

Chapter 11

Post-predicate elements in Adyghe

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In this chapter, I study post-predicate elements in the Northwest Caucasian language Adyghe. In the literature, Adyghe is characterized as having SOV as its basic pattern, but as being in principle a “free” word order language. There are no corpus-based studies on word order in Adyghe (or any other Northwest Caucasian language) up to now, so this study is a step towards filling this research gap.

I first examine examples of post-predicate elements in the literature on Adyghe, which confirm the expectations and exemplify various types of arguments and adjuncts as well as subordinate clauses that can appear after the verb. In a second step, I identify and count post-predicate elements in 20 Adyghe texts collected between 1969 and 2017 among the Adyghe people in the Caucasian homeland and the Turkish diaspora by various researchers. Only around 10% of the main clauses contain post-predicate elements of which the majority are pragmatic particles, but post-predicate subject, objects and adjuncts are also attested. Most post-predicate referents are topical, but focal referents can also be found. Differences in genre play a relatively big role: personal accounts contain around as twice as many instances of post-predicate elements than traditional narratives. Furthermore, the texts from Adyghe show a greater frequency of post-predicate elements than those from Turkey which might be due to the influence of two typologically and genealogically different contact languages (Russian and Turkish).

1 Introduction

In this contribution, I outline the main facts of word order in Adyghe and then analyze in more detail post-predicate elements.

Adyghe belongs to the Circassian branch of the Northwest Caucasian language family. The homeland of the Adyghe people is the northwestern Caucasus



region (Russian Federation). Since the conquest of the Caucasus by Russia in the second half of the 19th century there are diaspora communities in Turkey, Jordan, Israel, Syria and other countries.

The main goal of my contribution is to identify first of all grammatically acceptable post-predicate elements and examine them with respect to their syntactic functions, grammatical roles and their information structural properties. My second goal is to study post-predicate elements in natural texts by comparing data from the Adyghe homeland with data from the diaspora community in Turkey. Adyghe diaspora communities in Turkey (and other places) have been relatively isolated from the original speech community for more than 150 years. The two communities are under the influence of two distinct languages of wider communication, Turkish and Russian respectively, and the data suggest that these differing contact scenarios have led to divergence.

Like all Northwest Caucasian languages, Adyghe is polysynthetic with highly complex verbal morphology. Verb forms contain pronominal prefixes indexing all syntactic arguments of the predicate, i.e. intransitive and transitive subjects, direct object, indirect object, etc. Parts of speech are not always clearly differentiated in terms of inflection. A wide range of grammatical markers for person, tense, number, modality, and negation can be added to any content word. Adyghe has ergative alignment that shows up in case marking and agreement. The suffix *-r* (“absolutive”) marks intransitive subjects and direct objects. The suffix *-m* (“oblique”) marks transitive subjects (agents), as well as indirect objects, certain adverbials (temporal, spatial), and adnominal possessors. Nonspecificity and indefiniteness are indicated by the omission of case suffixes. Proper nouns and first and second pronouns do not distinguish absolutive and oblique. Clauses contain at least a predicate, which can be verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives or even postpositions. Predicates take pronominal prefixes and tense morphology. Copula clauses consist of a copula complement and the copula verb. Overt argument NPs are optional as it is expected for polysynthetic languages (Testelefs & Lander 2017). This property makes the study of word order patterns at the clausal level based on natural texts somewhat difficult because arguments are recurrently only expressed through pronominal prefixes.

Major grammatical descriptions of Adyghe are Jakovlev & Ashkhamaf (1941), Rogava & Kerasheva (1966) and Arkadiyev et al. (2009). Kumakhov & Vamling (2009) analyze Circassian clause structure, including word order. There are no corpus-based studies on word order in Adyghe. But there is a corpus of Standard Adyghe (Arkhangelskiy et al. 2018–2023), available on the Internet (<http://adyghe.web-corpora.net/>).

This paper is mainly based on 20 Adyghe texts (6,146 words) recorded in Adyghe (Caucasus) and Turkey.¹ All examples are marked by [H] for ‘homeland’ and [D] for ‘diaspora.’ Some of these texts have been published in Höhlig (1997), Paris (1974) and Feer (2019), and the texts from Paris (1974) can also be found in the online Pangloss Collection (see references). Other texts collected by Monika Höhlig in the 1990s and by Feer between 2016 and 2017 were kindly provided to me by both researchers. The texts are monologues that can be roughly divided into two types, namely (i) traditional narratives such as legends, fairy tales and anecdotes and (ii) personal accounts/autobiographies. Following Höhlig (1997), I also classified the texts according to the age of the speakers into old, middle and young generation. The texts have been chosen such as to roughly equally represent Adyghe from the homeland in contact with Russian and Adyghe from the diaspora in contact with Turkish. A further criterion was genre.

A full list with sources can be found in the appendix.

2 Word order profile of Adyghe

2.1 Word order patterns in noun phrases and other constituents

In this section and the following section, I present an overview of word order patterns in Adyghe noun phrases and clauses including a few examples with post-predicate elements. A more detailed discussion of post-predicate elements in texts will be given in Section 3.

Constituent order within the NP is mixed. Adjectives, simple cardinal numerals except for the numeral ‘one’ and resultative verbs follow the noun. The numerals are suffixed by means of a linking morpheme as in the following example (1).

- (1) noun + adjective-numeral + adjective
 Adyghe (courtesy of Y. Lander) [H]
ha ɤ^wež'-jə-ɬ^w g^were
 dog yellow-LNK-two certain
 ‘two certain yellow dogs’

Demonstratives (2), non-referential modifying nouns and appositive names (3), relative clauses (4), possessors including possessive prefixes (2), (3), the cardinal numeral ‘one’ (4) and ordinal numerals precede the nominal head. Lander (2017)

¹There is no WOVA-data set for Adyghe, or any other Northwest Caucasian language to date.

labels the prenominal modifiers “non-adjectival” and notes that they are ungradable. Postnominal modifiers can but need not be gradable. Very commonly modifiers enter into a close connection with the modified noun and are pronounced and written together such as the noun and the adjective in the second noun phrase ‘his grandmother’ in example (2). These units are called “nominal complex” in Lander (2017), who argues that they form a single word, based on their morphosyntactic properties. For instance, case marking and plural marking occur only once per unit (8).

- (2) demonstrative + noun + adjective and possessive-noun-adjective, postposition

Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

[*mwe* č'ele çəč'ə-r] [*ja-ne-ž*] *djə qə-zə-k^we-č'e* ...

that boy little-ABS POSS-mother-old to DIR-REL.TEMP-go-INST

‘when that little boy went to his grandmother ...’

- (3) possessive construction, postpositional phrase

Adyghe (Paris 1974) [D]

[*qahraman* g^waše-m] [*ja-šə-šxa-p^we*] [*ja-dež'-g'e*]

Kahraman princess-OBL POSS-horse-eat-place POSS-to-INST

possessor

possessed

postposition

‘to the manger of the horses of princess Kahraman’

- (4) relative clause + numeral-noun

Adyghe (Paris 1974) [D]

deč:əyəməq^we pšəpəjə-r [...] [*xəvæg^wə-m* *ja-sə-xe-me*]

Detcheghemeqo Pshepeye-ABS country-OBL LOC-live-PL-OBL.PL

ʔape-g'e *q:ja-va-ʔa^we-w*] *zə-çəfə-ʔ*

finger-INST DIR-3PL.A-CAUS-see-ADV one-human.being-PST

‘Detcheghemeqo Pshepeye [...] was a person whom the inhabitants (lit. ‘the ones living there’) of the country respected.’ (lit. ‘one human being that they pointed at with their fingers’)

Adyghe has exclusively postpositions, which have mostly been grammaticalized from nouns (Arkadiev & Maisak 2018). The postpositional complement is often additionally expressed via a possessive prefix (3).

In complex verb forms, auxiliaries follow the lexical verb and some have already grammaticalized into suffixes (Kimmelman 2011, Arkadiev & Maisak 2018). They mostly express aspectual meanings and epistemic modality (probability and

necessity) and can also occur in conditional clauses. In the following example, the auxiliary verb $\chi^w\partial$ - ‘be, happen’ bears the conditional suffix *-me* and forms a complex verb together with the lexical verb ʔ^we - ‘say, speak, tell, talk’.

- (5) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
g^waxeλ-ew jə-ʔe-r qə-mə-ʔ^wa-xe χ^wə-me, ...
 intent-ADV LOC-be-ABS DIR-NEG-speak-TRM happen-COND
 ‘if (the guest) did not tell the intentions that he had ...’

2.2 Word order at the clausal level

At the level of the main clause, Adyghe is, as other Northwest languages, at the same time left-branching / verb-final, with SOV being considered as a kind of default pattern, though tolerating a fair degree of flexibility (Jakovlev & Ashkhamaf 1941, Rogava & Kerasheva 1966, Kumakhov & Vamling 2009, Lander 2014, Testelet & Lander 2017). All logically possible orders are available. As typical for SOV languages, focal items occur in the preverbal position and contrastive items are said to occur sentence-initially (Arkadiev & Lander 2021).

Jakovlev & Ashkhamaf (1941: 91) list the following patterns for transitive verbs with overt subject, direct object, and an adjunct noun expressing location (6a-6f, 6g). Verb-final order with the subject preceding the direct object (SOV) is analyzed as basic and neutral with respect to emphasis and information structure (6a). The reversal of subject and direct object (OSV) illustrated in (6b) is characterized as also possible but less used. All other patterns are called “inverse” (6c-6f, 6g). They write that in verb-second patterns the final element is most highlighted and the penultimate element that immediately follows the verb is also highlighted, albeit to a lesser extent.

- (6) a. Adyghe (Jakovlev & Ashkhamaf 1941: 91) [H]
 basic pattern: S-O-LOC-V [SOV]
č’ale-me baž’e-xe-r meza-m š’a-λeβ^wə-be-x
 boy-OBL.PL fox-PL-ABS forest-OBL LOC-see-PST-PL
- b. O-S-LOC-V [OSV]
baž’e-xe-r č’ale-me meza-m š’a-λeβ^wə-be-x
 fox-PL-ABS boy-OBL.PL forest-OBL LOC-see-PST-PL
- c. S-V-O-LOC [SVO]
č’ale-me š’a-λeβ^wə-be-x baž’e-xe-r meza-m
 boy-OBL.PL LOC-see-PST-PL fox-PL-ABS forest-OBL

- d. LOC-V-O-S [VOS]
mezə-m š'a-lex^wə-be-x baž'e-xe-r č'ale-me
 forest-OBL LOC-see-PST-PL fox-PL-ABS boy-OBL.PL
- e. O-V-LOC-S [OVS]
baž'e-xe-r š'a-lex^wə-be-x mezə-m č'ale-me
 fox-PL-ABS LOC-see-PST-PL forest-OBL boy-OBL.PL
- f. V-S-O-LOC[VSO]
š'a-lex^wə-be-x č'ale-me baž'e-xe-r mezə-m
 LOC-see-PST-PL boy-OBL.PL fox-PL-ABS forest-OBL
- g. V-S-LOC-O [VSO]
š'a-lex^wə-be-x č'ale-me mezə-m baž'e-xe-r
 LOC-see-PST-PL boy-OBL.PL forest-OBL fox-PL-ABS
 'The boys saw the foxes in the forest.'

In verb-initial patterns, again the final element is emphasized and the verb to a lesser degree (6f, 6g).

Kumakhov & Vamling (2009: 117) also illustrate the six available constituent order patterns for subject, direct object and verb (albeit with a pronominal subject). Kumakhov & Vamling (2009: 112) further state that constituent order varies with information structure. For example, in answers to questions that target the subject SVO is more common than SOV.

The position of the indirect object in pragmatically neutral clauses with nominal arguments is between the subject and the direct object (S-DO-IO-V) according to Kumakhov & Vamling (2009: 114–115) (12–13). In this pattern, the two arguments that bear identical case markers (-*m*) (S, IO) are separated by the direct object in the absolutive case (-*r*).

- (7) Adyghe (Kumakhov & Vamling 2009: 114) [H]
 S-DO-IO-V
č'ale-m txelə-r pšaše-m r-jə-tə-v
 boy-OBL book-ABS girl-OBL OBL-3SG.A-give-PST
 'The boy gave the book to the girl.'
- (8) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
 S-DO-IO-V
jež' ja-te=ja-ne-xe-m-jə ə-š-xe-m-jə
 self POSS-father=POSS-mother-PL-OBL-ADD 3SG.POSS-brother-PL-OBL-ADD
pšešežəje-r [zə-fe-mə-je-w məlk^wə z-jə-ʔe] wəna^we
 girl-ABS REL.IO-BEN-NEG-want-ADV property REL.IO-LOC-be family

g^were-m r-a-tə-ɸ

certain-OBL OBL-3PL.A-give-PST

‘Her parents and brothers gave the girl to a certain family with property who she did not want.’

However, S-IO-DO-V is also attested (9), in particular when either the subject or the indirect object is a personal pronoun.

- (9) Adyghe (Rogava & Kerasheva 1966: 65) [H]

S-IO-DO-V

haç'e-m ç'ale-m šə-r r-jə-tə-ɸ

guest-OBL boy-OBL horse-ABS OBL-3SG.A-give-PST

‘The guest gave the horse to the boy.’

The addressee in (10) exemplifies another indirect object in preverbal position. Adjuncts such as instruments (11) or beneficiaries expressed by means of postpositional phrases (12) usually occur between the subject and the verb. Yet positions before the subject (11) and after the predicate are also allowed (Section 3).

- (10) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

šə-m apəλə-m r-a-ɽ^wa-ɸ mə-rə mə-rə

horse-OBL stableman?-OBL OBL-3PL.A-speak-PST this-PRED this-PRED

ə-ɽ^we-re-r

3SG.A-speak-DYN-ABS

‘They said to the stableman: “It is like this and like that.”’

- (11) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

əpç'e adəye-me ɽa-ç'e jaɽe-ç'e

earlier Adyghe-OBL.PL hand-INST clay-INST

qə-r-a-jə-ç'ə-š'tə-ɸe-x

DIR-DAT-3PL.A-smear-EL-AUX-PST-PL

[Now houses are built with plaster.] ‘Earlier the Adyghe people smeared (the houses) with clay with the hands.’

- (12) Adyghe (courtesy of R. Feer) [H]

çəf-me a-paje we p-šə-ɸe

human.being-OBL.PL 3PL-for 2SG 2SG.A-do-PST

‘You built it for the people.’

Temporal and spatial adverbials including locations and goals frequently occur in clause-initial positions before the subject if there is any overtly expressed subject (13, 14) or otherwise directly before the verb (14, 15), but also occasionally after the verb (Section 3).

- (13) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
 TIME-LOC-S-COP-PRED
a zeman-m hak^wənhable-m č'əle-m thamate ja-ʔa-ɸ hak^wəɾəne
 that time-OBL Hakunhable-OBL aul-OBL elder LOC-be-PST Hakuren
təɸ^wəʒ a-ʔ^we-w
 Teguz 3PL.A-speak-ADV
 'At that time in Hakunhable, the village-elder was called Hakuren Teguz.'
- (14) Adyghe (courtesy of R. Feer) [H]
 TIME-S-LOC-COP-PURP[DO-V]
aj ə-pe-re mafe-xe-m χ^waʒ'e-r bezerə-m
 that.OBL 3SG.POSS-earlier-ADJ day-PL-OBL hodja-ABS bazar-OBL
š'ə-ʔa-ɸ [č'em qə-š'efə-n-ew]
 LOC-be-PST cow DIR-buy-MOD-ADV
 'The days before, the Hodja was at the market to buy a cow.'
- (15) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
 TIME-GOAL-CV
wtoroj klass nes šk^welə-m sə-ɸ^wa-ɸ
 second[R] class[R] to school[R]-OBL 1SG.ABS-go-PST
 'Until the second class I went to school.'

Complement clauses are marked by a variety of strategies among which the most frequent ones are the bare verbal stem without any tense or other markers, the modal/potentialis form with or without additional case suffixes, a specialized factive form with the prefix *zere-*, case markers (adverbial case as in (4), (14), (16) and instrumental case as in (2)) and the conditional suffix in combination with the additive (17) (see Serdobolskaya 2016 for a detailed analysis). There are no complementizers. Complement clauses usually precede the matrix clause, (16), (17) but they can also follow or be embedded.

Reported speech can be marked with a quotative particle that has been grammaticalized from a non-finite form of the verb of speech *ʔ^we-* 'say, speak, tell, talk' (which, however, retains its person prefixes). The quotative particle follows the quote (10), (17). The clause expressing the quote follows the matrix clause with the verb of speech (10) or precedes it as in the next two examples (16, 17).

- (16) Adyghe (Feer 2019) [H]
 [təḅ^wəžəq^we qəzbeč' s-ləḅ^wə-n-ew] sə-feja-ḅ,
 Tuguzhuko Kyzbech 1SG.A-see-MOD-ADV 1SG.ABS-want-PST
 [sə-de-g^wəš'əle-n-ew] sə-faj ə-ɫ^wa-ḅ
 1SG.ABS-COM-talk-MOD-ADV 1SG.ABS-must 3SG.A-speak-PST
 '“I would like to see Tuguzhuko Kyzbech, I want/need to speak with him,”
 he said.'
- (17) Adyghe (courtesy of R. Feer) [H]
 [a-fede š'ə-le-m-jə] s-ša-xe-re-p nəʔa
 DAT-similar LOC-be-COND-ADD 1SG.IO-know-TRM-DYN-NEG only
 ə-ɫ^wa-ḅ je-ɫ^we pšaše-m
 3SG.A-speak-PST DAT-speak girl-OBL
 'The girl said, “I don't know at all if there is somebody similar.”'

Adverbial subordination is expressed through specialized and general connectors, relativization, and the additive suffix, but not by means of subordinating particles (Forker In Press). Adverbial clauses, in particular chaining clauses, precede the main clause, but a position after the main clause is also possible (Section 3).

Here is a summary of the preferred ordering patterns:

- fixed word order, but not consistent across different NP types
- only postpositions
- auxiliaries after lexical verb
- flexible word order at clausal level with preference for verb-final patterns, in particular for SOV
- complement and adverbial clauses precede main clauses
- relative clauses precede head nouns

From this follows that Adyghe has a certain preference for head-final patterns within the clause and in clause combining.

3 Examining post-predicate elements

In this section, I will explore post-predicate elements in more detail and not discuss the relative positions of pre-predicate items with respect to each other. In particular, I will explore the relative frequency of post-predicate elements in homeland Adyghe vs. diaspora Adyghe and the impact of genre/style.

3.1 Post-predicate elements in elicitation and texts

As explained in Section 2.2, Adyghe has a tendency for head-final word order at the clausal level. But at the same time the word order is described as “free” and in the published works on Adyghe, one finds many instances of post-predicate elements in examples that have probably been elicited. Examples (6c-6f, 6g) show post-verbal subjects and direct objects. In sentences (18) and (19), we find post-verbal indirect objects functioning as recipients and causees respectively. In (19) also the direct object appears after the verb.

- (18) Adyghe (Paris 1974: 220) [D]

indirect object (recipient)

λə-m q^wəẓ r-j-e-tə š^wəzə-m

man-OBL pear DAT-3SG.A-DYN-give woman-OBL

‘The man gives / is giving a pear to the woman.’

- (19) Adyghe (Letuchiy 2009: 388) [H]

indirect object (causee)

t-šə-n t-še-re-p-šə, qe-ž^wə-ba-ɾ^wə-ba ade wered

1PL.A-do-MOD 1PL.A-do-DYN-NEG-CS DIR-2PL.A-CAUS-say-PRT well song

a-š’

that-OBL

‘As for doing we will not do (anything), so he may sing a song!’ (lit. ‘You let him / you cause him to sing a song.’)

The post-verbal elements can be definite or indefinite (which for nouns correlates with case marking, i.e. the omission of the case marking indicates indefiniteness), e.g. in (6c) and (6d) post-verbal direct objects bear the absolutive suffix *-r* and are definite, whereas in (19) the direct object is not marked for case and thus indefinite.

Not only arguments but also adjuncts can occur after the verb. In (6c) and (6e), the case-marked noun denoting a location is placed in post-verbal position. In the literature, one also finds examples of complement clauses that follow the matrix

clause with a variety of complement-taking predicates, e.g. ‘want’, ‘need, must’, ‘fear’, or ‘know’ (20) and some examples of post-verbal adverbial clauses (21).

- (20) Adyghe (Serdobolskaya & Motlokhov 2009: 533) [H]
s-j-e-neg^wəje [*t^wə qe-s-hə-n-ew*]
 1SG.IO-DAT-DYN-suppose two DIR-1SG.IO-carry.away-MOD-ADV
 ‘I suppose / fear that I get a two (= bad mark).’
- (21) Adyghe (Testelefs 2009: 691) [H]
pšaše-r qe-ʁə-ʁ [*sə-z-de-g^wəš’əʔe-m*]
 girl-ABS DIR-cry-PST 1SG.ABS-REL.TEMP-COM-talk-OBL
 ‘The girl cried when I talked to her (= the girl or another female person).’

In short, Adyghe allows for post-verbal arguments and adjuncts with various syntactic functions and grammatical roles as well as for post-verbal complement and adverbial clauses. Based on the literature we cannot say whether post-verbal elements are a marginal phenomenon, and if some syntactic functions or grammatical roles are more frequently found there than others, due the lack of previous corpus studies.

Therefore, I examined post-predicate elements in declarative main clauses of 20 texts containing a total of 6,146 words distributed over 1,154 main clauses. The texts have been glossed by the researchers who recorded them (Paris, Höhlig and Feer) and by myself. In a second step, I manually annotated them for the presence or absence of post-predicate elements (see Section 3.2 below and Appendix for more information on the texts). I did not count all overt and covert arguments and all overt adjuncts and their positions with respect to the verb but only the post-predicate ones (and I am fully aware of the fact that this makes comparison with data from WOVA corpora impossible² and evaluation of frequency of post-predicate elements rather speculative).

The results of these counts are presented in Table 1. The first thing to notice is that for a language that is described as having “flexible word order”, in natural texts the position after the verb is not frequently occupied despite being easily filled in elicitation. In around one out of ten main clauses, we find post-predicate elements of which the largest group are focus / modal particles.

The most common particle is *nah* ‘more’ (22), (29), others being *nəʔa* ‘only’ (17), *armərme* ‘otherwise, if not this’, *mewš’tew* ‘like this’ and also Russian loans such as *uže* ‘already’ and *daže* ‘even’ and the Turkish indirect evidential particle

²Furthermore, in WOVA only non-subject referential expressions are considered, rather than all kinds of post-verbal items (e.g. modal particles, clausal constituents).

Table 1: Grammatical and semanto-pragmatic functions of post-predicate elements in Adyghe texts (both diaspora and homeland)

Arguments	33
Subjects (independent of transitivity and semantic role)	20
Direct objects (of transitive and ditransitive verbs)	10
Indirect objects (2 addressees and 1 beneficiary; no recipients attested)	3
Adjuncts	46
Possessors	4
Instruments	3
Temporal adverbials	12
Spatial adverbials (13 locations, 6 goals, 2 sources)	21
Manner adverbials	5
Particles	29
Clauses	19
Adverbial clauses	16
Complement clauses	2
Relative clauses	1
Total	126

(*je*)*məš* and the particle *yani* ‘that is, namely’. Pragmatic particles such as the ones listed are expected to have a great deal of freedom and thus do not really support the claim that the word order of Adyghe is flexible.

(22) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 218) [H]

jež’ djela-be nah
 self fool-PST more
 ‘He was a fool.’

Due to the way in which I annotated and counted the data, I cannot make any statements concerning the relative frequency of certain types of postverbal arguments and adjuncts. I will instead present the attested post-predicate elements and discuss their information-structural properties, whenever possible taking into account audio recordings of some of the examples that were provided to me by Monika Höhlig.

First of all, there is one construction that regularly leads to post-predicate elements according to the literature and the examined texts, namely direct reported speech (Rogava & Kerasheva 1966: 395–402). When the matrix clause with the verb of speech interrupts the quote or follows it, the usual word order is reversed and the subject (17) or the addressee, if there is no overt subject (23) follows the verb of speech.

- (23) Adyghe (Rogava & Kerasheva 1966: 396) [H]
səd-a aməd wə-z-ʁeg^wəmečʰə-re-r? *j-e-wəpčə-ʁ*
 what-Q Amid 2SG.PR-REL.TEMP-disturb-DYN-ABS 3SG.A-DYN-ask-PST
bzəlfəʁe-m
 woman-OBL
 ‘“What is it that worries you, Amid?” (s/he) asked the woman.’

Occasionally one encounters thetic sentences in which the subject appears in clause-final position. A thetic utterance is fully focused with no topical constituent. Introductory clauses in traditional fairy tales or narratives about well-known personalities may follow this pattern, as in the following example from a story about a famous singer and composer. The V-S pattern for introductory thetic sentences is also attested in other verb-final languages from the Caucasus such as Kartvelian and East Caucasian (Forker 2021, Forker 2024 [this volume]). In example (24), the speaker makes a short break before uttering the subject encoded as personal name (and there is no falling intonation in contrast to the examples discussed below).

- (24) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
mə čʰəle žə-m de-sə-ʁ [weredəʔ^we ʔaze-w]
 this aul old-OBL COM-sit-PST singer art.master-ADV
[qebar-xe-r-jə zečʰe qə-ʔ^wate-w] [txədəž-xe-r-jə qə-ʔ^wate-w]
 story-PL-ABS-ADD all DIR-tell-ADV legend-PL-ABS-ADD DIR-tell-ADV
k^waj zefes
 Kway Zefes
 ‘In this old village lived the master singer, story-teller and legend-teller, Kway Zefes.’

In introductory thetic sentences, also other constituents besides the subject can follow the verb, like the instrument in (25), which has a falling intonation towards the end of the sentence and no intonational break before the post-predicate element.

- (25) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
nemac-xe-r jewjə ž'ambeč'əje qə-da-ha-ʙ mašine-č'e
 German[R]-PL-ABS PRT Dzhambechi DIR-LOC-enter-PST car[R]-INST
 [beginning of narrative] 'The Germans came to Dzhambechi by car.'

The next example illustrates left dislocation of the subject combined with a post-predicate presumptive pronoun. In left dislocation, a referential constituent both precedes and is dislocated from a core clause with which it is associated. Within the core clause, there is an anaphoric co-referential resumptive pronoun (Westbury 2016). A typical function of left dislocation is to introduce referents that are not purely brand-new, but merely inactive. This means that the referent is assumed to be identifiable, but only minimally accessible, having been in one way or another evoked in the prior discourse or in the extra-linguistic context. This is what we find in (26): The story is about a group of boys, one of which is singled out by means of the left-dislocated element given in curly brackets and then resumed through the pronoun in subject function following the verb.

- (26) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 234) [H]
{japλenere, z-jə-hatəq z-jə-haləʙʷə}
 fourth REL.IO-POSS-flat.bread REL.IO-POSS-bread
qə-z-š^we-t-təʙʷə-ʙe-m} qe-k^we-ž'ə-ʙ a-r-jə
 DIR-REL.TEMP-MAL-1PL.A-steal-PST-OBL DIR-go-RE-PST that-ABS-ADD
 [All went back home from school. The three of us are standing there.]
 'The fourth one whose flat bread, whose bread we had stolen, he also
 went home.'

In the following, I use the term "topic" in the sense of "aboutness topic" (e.g. Krifka 2007). The topical item is identified through the utterance and then some piece of information about it is provided in the comment. Post-predicate elements that function as aboutness topics in Adyghe are not emphasized by means of intonation. The pitch accent is usually somewhere at the beginning, and towards the end of the utterance the intonation it falls and becomes flat; the voice sometimes gets lower and quieter such that in some examples, the last syllable of the final post-predicate element is barely audible. For instance, in (27) the pitch accent of the second clause falls on the first verb (*šxe-n*).

- (27) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
a-xe-r-jə a šxe-š't; šxe-n faje-ba çəfə-r
 that-PL-ABS-ADD that eat-FUT eat-MOD must-PRT human.being-ABS
 [Talking about the behavior of German and Soviet soldiers during WWII.
 The speaker is finishing her narration and after this she switches to a

different topic.] ‘They (=Germans) as well will eat it; the human being must eat.’

Topical elements often convey given information and can, e.g., be expressed by means of pronouns. In all following examples, the post-predicate elements represent given information. For those examples that have personally been provided to me by Monika Höhlig (29, 31-33) I could clarify the intonation. In all examples, the post-predicate elements are deaccented by means of a falling intonation.

- (28) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 236) [H]

subject

tawarəχ-ew š’ə-t-ep a-r

legend-ADV LOC-stand-NEG that-ABS

[Here is what I want to tell you.] ‘It is not an (old) legend.’

- (29) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

discourse particle + subject

ž’ə zewže t-š^wek^wedə-be-xe nah a-xe-r

now all 1PL.IO-get.lost-PST-PL more.than that-PL-ABS

[talking about various Adyghe traditions] ‘Now we lost all those (i.e. traditions).’

- (30) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 219) [H]

direct object

te q-jə-p-hə-b a š’a-le-r

from.where DIR-LOC-2SG.A-carry.away-PST that bucket-ABS

s-ŋ^w-əj sə-k^wəwa-b

1SG.A-speak-ADD 1SG.ABS-shout-PST

‘“From where did you take that bucket?” I said shouting.’

- (31) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

direct object

... neməč’ ha-xe-m a-šxə-b t^wə-jə ...

other dog-PL-OBL 3PL.A-eat-PST two-ADD

[Talking about the mysterious disappearance of turkeys and the fault of the dogs] ‘... the other dogs ate (our) two (turkeys) ...’

- (32) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
 possessor
jəles tʷeçʻə-re blə-re ə-nəbžʻə-ʙ čʻetəwə-m
 year twenty-COORD seven-COORD 3SG.POSS-age-PST cat-OBL
 [The dogs were also afraid of it, it was a very good cat] ‘The cat was 27 years old.’
- (33) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]
 manner adverbial (adjunct)
woot, nepeməçʻ tradicie-w səd žʻərjə t-xe-λə-n
 well[R] other traditions[R]-ADV what again 1PL.IO-LOC-lie-MOD
aj fede-w
 that.OBL be.similar-ADV
 [talking about various Adyghe traditions] ‘Well, which other traditions do we have here like that.’

The postpredicate elements in examples (28-33) can hardly be said to be highlighted or emphasized, in contrast to what Jakovlev & Ashkhamaf (1941: 91) have stated about the post-predicate elements in examples (6c-6f, 6g).

However, post-predicate elements are not always topical and do not always convey given information. The postverbal adjuncts in (34) and (35) convey new information and are part of the “presentational” or “information” focus of the sentence in which they occur. Information focus expresses the most important or new information in the utterance (Krifka 2007). Because I lack recordings of (34) and (35) I cannot say anything about the intonational patterns. Yet I hypothesize that the elicited examples (6c-6f, 6g) from Jakovlev & Ashkhamaf (1941: 91) should be interpreted in a similar manner, i.e. the post-predicate elements as being part of the information focus.

- (34) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 255) [D]
 spatial adverbial (Goal)
qe-ze-kʷe-žʻə-m, se sə-q-jə-čʻə-ʙ mutfaqə-m
 DIR-REL.TEMP-go-RE-OBL 1SG 1SG.ABS-DIR-LOC-go.out-PST kitchen[T]-OBL
 [In the evening my husband came home.] ‘When he came I went out to the kitchen.’

- (35) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 274) [D]

temporal and spatial adverbials (time span and location)

adəya bze te-g^wəš'a? zepət wəne-m-jə

Adyghe language 1PL.A-speak all.time house-OBL-ADD

k^wež'e-m-jə

village[T]-OBL-ADD

[talking about language knowledge and language use] 'We always speak Adyghe at home and in the village.'

Adverbial clauses seem to be more variable concerning their position than complement clauses (or relative clauses), whereby we can notice that post-predicate adverbial clauses repeatedly express cause (36) or purpose (14). For purpose clauses, we can assume an explanation based on iconicity. The purpose of an action resembles a spatial Goal and thus the linear order of the clauses reflects the temporal or spatial order of the events. Causal or concessive adverbial clauses refer to situations that do not necessarily occur prior to the situation expressed in the main clause but rather provide the reason or cause for it (36) or signal contrast or concession in relation to it (37). In both examples (36) and (37), the adverbial clauses constitute separate intonational units, i.e. there is a short break between the preceding main clauses and the sentence-final adverbial clauses.

- (36) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

adverbial clause expressing a cause or reason

abzəxa bze-č'e t-jə-wəna^we parjə g^wəš'ə?a-re-p

Abdzakh language-INST 1PL-POSS-family nobody talk-DYN-NEG

[č'emg^we-me t-a-xe-s-šə]

Temirgoi-OBL.PL 1PL.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC-sit-CVB

'In our family nobody speaks Abdzakh because we live among the Temirgoi.'

- (37) Adyghe (courtesy of M. Höhlig) [H]

concessive conditional clause

xet š'əš' qə-tje-wa-βe-m-jə jə-pče ʔ^wə-jə-xə-š't.

who part DIR-LOC-beat-PST-COND-ADD POSS-door LOC-3SG.A-open-FUT

[wəč'a^we qə-ʔ^wə-ha-βe-m-jə a-š' fed]

killer DIR-speak-lat-PST-COND-ADD that-OBL similar

'[You know the Adyghe traditions], whoever might knock, you will open your door, even if it were a killer.'

By contrast, in chaining constructions that also represent adverbial subordination, the dependent clauses do not follow the main clause because the chained clauses do not or only to a limited extent convey temporal reference but their temporal interpretation depends on the inflected predicate of the main clause. The temporal order of events in chaining constructions is therefore iconically reflected in the order of the chained clauses and the main clause (Forker In press).

The sentence in (38) illustrates a complement clause that follows the matrix clause. This order is not particularly common in the surveyed texts which contain only two instances (Table 3). As said above, I did not count all complement clauses in my data in order to assess the frequency of preposed vs. postposed ones and compare them with adverbial clauses. However, the paper by Serdobolskaya (2016) about complement clauses in Adyghe contains many examples of sentence-final complements which at least shows that in elicitation they are easily available (and probably triggered by Russian word order patterns).

- (38) Adyghe (Höhlig 1997: 251) [H]
 complement clause
s-ŕe-re-p [*qə-ze-re-s-ʔʷete-r*]
 1SG.A-know-DYN-NEG DIR-REL.IO-MNR-1SG.A-tell-ABS
 ‘I do not know how I should tell it.’

3.2 Summary of the quantitative analysis

Table 2 gives a summary of the texts ordered by place of recording. The texts from Adyghe (Northern Caucasus, homeland [H]) are almost double in terms of number of words and clauses but also with respect to the number of post-predicate elements per clause when compared with the texts from Turkey (diaspora [D]). The texts from Turkey have been recorded between 1969 and 1990 and are thus older than the texts from Adyghe, which have been recorded between 1990 and 2017. All texts represent three different Adyghe dialects, namely Shapsug (3 texts), Abzakh (15 texts) and Temirgoy (2 texts). The texts can be divided into two categories, namely into (A) traditional folklore narratives and folkloristic anecdotes and (B) personal, autobiographical narrations. The two genres also exhibit differences in style. In traditional narratives a formal style prevails (e.g. fewer loan words, long and structurally complicated sentences) whereas in personal accounts an informal style is found (e.g. many Russian loan words, shorter and structurally simpler sentences). Detailed information about the sources of the texts, the time and the place of the recording can be found in the Appendix.

Table 2: Comparing post-predicate elements in texts from Adyghe and from Turkey

	Adyghe	Turkey	Total
# texts	11	9	20
# words	4,083	2,063	6,146
# main clauses	770	384	1,154
# post-predicate elements	100	26	126
% post-predicate elements per clause	12.99%	6.77%	10.91%

If we compare the two genres – personal accounts and traditional narratives / anecdotes – with each other we find that personal accounts have more than twice as many post-predicate items than traditional narratives. This difference is more pronounced in Turkey than in Adyghe, but it is observable in both places (Table 3).

Table 3: Comparing post-predicate elements according to genre

	Personal accounts		Traditional narratives	
	Adyghe	Turkey	Adyghe	Turkey
# main clauses	554	158	216	226
# post-pred	79	19	21	7
% post-pred per clause	14.26%	12.02%	9.7%	3.1%
% post-pred per clause	13.76%		6.3%	

Thus, it seems that place as well as genre correlates with the number of post-predicate elements. Traditional narratives from Turkey contain the lowest number of them (7 items), which are almost exclusively focal / modal and evidential particles, in particular the particle *nah*. The traditional narratives from Adyghe also have post-predicate subjects in reported speech constructions (17) and some more post-predicate elements in various functions and of different formal types. On the other side of the spectrum, we find the personal accounts from Adyghe that have as many as 79 post-predicate elements.

The difference seems to be due to genre in combination with style, but it might have been enlarged by language contact with two typologically and genealogically different contact languages, Turkish and Russian. Turkish is a head-final

language; the unmarked word order is SOV (e.g. Erguvanlı 1984: 43; Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 338). Post-predicate elements are restricted to informal style and mostly found in spoken language, but also in more informal writing. They are never stressed and generally backgrounded, i.e. they convey information that is shared by speaker and addressee; WH-words are not allowed to be placed after the predicate (Erguvanlı 1984: 43–63; Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 345–346). Not only S, DO and IO may occur in post-verbal position, but also various adverbials and subordinate clauses (complement clauses, relative clauses and adverbial clauses; Erguvanlı 1984: 63–66). Although these authors confirm that speakers accept and produce post-posed elements of various kinds (under particular information-structural conditions), the corpus data from colloquial standard Turkish (Iefremenko 2021) in WOVA indicate that such structures are relatively infrequent in actual usage: about 94% of the coded non-subject and non-pronominal constituents in this data set are pre-verbal.

By contrast, Russian has been characterized as having free or pragmatically governed word order with many features of SVO languages (Dryer 2022). A small corpus study by Billings (2015) (500 transitive clauses from the Russian National Corpus) has shown that SVO dominates (89.6%), SOV is the second most frequent order (4.4%) and all other orders are also attested but rather infrequently. It is possible but not necessary that the differences between the texts from Adyghe and the texts from Turkey are due to contact with Russian and Turkish respectively. The detailed study by Höhlig (1997) that compares Adyghe in contact with Russian in the homeland and Turkish in the diaspora shows many examples of how both contact languages influence Adyghe in various parts of the grammar although it does not explicitly discuss word order. In order to test the contact hypothesis in the future, it is necessary to study the word order in the oldest written examples of Adyghe which have been produced by speakers who probably have not been exposed to Russian or Turkish to the same degree as today's speakers, which goes beyond the scope of this study. And when testing contact influence, we have to keep in mind that language contact can not only lead to a change towards another pattern, but also to an increased rigidity in the inherited pattern (e.g. Namboodiripad et al. 2019). Thus, the preference for verb-final utterances in Adyghe in Turkey could in principle also be due to such an effect and not to a preference for 'copying' the Turkish pattern.

4 Post-predicate elements in other Northwest Caucasian languages: Kabardian, Ubykh, Abkhaz and Abaza

In general, all Northwest Caucasian languages are described as head-final (Arkadiev & Lander 2021), but with flexible word order that permits all logically possible permutations. For Ubykh, the only Northwest Caucasian language that is no longer spoken, the latest grammar states that postverbal constituents are extremely rare in Ubykh texts (Fenwick 2011: 151–153), which must have been collected in Turkey after the forced exodus of the Northwest Caucasian people to the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century. In addition to SOV, only OSV is a relatively common alternative, but apparently marked order in Ubykh that “appears to provide a certain degree of emphasis to the fronted absolutive object” (Fenwick 2011: 151). Judging from the publication of traditional narratives from all Northwest Caucasian languages in Colarusso (1999), SOV is clearly dominant, which is in accordance with my Adyghe data presented in Section 3.

In elicitation, which for Ubykh cannot be done anymore, Kabardian, Abkhaz and Abaza are similar to Adyghe. Kumakhov & Vamling (2009: 112–130) provide elicited Kabardian examples of postverbal subjects and objects in nominal and pronominal form. They add that heaviness influences the position of arguments, i.e. heavy arguments are preferably placed at the beginning of sentences but can also occur at the end. Furthermore, they show that because proper nouns only facultatively take case markers for absolutive and oblique they require a strict S-DO-IO order but can still be placed in post-predicate position.

- (39) a. Kabardian (Kumakhov & Vamling 2009: 129)
 S-DO-V-IO
 Murat Nazir χ^w -i-še-nu-s’ **Aslen.**
 Murat Nazir VER-3SG.A-lead-FUT-ASSERT Aslan
- b. S-V-DO-IO
 Murat χ^w išenus’ **Nazir Aslen.**
 Murat VER-3SG.A-lead-FUT-ASSERT Nazir Aslan
- c. V-S-DO-IO
 χ^w išenus’ **Murat Nazir Aslen.**
 VER-3SG.A-lead-FUT-assert Murat Nazir Aslan
 ‘Murat will lead Nazir to Aslan.’

Similarly, Abkhaz does not employ case marking for core arguments, such that in case of ambiguity the order of subject and object is fixed as S-O. Postverbal placement of arguments is allowed if this order is kept (Chirikba 2003a: 60)

Abkhaz allows forthetic utterances that introduce new referents (often in subject position) to occur after the verb, (40) as is also the case for Adyghe.

- (40) Abkhaz (Chirikba 2003b: 259)

VS

jə-q'a-n *aʒəɾ-jə-pa-c^{wa}* *h^{wa}* *j^{wa}ə-ʒja* [*a*]-*aj.ʃj-c^{wa}*
 3PL-be-PST.FIN Adzhyr-3-son-PL QUOT two-HUM ART-brother-PL
 'There lived two brothers (reportedly known as) Sons of Adzhyr'

In the following example from Abaza, the direct object appears after the verb:

- (41) Abaza (courtesy of P. Arkadiev)

IO-V-DO

mhamatg'arəj j-ʃa-jə-r-t-ʃ *á-dg'al*
muhamat.girey 3SG.N.ABS-CISL-3SG.M.IO-3PL.ERG-give(AOR)-DCL DEF-land
'They gave land to Muhamat-Girey.'

In answers to WH-questions in Kabardian, the narrowly focused element can occur after the verb, but this order is marked compared to the neutral SOV order Kumakhov & Vamling (2009: 142).

In direct reported speech constructions with quotes preceding the matrix verb of speech subjects, or if the subject is omitted, other remaining constituents regularly follow the verb as shown in examples from Kabardian (e.g. Colarusso 1999: sentence 70 from the Kabardian texts), Abkhaz (Chirikba 2003a, sentence 15) and Abaza (42). This pattern was also noted for Adyghe (Section 3.1).

- (42) Abaza (courtesy of P. Arkadiev)

QUOTE-V-S

wə-z-fa-j ačə-ja? j-h^{wa}-t a-bəč’,
 2M.ABS.REL.RSN-CISL-come what-QN 3M.ERG-say-DCL DEF-thief
 za-k-g’əj a-jə-m-rə-x’-za-k-wa
 one.CLN-ADD 3N.IO-3M.ERG-NEG-CAUS-cool.down-INTF-CVB.NEG
 “‘Why did you come?’” said the thief, not calming down at all.’

Northwest Caucasian languages also allow certain types of adverbial clauses and complement clauses in post-predicate position (e.g. examples in Kumakhov & Vamling 2009: 192; Arkadiev 2020). For instance, according to Chirikba 2003a: 64), adverbial clauses with the present converb can either precede or follow the main clause.

5 Discussion

Summarizing, we can state that post-predicate elements are relatively rare in Adyghe texts, despite the possibility of eliciting them. There are no restrictions concerning grammatical functions and parts of speech of post-predicate elements in Adyghe — they can be arguments and adjuncts of various kinds, from short pronouns to more elaborate noun phrases, particles, etc. When comparing grammatical functions, I found more post-predicate subjects than objects and goals. However, I do not have data about the relative frequency. Thus, it might be the case that for functions such as subjects, locations or goals the probability of occurring in a position after the verb is higher than for objects, but this needs to be tested in future research. Subjects are probably overall more frequently represented in the texts than objects (or goals), since the vast majority of verbs have subject arguments, but only a sub-set of them allow for or even require objects or goals. Direct reported speech constructions in which the quote precedes the verb of speech regularly put the subject (or indirect object in the function of addressee if there is no subject) after the verb.

The majority of (non-clausal) post-predicate elements are topical, such that referents encode given information, but occasionally one also finds focal elements. In text-initial utterances, the newly introduced referent sometimes follows the verb. There is a correlation with genre and geographical origin of speakers. More traditional genres such as legends, fairy tales and anecdotes show a smaller amount of post-predicate elements than personal accounts and autobiographies; and texts recorded in Adyghe contain more post-predicate elements than those recorded in Turkey, which might be due to language contact (mainly between Russian and Adyghe speakers in Adyghe).

The other Northwest Caucasian languages seem to behave similarly to Adyghe. For Ubykh, which is no longer spoken, texts gathered in Turkey point to a very strong tendency for verb-final word order. This fits well to the observed difference between the Adyghe texts from Turkey and those from Adyghe. It also matches with the observations on Laz, a Kartvelian outlier in Turkey (Forker 2024 [this volume]).

Finally, when comparing Northwest Caucasian languages to the other two indigenous language families in the Caucasus (see Forker 2024 [this volume]) we can safely state that Northwest Caucasian languages shows the biggest preference for verb-final order and thus the lowest number of post-predicate items.

Abbreviations

1	first person	INTF	intensifier
2	second person	IO	indirect object
3	third person	LAT	lative
A	agent	LNK	linking element
ABS	absolutive	LOC	locative
ADD	additive	M	male
ADJ	adjective	MAL	malefactive
ADV	adverbial	MOD	modal
ASSERT	assertive	N	neuter
AUX	auxiliary	NEG	negation
BEN	benefactive	OBL	oblique
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
CISL	cislocative	POSS	possession
CLN	non-human numeral classifier	PR	possessor series of personal prefixes
COM	comitative	PRT	particle
COND	conditional	PST	past tense
COORD	coordination	Q	question marker
CS	causal	QN	non-human question
CVB	converb	R	Russian loan
DAT	dative	RE	refactive
DCL	declarative	REC	reciprocal
DEF	definite	REL	relativizer
DIR	directional	RSN	reason
DYN	dynamic	SG	singular
EL	elative	T	Turkic loan
ERG	ergative	TEMP	temporal
FIN	finite	TRM	terminative
FUT	future	VER	version
INST	instrumental		

Digital corpora

Adyghe

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Ankara Turkish

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