence for this. First, similarly to *le*-CL, the assertive marker cannot appear in clauses that contain finite verb forms (10):

- (10) a. *do<sup>s</sup>Hi ar-b-ik-ib (\*g<sup>w</sup>a)*  
 snow PV-N-fall:PFV-AOR ASRT  
 ‘The snow fell.’

<sup>5</sup> See [Sumbatova & Lander \(2014\)](#) for a detailed discussion of this issue in Tanti Dargwa, another Dargwa variety.



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- b. *mator b-uz-an* ( $*g^w a$ )  
 engine N-work:IPFV-HAB ASRT  
 ‘The engine is working.’

Second, the assertive marker cannot combine with a copula (11a-b), unless the latter does not appear in a non-finite form, as in (11c). If we assume that  $g^w a$  is a copula, this is explained: a clause cannot contain two copulas.

- (11) a. *dag it derbenti-ze-la w-ak'-i-le le-w*  
 yesterday that Derbent-INTER-EL m-come:PFV-AOR-CVB AUX-M  
 ( $*g^w a$ ).  
 ASRT
- b. *dag it derbenti-ze-la w-ak'-i-le g^w a*  
 yesterday that Derbent-INTER-EL M-come:PFV-AOR-CVB ASRT  
 ( $*le-w$ )  
 AUX-M
- c. *dag it derbenti-ze-la w-ak'-i-le*  
 yesterday that Derbent-INTER-EL M-come:PFV-AOR-CVB  
*le-w-le g^w a*  
 AUX-M-CVB ASRT  
 ‘Yesterday he came from Derbent.’

It is worth mentioning, however, that  $g^w a$  differs from  $le-CL$  in that it does not take any morphology.

### 3 Verbal predications

Just like the copula  $le-CL$ , the assertive marker need not follow the verb but can appear after focused elements:

- (12) a. *nuša-jni g^w a kulubi-s remont b-aq'-i-le*  
 we-ERG ASRT club-DAT renovation N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘It was us who made the renovation for the club.’
- b. *nuša-jni kulubi-s g^w a remont b-aq'-i-le*  
 we-ERG club-DAT ASRT renovation N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘It was the club for which we made the renovation.’

I will distinguish between the wide scope use of  $g^w a$ , where it has a scope over the whole sentence or over the predicate and follows this predicate, and the

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narrow scope use of *g<sup>w</sup>a*, where it should follow exactly the focused phrase. In verbal clauses, the wide scope *g<sup>w</sup>a* is found with the neutral converb (13) and with the infinitive (14)–(15) but not with the participle (cf. the infelicitous (16) with (19) below):<sup>6</sup>

- (13) *q<sup>w</sup>e b-iq'-uwe g<sup>w</sup>a, ħu ħa-k-i-le*  
 VOW N-do:IPFV-CVB.IPFV:IPFV ASRT you.sg NEG-bring:PFV-AOR-CVB  
*ħa-w?-iša*  
 NEG-M.be-FUT.EGO  
 'I swear I will take you (as a wife).' (Widow)
- (14) *durʔa uh-ub-i-li derq<sup>w</sup> uh-ub-i-s*  
 lose M.LV:PFV-AOR-ATR-ERG winning M.become:PFV-AOR-ATR-DAT  
*ca dus-li quli-w w-at-ul-le*  
 one year-ERG house.ESS-M(ESS) M-put:IPFV-PTCP-ADVZ  
*uz-es g<sup>w</sup>a*  
 M.work:IPFV-INF ASRT  
 'The one who will lose will work as a servant for the one who will win, for one year.' (Widow)
- (15) *ħad hete ħunt'a-l qul-le-šu u'q'-es g<sup>w</sup>a*  
 you.sg.DAT there(LAT) red-ATR house-PL-AD(LAT) M.go:PFV-INF ASRT  
 'You should go there, to the red houses.'
- (16) *\*musa-ni poʁoʁm b-oʁʔ-aq-ib-i g<sup>w</sup>a*  
 Musa-ERG glass N-break:PFV-CAUS-AOR-ATR ASRT  
 ('Musa broke the glass.')

If the assertive marker follows a constituent other than the predicate, the choice of the verb form is less restricted. In this construction not only a converbal form (17) and an infinitive (18) but also a participial form (19) is allowed:<sup>7</sup>

- (17) *mahmud-ini g<sup>w</sup>a b-ilt'-uwe heš surat*  
 Mahmud-ERG ASRT N-take.out:IPFV-CVB.IPFV that picture  
 'It was Mahmud who is drawing that picture.'

<sup>6</sup> Presumably, the assertive marker should combine with the participle where it functions as the head of the nominal predicate in a nominal clause. However, I lack relevant examples.

<sup>7</sup> These combinations stand in parallel with similar combinations of converbs, infinitives and participles with the standard copula (cf. Daniel 2018, in this volume).

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- (18) *rasuj-ni g<sup>wa</sup> nu k-es*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG ASRT I bring:PFV-INF  
 ‘It is Rasul who will bring me here.’
- (19) *musa-ni g<sup>wa</sup> po<sup>o</sup>ro<sup>o</sup>m b-o<sup>o</sup>rɪ-aq-ib-i*  
 Musa-ERG ASRT glass N-break:PFV-CAUS-AOR-ATR  
 ‘It was Musa who broke the glass.’

In examples (17)–(19) we observe the assertive copula following focused NPs. (20)–(22) demonstrate that *g<sup>wa</sup>* can follow other kinds of constituents, such as adverbs and embedded clauses:

- (20) *išbari g<sup>wa</sup> nuni praznik b-aq<sup>o</sup>-ib-i / b-aq<sup>o</sup>-i-le*  
 today ASRT I.ERG feast N-do:PFV-AOR-ATR / N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘It was today that I organized the feast.’
- (21) *it q<sup>o</sup>a<sup>o</sup>ju g<sup>wa</sup> w-aš-uwe*  
 that slowly ASRT M-go:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 ‘He is moving SLOWLY.’
- (22) *musa rasuj-šu quli w-ak<sup>o</sup>-ib-i-jaxe*  
 Musa Rasul.OBL-AD(LAT) house.ESS(LAT) M-come:PFV-AOR-ATR-ANTE  
*g<sup>wa</sup> xamis g-ub-le*  
 ASRT Khamis see:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘After MUSA’S COMING TO RASUL, he saw Khamis.’

Still, we do find restrictions on what can be focused by means of *g<sup>wa</sup>*.<sup>8</sup> For example, the assertive marker cannot immediately follow postpositional objects; rather, it occurs after the whole postpositional phrase:

- (23) a. *\*heč<sup>o</sup> dubur-li-če g<sup>wa</sup> aqu-r dirig<sup>w</sup> xa?*  
 that mountain-OBL-SUPER(LAT) ASRT up-NPL(ESS) cloud appear  
*d-uh-ub-le*  
 NPL-become:PFV-AOR-CVB
- b. *heč<sup>o</sup> dubur-li-če aqu-r g<sup>wa</sup> dirig<sup>w</sup> xa?*  
 that mountain-OBL-SUPER uper-NPL(ESS) ASRT cloud appear  
*d-uh-ub-le*  
 NPL-become:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘It is over that mountain that the cloud appeared.’

<sup>8</sup> I hypothesize that these restrictions hold for the neutral copula as well, but I lack the necessary data.

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Further, the assertive marker cannot be embedded in an NP. In particular, it cannot occur immediately after an adjective attribute (24), an attributive demonstrative (25) or a quantifier (26) when they precede the head noun:

- (24) a. \**ħunt'a-l g<sup>wa</sup> burχa-li-če-r* *karb-ube*  
 red-ATR ASRT roof-OBL-SUPER-NPL(ESS) stone-PL  
 b. *ħunt'a-l burχa-li-če-r* *g<sup>wa</sup> karb-ube*  
 red-ATR roof-OBL-SUPER-NPL(ESS) ASRT stone-PL  
 'There are stones on the RED roof.'
- (25) a. \**heš g<sup>wa</sup> b<sup>we</sup>t'i-če-r* *d-aq-il* *inc-be*  
 that ASRT tree-SUPER-NPL(ESS) NPL-much-ATR apple-PL  
*d-urh-uwe*  
 NPL-become:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 b. *heš b<sup>we</sup>t'i-če-r* *g<sup>wa</sup> d-aq-il* *inc-be*  
 that tree-SUPER-NPL(ESS) ASRT NPL-much-ATR apple-PL  
*d-urh-uwe*  
 NPL-become:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 'There are many apples growing on THAT tree.'
- (26) a. \**har-il g<sup>wa</sup> urši-li-s* *midal g-i-le*  
 each-ATR ASRT boy-OBL-DAT medal give:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 b. *har-il urši-li-s g<sup>wa</sup> midal g-i-le*  
 each-ATR boy-OBL-DAT ASRT medal give:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 'He gave a medal to EACH boy.'

One natural way to focus an attribute is to place the assertive copula after the whole NP. Alternatively, one can split the description of a participant into two NPs with a semantic attribute being nominalized and taking its own case marker. Since the semantic attribute itself constitutes a complete NP in this construction, it becomes possible to place *g<sup>wa</sup>* immediately after it (27). Notably, for absolutive NPs this results in the illusion of the embedding of the assertive marker in an NP (28), but this is likely to be a consequence of the fact that absolutive NPs do not receive overt case marking, so the two adjoined absolutive NPs look as a single phrase.

- (27) *ħunt'aj-če-r* *g<sup>wa</sup> burχa-li-če-r* *karb-ube*  
 red.OBL-SUPER-NPL(ESS) ASRT roof-OBL-SUPER-NPL(ESS) stone-PL  
 'There are stones on the RED roof.'  
 (Lit., 'There are stones on the red one, on the roof.')

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- (28) *b-urq'-il g<sup>wa</sup> bartbisu iχ-ini ħa-s-i-le*  
 N-old-ATR ASRT carpet that-ERG NEG-take:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘He did not buy the OLD carpet.’

Further, *g<sup>wa</sup>* cannot occur within *s*. For example, it cannot be embedded in a coordination construction (29) or in a converbal clause (30).

- (29) *\*rasuj-ni=ra g<sup>wa</sup> nu-ni=ra past'an*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG=ADD ASRT I-ERG=ADD vegetable.garden  
*b-erk-u-le*  
 N-dig:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 (‘RASUL and I digged the vegetable garden.’)
- (30) a. *\*b-urq'-il bartbisu g<sup>wa</sup> b-ic-i-le, d-aq-il*  
 N-old-ATR carpet ASRT N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB NPL-much-ATR  
*arc d-aq'-i-le*  
 money NPL-do:PFV-AOR-CVB
- b. *b-urq'-il bartbisu b-ic-i-le g<sup>wa</sup>, d-aq-il*  
 N-old-ATR carpet N-sell:PFV-AOR-CVB ASRT NPL-much-ATR  
*arc d-aq'-i-le*  
 money NPL-do:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘After selling THE OLD CARPET, he got much money.’

Unlike most Dargwa varieties, Mehweb has developed a biabsolutive construction<sup>9</sup> (see also [Daniel 2018](#), in this volume, and [Ganenkov 2018](#), in this volume). In this construction, a transitive verb appears as a converb and requires a copula but the actor appears in the absolutive, as does the undergoer. This construction is possible with *g<sup>wa</sup>* (31a-b), yet the assertive copula cannot occur between the P-argument and the converb (31c).<sup>10</sup> This contrasts the biabsolutive construction with a simple combination of the converb with a copula and suggests that this pattern contains an embedded converbal clause which is an island, at least with respect to *g<sup>wa</sup>*:

<sup>9</sup> Biabsolutive (binominative) constructions are quite widespread in the East Caucasian family, but are not typical for the Dargwa branch, where they have been previously only reported for Itsari Dargwa ([Mutalov & Sumbatova 2003](#)). See [Forker \(2012\)](#) and [Gagliardi et al. \(2014\)](#) for surveys of some properties of this kind of constructions as well as for a discussion of their diversity and possible analyzes.

<sup>10</sup> The same set of facts is observed for the simple copula *le-cl*.

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- (31) a. *musa kaš d-uk-uwe g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 Musa kasha NPL-eat:IPFV-CVB.IPFV ASRT  
 ‘Musa is eating kasha.’  
 b. *musa g<sup>wa</sup> kaš d-uk-uwe*  
 Musa ASRT kasha NPL-eat:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 ‘It is Musa who is eating kasha.’  
 c. *\*musa kaš g<sup>wa</sup> d-uk-uwe*  
 Musa kasha ASRT NPL-eat:IPFV-CVB.IPFV  
 Intended ‘It is kasha that Musa is eating.’

With clausal complements, the situation is less obvious: some (but by no means all) speakers allow positioning *g<sup>wa</sup>* within a clausal complement (32)–(33).<sup>11</sup>

- (32) *%it kaltuška g<sup>wa</sup> d-elʔ<sup>w</sup>-eʔs d-aʔ-i-le*  
 that potato ASRT NPL-seed:IPFV-INF NPL-start:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘She started to plant potatoes.’  
 (33) *%heš k<sup>wi</sup>ha g<sup>wa</sup> b-eq<sup>w</sup>-es aħmad-ini di-ze*  
 that ram ASRT N-cut:PFV-INF Ahmad-ERG I.OBL-INTER(LAT)  
*hari b-aq’-i-le*  
 request N-do:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘Ahmed asked me to cut this ram.’

While the placement of *g<sup>wa</sup>* after a constituent other than the predicate usually indicates focus shift, even in this case it does not need to follow the constituents that are (likely to be) focused. Consider the following examples:

- (34) a. *χadižat-ini=ra heš kung g<sup>wa</sup> b-elč-u-we*  
 Khadizhat-ERG=ADD that book ASRT N-read:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 b. *χadižat-ini=ra g<sup>wa</sup> heš kung b-elč-u-we*  
 Khadizhat-ERG=ADD ASRT that book N-read:PFV-AOR-CVB  
 ‘Even Khadizhat has read that book.’

In (34) one can hypothesize that the focused constituent is the ergative NP, since it is marked with the additive clitic meaning ‘even’. Yet as shown by these examples, the assertive copula may but need not be adjacent to the focused

<sup>11</sup> The superscripted % in these examples refers to the fact that there is considerable variation among speakers in the acceptance of such examples.

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phrase: indeed, in (34a) it follows the absolutive argument. These examples suggest that focus is possibly not the only factor which determines the position of g<sup>wa</sup>. More generally, we conclude that in verbal clauses the grammatical position of g<sup>wa</sup> should be determined neither by the predicate nor by focus.

## 4 Non-verbal predication

Non-verbal predication is represented by two types, namely existential clauses and non-existential clauses with non-verbal predicates (nouns, adjectives, numerals, demonstratives, etc.). In Mehweb, the latter type allows the absence of a copula while the former normally does not.<sup>12</sup> The assertive copula can appear in both types.

(35)–(36) show examples of the use of g<sup>wa</sup> in existential predications that assert the existence of entities or events described by an NP. Note that, in Mehweb, this type includes possessive predication (37).

- (35) *buni-b g<sup>wa</sup> muzej*  
 in.Gunib-N(ESS) ASRT museum  
 ‘There is a museum in Gunib!’
- (36) *išbari meħ<sup>we</sup>-b bek g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 today in.Megeb-N(ESS) wedding ASRT  
 ‘There is wedding in Mehweb today!’
- (37) *pat’imat-la q’<sup>wa</sup>’l g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 Patimat-GEN cow ASRT  
 ‘Patimat has a cow!’

The assertive copula is also found in clauses emphasizing the existence of the already known entities (sometimes in combination with the converbal form of the copula; cf. (38)) or describing the location of the already known entities (39):

- (38) *meħ<sup>we</sup> (le-b-le) g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 in.Megeb be-N-CVB ASRT  
 ‘Mehweb does exist!’

<sup>12</sup> An important exception is the use of NPs denoting events, which allow the absence of copula, as in (i):

- (i) *išbari meħ<sup>we</sup>-b bek*  
 today in.Megeb-N(ESS) wedding  
 ‘There is wedding in Mehweb today.’

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- (39) *musa kuni-w g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 Musa in.Gunib-M(ESS) ASRT  
 ‘Musa is in Gunib.’

(40)–(41) show examples of the use of *g<sup>wa</sup>* in clearly non-existential predications.

- (40) *heš-di hum-be g<sup>wa</sup> ha<sup>ʔ</sup>b dek<sup>ʔ</sup>ar-i*  
 that-PL road-PL ASRT three different-ATR  
 ‘These roads are three different (roads).’ (Two sons)
- (41) *ħa-la k<sup>ʔ</sup>unk<sup>ʔ</sup>ul-li-ʔini b-aq<sup>ʔ</sup>-ib-il k<sup>ʔ</sup>unk<sup>ʔ</sup>ur g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 you.sg.OBL-GEN cauldron-ERG N-do:PFV-AOR-ATR cauldron ASRT  
*iš*  
 that  
 ‘This (cauldron) is the cauldron originating from (lit., made by) your caldron.’ (Molla Rasbaddin and the neighbour’s cauldron, 15)

At least if the assertive marker follows the demonstrative, their combination can be embedded within the alleged subject phrase. In (42) the phrase *heš g<sup>wa</sup>* ‘that is’ is embedded within the relative clause construction ‘the house which Rasul built’.

- (42) *rasuj-ni [heš g<sup>wa</sup>] b-aq<sup>ʔ</sup>-ib-i qali*  
 Rasul.OBL-ERG that ASRT N-do:PFV-AOR-ATR house  
 ‘The house that Rasul built is that one.’

Negative non-verbal predication in Mehweb contains a dedicated negative copular verb. If *g<sup>wa</sup>* is needed, this copula appears in a converbal form:

- (43) *it učitel aħi-je g<sup>wa</sup>*  
 that teacher be:NEG-CVB ASRT  
 ‘He is not a teacher!’

In equative clauses, determining what is the predicate presents a complex issue because of the formal similarity between the subject and the nominal predicate. Still, one can find indirect evidence for the predicate status of one of the noun phrases based on various semantic and syntactic tests. By using these tests, it is possible to show that the assertive marker does not have to immediately follow the syntactic predicate.



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First, if a nominal phrase in an equative clause includes a reflexive pronoun bound by the other part of the clause, it is likely that it is a predicate and the reflexive is bound by the subject. However, *g<sup>w</sup>a* need not follow such a nominal predicate:

- (44) *šamil g<sup>w</sup>a sune-s-al weʔ*  
 Šamil ASRT self.OBL-DAT-EMPH boss  
 ‘Šamil is a boss of himself.’

Second, in an equative clause, an expression with a true distributive quantifier arguably should not function as a predicate (Partee 1987; but see Arkadiev & Lander 2013 for counterevidence). Yet, *g<sup>w</sup>a* is possible with the quantified NP:

- (45) *har insan g<sup>w</sup>a sune-s-al uḥna-w rasul*  
 every person ASRT self.OBL-DAT-EMPH M.inside-M(ESS) Rasul  
*ḥamzatow*  
 Gamzatov  
 ‘Everyone is Rasul Gamzatov (a famous Daghestanian writer) deep inside.’

Finally, if an equative clause contains an adjunct, the assertive copula may follow this adjunct:

- (46) *anwar meḥ<sup>w</sup>e-ja uškuj-ḥe-w g<sup>w</sup>a učitel*  
 Anwar in.Megeb-GEN school.OBL-IN-M(ESS) ASRT teacher  
 ‘Anwar is a teacher at the Mehweb school.’

Thus, the assertive marker need not follow the predicate. At the same time, it is not obvious that *g<sup>w</sup>a* always follows the focus. For instance, in the elicited dialog (47), *g<sup>w</sup>a* is attached to the first part of the clause ‘Šamil is a singer’, while its focus is constituted by its second part. In answers to content questions, *g<sup>w</sup>a* is by default attached to the part of the utterance which does not contain new information, as in (48) and (49).

- (47) *šamil učitel. – aḥin! šamil g<sup>w</sup>a dalaj ukʼ-an-či!*  
 Šamil teacher be:NEG Šamil ASRT song M.say:IPFV-HAB-AG  
 ‘Šamil is a teacher. – No! Šamil is a singer!’
- (48) *meḥ<sup>w</sup>e-la χ<sup>w</sup>alajli či-ja? – meḥ<sup>w</sup>e-la χ<sup>w</sup>alajli g<sup>w</sup>a*  
 in.Megeb-GEN chief who-Q in.Mehweb-GEN chief ASRT

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*israpil*

Israpil

‘Who is the head of Mehweb? – The head of Mehweb is Israpil.’

(49) *israpil* č̣i-ja? – *israpil* g<sup>wa</sup> meħ<sup>w</sup>e-la χ<sup>w</sup>alajli

Israpil who-Q Israpil ASRT in.Megeb-GEN chief

‘Who is Israpil? – Israpil is the head of Mehweb.’

Thus, we find that, in non-verbal predications as well as in verbal predications, the assertive copula does not necessarily follow the predicate and the focused element.

## 5 Conclusion

To sum up, the assertive marker g<sup>wa</sup> has the distribution of a copula (though lacking non-finite forms which are available for the copula), but its position does not fit into the picture that is usually documented in East Caucasian languages in that it does not need to be adjacent to the predicate or focus. At the same time, we observe some constraints on its distribution in complex constructions (in particular, its reluctance to syntactic islands). I conclude that more research is needed both to approach the functions of g<sup>wa</sup> and to understand the principles that govern its syntactic position.

Further, it seems that our assumed knowledge of the principles regarding other kinds of predicative markers is overestimated. Indeed, while the idea of focus-determined positions of copulas is important for East Caucasian, I am aware of no detailed corpus-based study of the position of predicative markers for any language of the family. Given the fact that during the last years the amount of corpora of East Caucasian languages has been increasing, one may hope that such studies will soon appear.

Moreover, as I emphasized in §2, predicative markers differ in their behavior, both within a single language and cross-linguistically. For East Caucasian, we need a more elaborated intragenetic typology of predicative markers. The present paper is to be considered a contribution to this line of investigation.

## Acknowledgements

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12 *The Mehweb “assertive” copula g<sup>wa</sup>: a sketch of a portrait*

## List of abbreviations

1PL	first person plural
ABL	ablative
AD	spatial domain near the landmark
ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
AG	nomen agentis
ANTE	anteriority converb
AOR	aorist
ASRT	assertive particle
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CL	gender (class) agreement slot
CVB	converb
DAT	dative
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
EMPH	emphasis (particle)
ERG	ergative
ESS	static location in a spatial domain
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
IN	spatial domain inside a (hollow) landmark
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)

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PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PRF	perfect
PRS	present
PST	past
PTCP	participle
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question (interrogative particle)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark

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# Chapter 13

## Maps of Mehweb

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This section presents two maps of Mehweb, one showing the spread of the East Caucasian language family, together with Mehweb’s closest relatives and its location with respect to the other languages of the Dargwa branch; the other showing the location of the linguistic family at a larger scale of the mountains of the Caucasus.



Figure 1: Mehweb on the map of East Caucasian languages



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