

# Expressive Constructions in Georgian and other Caucasian Languages

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**Abstract:** Expressive and ideophonic constructions conveying ‘marked words that depict sensory imagery’ (Dingemanse 2012) are frequently found in the languages of all regions of the world, but their distribution, use and functioning across languages of the Caucasus has never been documented from a regional perspective. This chapter will survey the various kinds of expressive language present in the three autochthonous Caucasian families: Abkhaz-Adyghean, Kartvelian and Nakh-Daghestanian. It will also look in-depth at the specific morphological and syntactic peculiarities of expressives in Georgian, which exhibit exuberant consonant clusters, processes of reduplication uncharacteristic of the language as a whole, as well as specific morphosyntactic alignment splits between different classes of expressive. Expressives will be seen not to be one thing, but many.

The study of expressive language has long labored, both literally and figuratively, under an image problem. Ideophones depicting or evoking particular kinds of sensory or perceptual experiences of languages’ speakers have often been shunted to the metagrammatical margins, in part because Standard-Average-European languages do not grammaticalize them in quite the same way or to the same extent that some languages of Africa, Asia and the Americas often do, but also because early scholars found it difficult to characterize precisely how sensory semantics became iconically encoded as a morphosyntactic class distinct from other parts of the lexicon. In many ways, the languages of the Caucasus at Europe’s outer edge epitomize this tendency. Despite constituting some one-quarter of the linguistic diversity of the continent, the typological properties of these languages such as baroque polysynthesis, ergativity and other non-nominative alignments, extremes in the number of grammatical categories and phonological inventories coded in verbal and nominal morphosyntax have often been treated as anthropologically ‘other’, and not taken into consideration in discussions of Europe’s linguistic heritage. Surveys such as this survey of expressives in

Abkhaz-Adyghean, Kartvelian and Nakh-Daghestanian languages can help place Europe's diversity in a new light.

## §1 Variation across Caucasian languages

Expressive language in Caucasian languages manifests itself in many different ways. Dingemanse (2012, 2015, 2017, 2018) defines ideophones as 'marked words that depict sensory language' in the sense that:

- they are conventionalized expressions with consistent forms and meanings and not nonce formations or interjections;
- they typically possess structural properties (of phonology or morphosyntax) that distinguish them from other classes of words;
- they depict rather than merely describe an event or state in an affective, performative or mimetic way;
- their semantic content encodes sensory information of sight, sound, or a speaker's internal psychological state.

In all these ways, ideophones and related expressive constructions behave in some ways as hybrid classes of words, often partaking in part but not all of a language's usual repertoire of grammatical properties. In some cases, expressives do not form a formally distinct class but nonetheless adopt a kind of statistical profile or suite of traits that sets them apart from other classes of words in a language. Consider two different sets of Georgian lexical items:

### (1) Georgian expressive clusters

- a. bdḡvr-ial-eb-s  
glitter-SUFF-TH-SUBJ.3.SG  
'it glitters/twinkles'
- b. bḡḡlet-a  
sob-MAS.NOM  
'sobbing'
- c. brč'val-i  
stabbing.pains-NOM  
'stabbing pains, colic'

(2) **Georgian** expressive reduplication and consonant gradation

- a. t'q'ap'a-t'q'up'-i  
rattle-RED-NOM
- b. tkapa-tkup-i  
clap-RED-NOM
- c. dgapa-dgup-i / dgaba-dgub-i  
tromp/stomp-RED-NOM

In the first set (1), each word expresses some salient sensory experience, whether by sight (a), sound (b) or internal sensation (c). Each word also manifests another feature for which Georgian is quite famous: extremely complex syllable onsets (Butskhrikidze 2002). Georgian allows up to eight consonants in a row, e.g. *gv-prckvn-i-s* [OBJ.1.PL-peel-TH-SUBJ.3.SG] 'he is peeling us'. In the second set of words in (2), we see three different kinds of expressive processes: reduplication and consonant and vowel gradation. In all the forms in both (1) and (2), expressive imagery is encoded by a specific kind of phonological process to the extent that it is a salient hallmark of expressives and can be identified as such by native speakers. At the same time, in none of these cases do expressives actually constitute a separate syntactic or morphological category distinct from nouns, verbs, etc. This is a trait that we will find in many other languages of the Caucasus examined here.

### 1.1 Variation of exponence

Researchers have found other features common among expressive constructions (Dingemanse 2012: 655). Expressives are usually intonationally and phonationally foregrounded, in that they are characterized by higher or lower pitch ranges and/or by phonation types that are not typical or are not grammaticalized as part of a given language's phonological system, such as breathy voice, creaky voice or whispered voice. Expressives often also manifest specific kinds of morphological contrasts not found (or not found as productively) in nonexpressive language. One very common feature of such morphological expressiveness is total or partial reduplication, as in (2) above, but many languages also have dedicated expressive affixes. So for example in **Megrelian** (Zan; Kartvelian), in (3), an *-in* formant is often found with expressive verbs denoting emission of sound, often in combination with partial reduplication (Kadshaia & Fähnrich 2001):

(3) **Megrelian**

a. zirzin-	buzz	f. c'k'irin-	clank, jingle
b. č'urč'in-	whine, cry	g. pičin-	stop breathing while crying
c. ġumin-	whine, howl	h. jujin-	mumble
d. švit'in-	whistle	i. k'ižin-	cry, shout
e. zuzin-	whistle		

In **Bagvalal** (Avar-Andic; Nakh-Daghestanian), speakers may indicate that an object somehow fails to live up to expected behavior for that object by the encliticization of expressive particles =*dan* or =*q'ā* to the nominal constituents under discussion (Kibrik 2001: 155):

- (4) a. muk'u=b=dan hal-i-la                      hinča=b=dan dažik ek'<sup>wa</sup>  
           small=N=EXPR stalk-OBL-SUP    big=N=EXPR    gourd be  
           'Such a small stalk for such a big gourd!'

- b. o-šu-r                      š'an=r=q'ā                      ġarb-da-r                      q'<sup>w</sup>a-rā-X                      ek'<sup>wa</sup>  
           this-OBL.M-ERG    small-NPL-EXPR                      letter-PL-ERG    write-MS.IPF-CONV    be  
           'He writes in such small letters'

In some Caucasian languages, expressiveness has even become grammaticalized with a dedicated slot on the verb. In his discussion of the verbal templatic morphology of **Budukh** (Lezgitic; Nakh-Daghestanian), Alexeev notes that an expressive slot follows spatial preverbs but comes before negation and gender agreement prefixal slots (1994: 270):

It is also possible to identify in Budukh a specific series of expressive prefixes –*t'*, –*č'*, –*ž*, –*c* to express either the intensity with which an action takes place or the unpleasant emotions connected with the action, e.g. *čet'er'i*, to throw around; *čot'onšu*, to kick down; *yet'er'i*, to strew the lot; *q:at'orğu*, to rip right apart; *q:et'er'i*, to winnow; *q:ot'olq'ol*, *sot'olq'ol*, to be torn apart; *q:ot'onšu*, to trample; *sart'arhar*, to run; *set'er'i*, to spill out; *sot'onšu*, to make felt; *ġat'orğu*, to hem (stitch); *ġut'orğu*, to close up hole with a lace; *vot'onšu*, to crumple; *vot'onku*, to knead (dough) - all with prefix –*t'*-, and *q:uč'onxū*, to graft; *voč'onxū*, to shrug; *ġoč'onxū*, to chase; *oč'onxū*, to clean - all with prefix –*č'*-, and so on.

Thus in Budukh, morphosyntactic expressiveness may be seen as a category related to, but distinct from, other systems of spatial and deictic reference.

On the other hand, in **Sanzhi Dargwa** (Dargic; Nakh-Daghestanian), which has an exceptionally rich inventory of expressive verbs (for some examples, see Table 1; Forker 2019: 235), ideophones bear little to no discrete reduplication or other morphological cue, but instead are primarily flagged by their presence in a light-verb construction, as in (5):

- (5) a.      amma ʁaʁ                  r-ik'-ul                  ca-r    ik'  
              but    scream          F-say.IPFV-ICVB          COP-F   DEM.UP  
              'But she is screaming.'
- b.      li<b>il xurt'    aʁ-ib                  ca-b    hel-i-la                  ruc-be  
              all<HPL> swallow    do.PFV-PRET    COP-HPL    that-OBL-GEN    sister-PL  
              '[The wolf] swallowed all her sisters.'

Indeed, in this variety of Dargwa, in many cases, the only formal cue to the ideophonic character of these constructions is that the ideophone often bears some marked laryngeal feature, such as pharyngealized vowels, uvular consonants or glottalization, since some ideophones may be complements to multiple different light verbs, and vice-versa.

IDEOPHONE	LIGHT VERB	TRANSLATION
č'aʁm	b-arq'- (N-do.PFV-)	'chew'
č'aʁχ	b-ik'ʷ- (N-say.IPFV-)	'pour'
c'ip	či-r-aʁ- (SPR-ABL-do.PFV-)	'chop off, cut off'
	b-arq'- (N-do.PFV-)	
laʁh, lap'	(ha-)b-arq'- (up-N-do.PFV-)	'flap, wave'
paʁqaʁr, p'aq'	b-uq- (HPL-go.PFV-)	'shake off'
pas	b-ik'ʷ- (N-say.IPFV-),	'scatter'
	b-arq'- (N-do.PFV-)	
pirχ	b-arq'- (N-do.PFV-)	'light up'
q:eh	b-ik'ʷ- (N-say.IPFV-)	'cough'
q'ac'	b-ik:- (N-bite.PFV-)	'gnaw, bit'
	b-ik'ʷ- (N-say.IPFV-)	
	b-ax- (N-go-)	
s:urk'	b-arq'- (N-do.PFV-)	'press'
s:urk'	b-ik'ʷ- (N-say.IPFV-)	'rub, polish'
t'aʁq'	b-ert:- (N-burst.PFV-)	'crack, split'
χuʁrχ	b-ik'ʷ- (N-say.IPFV-)	'snore'
χʷaʁrt	b-uq- (HPL-go.PFV-)	'flinch, cringe, wince'

**Table 1. Ideophones within light-verb constructions in Sanzhi Dargwa (Forker 2019: 236)**

## **1.2 Typology as a constraint on exponence of expressives**

To a great extent, the differences in how ideophones are expressed in the three autochthonous families are understandably constrained by the overall typological profiles of the languages in question. Abkhaz-Adyghean languages manifest extremes in terms of the phonological inventories that they possess and in the extent to which they morphologize grammatical categories on syntactic heads. Thus while **Abkhaz**(Abkhaz-Abaza; Abkhaz-Adyghean) has between 58 and 64 consonant phonemes (depending on whether we are examining the literary or nonstandard dialects respectively), it has only two underlying phonemic vowels, /a/ and /ə/, among the fewest of any language. As a result of this, expressive constructions tend to be marked as gemination of verb stem consonants, not vowels: -ss- in *á-pssa-ra* ‘sweep’ (Abzhywa dial., cf Bzyp *a-psa-ra*; Chirikba 1996:23), *psshá-rá* (Tapant dial.; Chirikba 1996: 25). Thus the kinds of vowel gradations employed to create ideophonic lexical items in Georgian in (2) play little to no role in Abkhaz expressive language.

The languages of this family also display extremely high degrees of verbal head-marking polysynthesis – with 11 categories inflected on the verb, they rank in the second highest category of the World Atlas of Language Structures (Haspelmath et al. 2005: Ch. 22), but nouns are marked with few case or other categories. In closely related **Kabardian**(Circassian; Abkhaz-Adyghean), expressives are usually found as particles (Colarusso 1992: 158-9):

### **(6) Kabardian expressive particles**

- |                |                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. q'əʔa       | ‘please!’                            |
| b. ʔaw         | (astonishment)                       |
| c. aɭawaɭa     | (astonishment)                       |
| d. dədəd-dədəd | (pain, sorrow)                       |
| e. śaakʷ       | (expressive of a blow on the cheek)  |
| f. t'aay       | (expressive of a fall in a struggle) |

Because of this overall morphosyntactic orientation, dependents in this family simply lack the categories with which expressives in other languages might be manipulated.

Nakh-Daghestanian languages in contrast often have a dozen or more vowels and their morphosyntactic profile is much more highly dependent-marking.

Consequently, a Nakh language like **Chechen**, with its twenty-three simple vowel distinctions (not including diphthongs) and its eight case forms, has a phonological profile that allows ideophones to manifest themselves in vowel gradations, umlaut, and ablaut. Frequently, as noted above in the case of Sanzhi Dargwa, this consists of constructions of light verbs with complements bearing ideophonic content. For example, in (7), the light verb is *ælla* ‘say’ and its object is a reduplicated noun *varq-varq* ‘croaking’ (Muslim Khulando, p.c.):

(7) **Chechen**

Varq-varq	ælla	phid-aš	y-ara	y-exaš	ʔoma čoh
croak-croak	say.CV	frog-PL	ii-PROG.PAST	ii-cry.CV.SIM	pond in

‘Frogs were croaking in the pond.’

In Chechen, this ideophone for ‘croak’ can be modified to express the pitch of the sound: *varq-varq*, *vorq-vorq*, *vurq-vurq*. In some Caucasian languages, this use of light verbs is effectively the only strategy possible for integrating ideophonic expressions into the language. In **Udi**, a Lezgian language of Azerbaijan and Georgia, independent verbs have become a closed class such that almost all verb constructions actually involve a light verb stem as in (8) plus an incorporated element of some kind, either a noun, adverbial or some dependent verb stem. Thus in (9), a light verb *p-* ‘say’ has incorporated a stem *äit-* ‘word’ to create a new predicate ‘speak’ (Harris 2008):

(8) **Udi** light verbs

*b-* ‘do’, *bak-* ‘become’, *d-* ‘make, CAUSATIVE’, *p-* ‘say’, *ak-* ‘see’, *aq-* ‘take, get, receive’, *ef-* ‘hold’, *p’ur-* ‘die’, *sak-* ‘push’, *(u)k-* ‘eat’, *u<sup>š</sup>g-* ‘drink’, etc.

(9) Luiza-n	Udi-n	muz-in	äit-ne-p-e
Louisa-ERG	Udi-GEN	language-INST	word-3SG-say-AOR.II

‘Louisa spoke in Udi.’ (Harris 2008: 214)

In Udi, this morpholexical constraint has the consequence that there are no (new) simplex expressive verbs: all expressive verbs consist of an expressive element (ideophone, noun, etc.) incorporated into a light-verb stem: *gi<sup>š</sup>zgi<sup>š</sup>z-p-esun* [laugh-say-MAS] ‘laugh, chuckle’, *q’ašq’aš-p-esun* [crunch-say-MAS] ‘eat, crunch on’, *q’a<sup>š</sup>q’a<sup>š</sup>-p-esun* [IDEO-say-MAS] ‘drown, strangle’, *t’ut’u-p-esun* [IDEO-say-MAS] ‘tremble’, *ğa<sup>š</sup>ğa<sup>š</sup>-p-esun* [IDEO-say-MAS] ‘snarl, snap’ (Schulze ms: 165).

In most languages though, expressive elements vary in precisely how integrated they are in clauses. Thus in **Archi** (Lezgetic;Nakh-Daghestanian), incorporated expressives in some cases behave like simple stem formatives and thus are invisible for purposes of case assignment of other arguments in the clause (Testelec 1987):

- (10)     **Archi**
- a.     t'ant'           ziz-war  
          bee.ABS       buzz-say.PRS  
          'The bee buzzes.'
- b.     za-ri   diq'           χu-bu  
          I-ERG   soup.ABS    drink-say.PST  
          'I eat the soup'
- c.     jaIt'i-li       zat:i-k       łit-bo  
          snake-ERG   I-LOC       hiss-say.PST  
          'The snake hissed at me.'

Like most languages of the family, Archi is an ergative language, and so the subject *t'ant'* 'bee' of the intransitive predicate in (10a) takes absolutive case (here, null marking); in a corresponding transitive like (10b), the incorporated form *χu-* 'drink' does not prevent the verb from assigning absolutive case to the other argument *diq'* 'soup'. In (10c) however, the expressive element *łit-* 'hiss' appears to absorb the assignment of absolutive case normally assigned to direct objects of transitive verbs, making it unavailable for the notional patient, which receives locative case. In a different ergative Lezgetic language of Daghestan and Azerbaijan, **Lezgian**, expressives have completely generalized the absorption of absolutive case so that originally onomatopoetic expressives like those in (10) uniformly take ergative subjects with a single light verb *awun* 'do' (Haspelmath 1993: 181), as in (11-12):

- (11)     C<sub>1</sub>V(r)C<sub>2</sub> + awun
- a.     murr-murr awun    'purr'
- b.     č'arx-č'arx awun   'crunch'
- c.     žirt'-žirt' awun   'squelch'
- d.     ziw-ziw awun       'clink'



- (12) C<sub>1</sub>V<sub>1</sub>C<sub>2</sub>rV<sub>1</sub>C<sub>2</sub> + awun
- a. t'aq'raq' awun 'crunch'
  - b. bağrağ awun 'rumble'
  - c. lešreš awun 'splash'
  - d. č'wäqräq' awun 'snap, crack'

Like the Georgian examples in (2) above, Lezgian expressives show varying kinds of vowel or consonant gradation, reminiscent of Semitic templatic morphology (see also §1.4 and §2 below).

In some languages, a distinction between different levels of integration of incorporated expressives has become grammaticalized as a marker of animacy. In **Bezht'a** (Tsezic; Nakh-Daghestanian) and **Lak** (Lakic; Nakh-Daghestanian), incorporating constructions mark subject arguments with ergative case if they are animate (13a, 14a), but absolutive case if they are inanimate (13b, 14b; Testelec, lecture notes):

- (13) **Bezht'a**
- a. is-t'i                      hic-ʎo-jo                      (Animate subject)  
     brother-OBL.ERG      sneeze-say-PST  
     'Brother sneezed.'
  - b. okko                      c'im-ʎo-jo                      (Inanimate subject)  
     coin.ABS                  jingle-say-PST  
     'The coin jingled.'
- (14) **Lak**
- a. č:it-ul                  maIw-ukunni                      (Animate subject)  
     cat-ERG                  meow-say.PST  
     'The cat meowed.'
  - b. granata                  p'alq'-ukunni                      (Inanimate subject)  
     grenade.ABS      explode-say.PST  
     'The grenade exploded.'

Thus in these languages the encoding of expressive forms represents a kind of covert category of animacy. In yet other languages, expressive-like forms are fully integrated into the language's formal gender-marking system. Like most northeastern Caucasian languages, nouns in **Hinuq** (Tsezic; Nakh-Daghestanian) fall into a number of different gender classes depending on how they agree with certain verbs, adjectives, adverbs and some other word-classes. In Hinuq, expressive verbs depicting the emission of sound

may be nominalized by the addition of a suffix *-ni*, as in (15), and when doing so they are consistently classed with Hinuq's fifth gender otherwise associated with tools, abstract nouns, and meteorological phenomena (Forker 2013: 120):

- (15) **Hinuq**
- |    |                          |                        |                    |
|----|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| a. | ħapya:- 'bark'           | ħap-ni 'barking'       | (Forker 2013: 109) |
| b. | babaya:- 'bleat'         | baba-ni 'bleating'     |                    |
| c. | dodoya:- 'shake'         | dodo-ni 'shaking'      |                    |
| d. | bubuya:- 'bellow' (bull) | bubu-ni 'bellowing'    |                    |
| e. | p'ap'aya:- 'chatter'     | p'ap'a-ni 'chattering' |                    |

Thus in Hinuq one can largely predict which formal gender class an expressive nominalization will be.

### 1.3 Category innovation exclusive to expressives

Such cases reflect the recruitment of a preexisting grammatical category for expressive purposes, but in many languages, expressive language manifests entirely new grammatical or phonological categories that are either not present in the language otherwise, or are very marginal. Thus many languages in the Caucasus lack a distinct voiceless labiovelar fricative /f/, but according to Sumbatova (2003: 3), in **Icari Dargwa** (Dargic; Nakh-Daghestanian) this phone exists marginally only within the class of ideophones like *uf-* in *uf.bik'<sup>w</sup>araj* 'blow (about someone), utter a fie'. In the core lexicon of **Khwarshi** (Tsezic; Nakh-Daghestanian) vowel-length (Khalilova 2009: 20) and of **Budukh** both vowel-length and nasalization (Azmaiparashvili et al. 2016: 148) are unknown, and yet both processes occur occasionally in those languages in expressive constructions. In **Udi**, neither consonants nor vowels exhibit length contrasts, but in some forms glottalized velar or uvular stops can become lengthened: *ek:'a* 'all what', *eq:'ara* 'how much', *t'eq:'ara* 'so much', features that Schulze (*ms*: 71) attributes to potential expressive usage. Likewise, in Udi reduplication plays virtually no role in the core grammar of the language, but does appear as a productive process in expressive forms (according to Schulze *ms*: 137-38):

- (16)
- |    |          |             |
|----|----------|-------------|
| a. | č'uč'up' | 'curl'      |
| b. | k'ak'ala | 'excrement' |
| c. | gugum    | 'horsefly'  |
| d. | k'ok'oc  | 'hen'       |

#### 1.4 Expressives as a source of lexical innovation: *flora and fauna*

Another almost ubiquitous way in which Caucasian languages use expressive language is as a source for names of salient animal and plant species, or words closely associated with them. This form of expressive language is indeed so wide-spread within the Caucasus that it may be rightly distinguished as a separate kind of lexical process. Though there is variation both within and between languages and language families, a common trend is for species names to have a reduplicative template of <C<sub>1</sub>V<sub>1</sub>(r/l/n)(C<sub>1</sub>)(C<sub>2</sub>)V<sub>1</sub>C<sub>2</sub>>. In many cases, the species names can be reconstructed to their respective protolanguage, e.g. **Georgian** *k'ak'abi* 'partridge' and **Megrelian** *k'ok'obe* 'partridge', since they underwent separately identifiable sound-changes (in this case, the raising/backing of Proto-Kartvelian \**a* to /o/ in Megrelian). In other cases, it seems likely that a single lexical item was loaned between languages (including closely related ones), or was innovated separately according to a similar expressive template. This is true of the words for 'nightingale' across the Caucasus, which have often borrowed the root *bulbul-* from Persian.

FAMILY	LANGUAGE	SPECIES NAME
Abkhaz- Adyghean	Abkhaz	<i>a-h<sup>w</sup>əh<sup>w</sup></i> 'pigeon', <i>patpatə-</i> 'to flitter, quaver (of a bird)', <i>a-c'əpc'əp</i> 'sp. of bird', <i>a-č'wənc'wəha</i> 'bird's stomach', <i>ğ<sup>y</sup>arğ<sup>y</sup>ar-</i> 'to frighten birds in fields or kitchen gardens', <i>a-k'ark'alaməš<sup>w</sup></i> 'sp. of small lizard', <i>a-c'ərc'ərə</i> 'sound made by dragon-fly or snake'
	Abaza	<i>h<sup>w</sup>əh<sup>w</sup></i> 'pigeon'
Kartvelian	Georgian	<i>k'irk'it'a</i> 'kestrel', <i>guguli</i> 'cuckoo', <i>bulbuli</i> 'nightingale', <i>but'but'a</i> 'warbler', <i>k'ok'orina</i> 'sandpiper', <i>c'ivc'iva</i> 'chickadee', <i>k'ak'abi</i> 'partridge', <i>k'ač'k'ač'i</i> 'magpie', <i>tutiq'uši</i> 'parrot', <i>q'arq'at'i</i> 'stork, spoonbill', <i>xoxobi</i> 'pheasant', <i>baq'aq'i</i> 'frog'
	Megrelian	<i>ğerğet'i</i> 'goose', <i>ğorğonji</i> 'goose', <i>k'ok'obe</i> 'partridge', <i>dadulia</i> 'little chick', <i>t'urt'urue</i> 'turtle dove', <i>č'k'ič'k'it'ia</i> 'ant', <i>jgijgit'ia</i> 'ant'
Nakh- Daghestanian	Svan	<i>parpānd</i> 'blackbird', <i>č'inč'wer</i> 'bird's nest', <i>metetx</i> 'bat'
	Aghul	<i>q:laraq:lal</i> 'magpie', <i>c'urc'ul</i> 'marten', <i>mizmiz</i> 'mosquito'
	Akhvakh	<i>koq:o</i> 'frog', <i>žožo</i> 'fly'
	Avar	<i>žužuk</i> 'quail', <i>λ:iλ:i</i> 'kind of song bird', <i>k<sup>w</sup>atk<sup>w</sup>at</i>

	'woodpecker'
Archi	<i>zimzi</i> 'mosquito'
Bezht'a	<i>qöqötö</i> 'woodpecker', <i>šašu</i> 'swallow'
Budukh	<i>kakil</i> 'partridge', <i>čič</i> 'lizard'
Chechen	<i>šoršal</i> 'thrush, blackbird', <i>qoqa</i> 'pigeon'
Dargwa	<i>š:akək̆i</i> 'quail', <i>wadwadi</i> 'hoopoe' (Akusha), <i>čič̆ala</i> 'snake', <i>imiʔala</i> 'stinging insect, ant' (Akusha), <i>zimizal</i> 'stinging insect, ant' (Chiragh), <i>q:ulq:a</i> 'crow'
Karata	<i>čʷančʷara</i> 'butterfly, quail'
Khinalug	<i>k'ak'id</i> 'partridge', <i>čänč</i> 'pigeon'
Hunzib	<i>q'alq'ala</i> 'magpie'
Lak	<i>q:aqnu</i> 'partridge', <i>ḡanḡarat'i</i> 'beetle'
Lezgian	<i>kutkut'</i> 'hoopoe', <i>čurčul</i> 'snake, worm' <i>çuçul</i> XX
Rutul	<i>siričal</i> 'marten'
Tabasaran	<i>q:aq:uba</i> 'partridge', <i>mizmiz</i> 'mosquito', <i>q:Iarq:Iar</i> 'magpie'
Tsakhur	<i>kicaçaj</i> 'sparrow', <i>t'aq̆t'aq'aj</i> 'woodpecker' <i>bizbiza</i> 'mosquito'

**Table 2. Floral and faunal terms derived from expressives in Caucasian languages**

### 1.5 Expressives as a locus of diachronic change

Finally, expressives may also be a source for or a locus of diachronic change. For one, ideophones may become grammaticalized into other constructions and subsequently lose any semantically decompositional meaning that is accessible to speakers. Thus in the **Sanzhi Dargwa** example above, it is difficult to isolate the difference in meaning between *s:urk' b-arq'-* [IDEO-do.PFV-] 'press' and *s:urk' b-ik'w-* [IDEO-say.IPFV-] 'rub, polish', despite the fact that each element of these constructions is formally quite distinct. Over time, such ideophones may be fully grammaticalized as part of some other element.

The reverse is also true: in some cases, non-ideophonic content may begin to behave like ideophones, at least in a formal sense. In recent work, Gilles Authier has documented so-called 'pseudo-ideophones' in Archi, in which a lexical contrast arises by reanalysis of some part of a simplex verb as complex. He gives examples like *λum-*

*mus* ‘pull’ and *t:um-mus* ‘flee’ in which the stem’s initial consonant has innovated what appears to be an expressive contrast:

- (17)      lo-bur              χ:ams:-i-λ’iš              b-ułne  
                  child-PL.NOM bear-OBL-SUBEL              HPL-flee.PF  
                  ‘The children fled from the bear’

Because the form with initial *t-* appears cognate to a lexeme *-ġn* in the related **Kryts** language (Lezgi; Nakh-Daghestanian) without expressive function (cf. *ji-ġn-iž* ‘pull’), the Archi form with initial *λ-* may represent an incipient expressive morphological contrast.

In languages with long written histories, we can also trace the evolution of the formal exponence of such expressive constructions by looking at how they change in frequency and function in historical texts. The Caucasian language with by far the longest written history in the region, Georgian, possesses a rich wealth of historical texts dating from the fifth century A.D. onward. These can allow us to see how reduplicative patterns for expressive verbs like *ġaġadeba* ‘call out to, wail to’ (first att. 5<sup>th</sup> c.) or *k’amk’ameba* ‘sparkling’ (first att. 11<sup>th</sup> c.) expand and change over many centuries:

- (18)      *The Martyrdom of Queen Shushanik* (ca. 476-482 A.D.)  
                  sen-i...              mo-i-c’i-a              mis              zeda,romel-sa=c=igi  
                  illness-NOM    PVB-PRV-contract-3SG3SG.GEN    on    which-DAT=REL=DET  
                  c’inaysc’ar    u-ġaġa-d-eb-d-i  
                  before.hand    PRV-wail.out-put-TH-IMPF-1/2  
                  ‘She contracted an illness about which you were crying out before...’
- (19)      *The Sixth Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Council of Carthage* (ca. 1010-1030 A.D.)  
                  xolo ġmert-t-mtavrob-it-ta              k’amk’am-eb-a-ta=gan  
                  but    God-GEN-government-INST-GEN.PL    twinkle-TH-MAS-GEN.PL=from  
                  es-oden-i              natel-i              a-ku-s              ġirs-ta  
                  this-QUANT-NOM    light-NOM    PRV-have.INAN-3SG    worthy-DAT.PL  
                  ‘But from the twinklings of the Divine Government those who are worthy  
                  have so much light...’

Such a long textual heritage allows scholars to know that apparent expressive constructions with particular features like reduplication exclusive to expressives are not new innovations in recent centuries, but long-enduring, stable features of the language.

## §2 Expressive language in Georgian: Holisky (1988)

The most extensive previous treatment of expressive language in Georgian is that of Holisky(1988), who examines a number of familiar features from previous literature. For Holisky, expressives are a syntactically distinct form-class that (citing Emeneau 1980 and Johnson 1976 resp.) denote ‘varied kinds of sensation, the impingement of the material world... upon the senses’ that also ‘convey with vivid clarity and eloquence the perceptual qualities of objects and events’. In addition to the criteria noted by Dingemanse (2012), she found a variety of other traits either universally or statistically likely to appear, including:

- (20) a. they do not always observe the same phonotactic patterns established for the rest of the lexicon;
- b. some phonological rules may not hold for this class; or vice-versa, special rules may apply only to this class;
- c. they are restricted to a few syntactic positions, often in isolation;
- d. they tend not to be negatable or quantifiable;
- e. they describe situations in a holistic way, closer to being semantic propositions than predicates or arguments;
- f. they often exhibit stylistic restrictions, e.g. to children’s speech, or oral and not written language

Holisky’s investigation (done along with Nana Kakhadze) focused exclusively on one subclass of expressives: manner of speaking verbs. After examining over one hundred such verbs divided into loud sounds, high-pitched sounds, indistinct sounds, etc., she found that many of them lack lexical discreteness, in the sense that they form quasi-paradigmatic structures amongst themselves. On the one hand, there are verbs like those in (21) through (23) in which a fixed consonantal templatic matrix alternates with different vowel qualities, with high vowels reflecting higher, louder pitch, while lower vowels reflecting lower pitch (Holisky 1988: 57):

*Verbs of shrill, squeaky complaining*

(21)	č'uč' q'un-eb-s squeal-TH-3SG 'S/he is squealing'	č'ič' q'in-eb-s squeak-TH-3SG 'S/he is squeaking'	č'ač' q'an-eb-s squawk-TH-3SG 'S/he is squawking'
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*Verbs of low, loud complaining*

(22)	jujğun-eb-s 'speaks peevishly, nasally'	jijgin-eb-s 'mutters'	jajgan-eb-s 'grumbles loudly'
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*Verbs of soft, child-liketalking*

(23)	t'ut'un-eb-s 'mumbles softly'	t'it'in-eb-s 'bubbles, drivels'	[cf. t'a'tana 'scolder, remonstrator']
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On the other hand, there are also expressive verbs in which the vowel stays fixed, while we see various kinds of consonant gradation, often reflecting an onomatopoeic hierarchy of [voiced > aspirated > glottalized]:

*Verbs of children's crying*

(25)	jgav-i-s 'weeps loudly, howls'	čxav-i-s 'screeches, yowls'	č'q'av-i-s '(owl, jackal) yowls, howls'
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*Verbs of sobbing*

(26)	zlukun-eb-s 'bawls, sobs loudly'	slukun-eb-s 'sobs loudly'
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*Verbs of soft, child-liketalking*

(27)	bluq'un-eb-s 'stutters, stammers'	bluk'un-eb-s stutters, stammers'
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Holisky also found that glottalization is associated with high pitch, with seventeen of the eighteen words associated with high-pitch having glottalized sounds, while voiced consonants are associated with lower pitch and negative attitudinal perspectives of speakers (1988: 60):

Glottalized		Voiced	
<i>c'rip'in-eb-s</i>	squeaks, peeps	<i>burt'q'un-eb-s</i>	mumbles, growls
<i>c'iv-i-s</i>	screeches, shrieks	<i>burdğun-eb-s</i>	mutters, grumbles
<i>č'uč'q'un-eb-s</i>	squeals	<i>dudğun-eb-s</i>	talks through one's nose
<i>č'q'iv-i-s</i>	screeches, shrieks	<i>bluq'un-eb-s</i>	stutters, stammers
<i>k'iv-i-s</i>	shrieks	<i>bubun-eb-s</i>	bellows, lows

However, perhaps the most significant generalization in Holisky's work is that these manner of speaking verbs also overwhelmingly bear the same morphosyntactic profile: they belong to a class of 'medial' verbs, or atelic, agentive intransitive predicates that pattern differently from transitive predicates and stative intransitive predicates in terms of case, agreement and tense/aspect/mood morphology (see also Holisky 1983).

To understand this, it is important to understand the complicated system of Georgian case and agreement. Georgian is a Split-S language in terms of its morphosyntactic alignment (Harris 1981, Harris 1985 [2020], Wier 2005, Wier 2011, Wier 2014, Baker 2017): it has two classes of intransitive predicates, one of which patterns like the subject of transitive verbs, and another which patterns separately (though not quite like the objects of transitives). But in addition to this, Georgian features cross-cutting tense-aspect-mood splits, and different conjugations pattern differently in different TAM-combinations. In other words, one cannot say that a particular case desinence directly reflects a specific grammatical function, because there is a many-to-many-to-many relationship of case, agreement and grammatical function. So for example in (28) we see case-shifts from one tense to the next:

- (28) a.    *bavšv-i*        *male*    *i-č'uč'q'un-eb-s*  
          child-NOM    soon    PRV-squeal-TH-3SG  
          'The child will squeal soon.'
- b.    *bavšv-ma*    *i-č'uč'q'un-a*  
          child-NARR    PRV-squeal-AOR.3SG  
          'The child squealed.'
- c.    *bavšv-s*        *u-č'uč'q'un-i-a*  
          child-DAT        PRV-squeal-PF-3SG  
          'The child has apparently squealed.'



In (28a), the subject in the present/future series form is *bavšv-i* ‘child’ with nominative case *-i*, while in the aorist series form in (28b) it is *bavšv-ma* with narrative (ergative) *-ma*, and in the perfect-evidential series it is *bavšv-s* with dative *-s*.

To get a holistic concrete sense of this, Table 3 and Table 4 display the general system of case assignment and tense-aspect formation for Georgian verbs across different series and conjugation classes. In Table 3, the PRESENT-FUTURE series of verb paradigms, the first conjugation of transitives assign *nominative* case (NOM) to their grammatical subject/agent (SUBJ), *dative* case (DAT) to their indirect object/goal (IOBJ), and also *dative* to their direct object/theme (DOBJ), if they are ditransitive. However, when we shift to the AORIST series, verbs in this series of paradigms now assign *narrative* (AKA ‘ergative’) to their subject, *dative* to their indirect object, and *nominative* to their direct object. When we shift yet again to PERFECT-EVIDENTIAL series of verb forms, the case array changes yet again: the notional subject is marked by *dative* case, the notional direct object by *nominative* case, and the notional indirect object not by a case at all but by a postpositional phrase headed by *=tvis* ‘for’. Table 4 likewise identifies the formal criteria by which these classes are distinguished.

Very many formal explanations have been proffered for the technical origin and synchronic functioning of this complex system (e.g. see Harris 1981 arguing for a change in grammatical function; cf Wier 2011 for an account involving two distinct levels of argument structure; see also Nash 2017 for an account based on theta-licensing). For the purpose of expressives however the significance of all of this is that the two classes of intransitive verbs differ in each of these different tense-aspect-mood series, a class of ‘medial’/agentive intransitives which patterns like the subject of transitives, and a class of stative intransitives that patterns separately. The expressive verbs that Holisky examined pattern like the first of these two intransitive classes: as ‘medial’, atelic, agentive intransitive verbs.

	<i>Transitive</i>	<b>'Medial' Intr.</b>	<i>Stative Intr.</i>	<i>Dative-Affective</i>
<i>PRESENT-FUTURE</i>	SUBJ: NOM IOBJ: DAT DOBJ: DAT	SUBJ: NOM	SUBJ: NOM	SUBJ: DAT DOBJ: NOM
<i>AORIST</i>	SUBJ: NARR IOBJ: DAT DOBJ: NOM	SUBJ: NARR	SUBJ: NOM	SUBJ: DAT DOBJ: NOM
<i>PERFECT- EVIDENTIAL</i>	SUBJ: DAT IOBJ: PP DOBJ: NOM	SUBJ: DAT	SUBJ: NOM	SUBJ: DAT DOBJ: NOM

**Table 3. Georgian case assignment across TAM series and conjugational class (Harris 1981, Holisky 1983, Wier 2011)**

	<i>Transitive</i>	<b>'Medial'</b>	<i>Stative Intr.</i>	<i>Dative-Affective</i>
<i>Formation of the Future subseries</i>	Preverb	<b>i-...-eb</b>	Preverb	e-...-eb
<i>3Sg suffix in Present</i>	-s	<b>-s</b>	-a	-s
<i>3Sg suffix in Future</i>	-s	<b>-s</b>	-a	-a

**Table 4. Formal criteria distinguishing different conjugation classes (Harris 1981, Holisky 1983, Wier 2011)**

This generalization by Holisky is significant, because it shows that expressive manner-of-speaking verbs belong to a distinct formal class not just in their morphology, but also in their patterns of nominal case assignment and verbal tense-aspect formation and agreement.

### §3 Expressive language in Georgian: Extensions and Implications

This leaves open the question: do all Georgian expressives manifest these features, or just the manner-of-speaking verbs? To investigate this, I collected over 150 expressives outside this domain of manner-of-speaking verbs to examine the extent to which they matched Holisky's internally consistent generalizations (see Table 5). The

database focuses on expressives of the emission of light, emission of sound, and salient movement, and includes not only verbs, but a number of nominals or adverbials which also depict sensory data and share some of the same features as verbs. For example in (29), among verbs of emission of sound, we find nominal triplets with many of the expressive traits discussed above:

- (29) a. xrial-griali 'banging, clatter'  
 b. xrial-ǵriali 'very loud and constant noise'  
 c. xrial-xriali 'prolonged rattle, roar, thundering'

As a control, the database also included 175 basic lexical items of all different lexical classes against which the features of the expressive sets could be compared. These basic lexical items were created from the list of basic semantic primitives used by the Loan Word Typology database (Haspelmath and Tadmor 2009), which was expressly designed to make the creation of semantically commensurable basic word lists possible.

	EMISSION OF LIGHT	EMISSION OF SOUND	SALIENT MOVEMENT	CONTROL SAMPLE
<b>TOTAL</b>	52	51	50	175
• verbs	40	19	41	53
REDUPLICATION	18 (35%)	23 (45%)	30 (60%)	2 (1%)
• Full	16 (31%)	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	0 (0%)
• Partial	2 (4%)	16 (31%)	20 (40%)	2 (1%)
ROOT CLUSTER >3	10 (19%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	13 (7%)
MEDIAL VERB	11 (28% of verbs)	8 (42% of verbs)	19 (46% of verbs)	1 (2% of verbs)
VOICED FRICATIVE	19 (37%)	4 (8%)	9 (18%)	41 (23%)

**Table 5. Statistical distribution of features of morphosyntactic exponence across different expressive classes**

When we compare these additional classes of expressives to that earlier work, we find that they do largely cohere with Holisky's findings, but with interesting twists. We see similar kinds of morphological exponence in the form of reduplication, expressive ablaut and consonant gradation, as well as expressive affixal formatives such as *-in*, *-un* or *-ial*. We also see that, like manner of speaking verbs, many verbs that denote

emission of light or inanimate sources of sound also fall into Holisky's medial class of verbs in terms of their case-assignment and tense/aspect/mood desinences.

	EMISSION OF LIGHT	EMISSION OF SOUND	SALIENT MOVEMENT
<i>PRES</i>	cecxl-i bdǵvrial-eb-s fire-NOMglow-TH-3SG 'The fire is glowing'	panjara raxrax-eb-s window.NOM rattle-TH-3SG 'The window is rattling'	bavšv-i braxun-eb-s child-NOMstomp-TH-3SG 'The child is stomping'
<i>AOR</i>	cecxl-ma i-bdǵvrial-a fire-NARRPRV-glow-AOR.3SG 'The fire glowed'	panjara-mi-raxrax-a window.NARRPRV-rattle-AOR.3SG 'The window rattled'	bavšv-ma i-braxun-a child-NARRPRV-stomp-AOR.3SG 'The child stomped'
<i>PERF- EVID</i>	cecxl-su-bdǵvrial-i-a fire-DATPRV-glow-PF-3SG 'The fire has apparently glowed'	panjara-su-raxrax-i-a window-DATPRV-rattle-PF-3SG 'The window has apparently rattled'	bavšv-su-braxun-i-a child-DATPRV-stomp-PF-3SG 'The child has apparently stomped'

**Table 6. Case assignment of different classes of expressives across tense-aspect series**

However, it is also clear that there arise other salient features that are either absent, or rarer, in the class of manner-of-speaking verbs. For example, while the data published by Holisky examined included forms with complex onsets with two segments like /č'q'/, /dǵ/, /jǵ/, /čx/, /t'q'/, and so on, in lexical items depicting emission of light, we often find extremely complex onsets of three, four, and even five segments in length, at more than double the frequency (19%) of the control sample (7%), and elevated rates in the other two classes:

EXPRESSIVE WITH COMPLEX ONSET	ENGLISH GLOSS
bdǵvrial-eb-s	glitters, glares
k'rtol-av-s	glitter, quiver, shiver
mbdvinvar-eb-s	flicker, glimmer
mbzin-av-i	brilliant
mbžut'-av-i	flickering, glimmering
ckrial-eb-s	moves gracefully, quickly, shimmers
bžǵvrial-eb-s	sparkles, glitters
brč'q'vial-eb-s	sparkles, glitters, is radiant
brč'q'vin-av-s	glitters, shines
bdǵvin-av-s	walk about roaring (of lions)
mžǵer-i	voiced (e.g. consonant)

mbdǧvin-av-i	roaring
ǰgrial-eb-s	crashes, bangs
ǰgnar-av-s	gnaws on s.th.
žǧl-i-s	cracks s.th. (e.g. glass)
brtq'el-brtq'el-i	high-flown, bombastic speech
k'rt'n-i-s	(bird) preens for lice
prckvn-i-s	peels s.th.
čkro	noise, sound of s.o.'s voice
t'q'lap'i	fruit-leather (made by crushing fruit)
t'q'laša-t'q'luši	continuous cracking, thwacking sound

**Table 7. Expressive verbs of emission of light or sound or of salient movement**

This stands in contrast to the verbs of emission of sound or salient movement, fewer of which manifest extremes of consonant clusters in onset position. While such long consonant clusters can be found occasionally in nonexpressive parts of the lexicon (e.g. *bžǧali* 'light grey', *prckili* 'reddish stone', *dngra* 'fit, strapping, imposing', *p'rc'k'ali* 'splinter', etc.), they are considerably more frequent among expressives. It seems likely that this reflects an exaptation from Georgian's typologically unusual syllable structure toward making expressives more salient in discourses. But it is also difficult to describe in purely morphological terms, since if there is any generalization to be had here, it is on a highly abstract prosodic level – not unlike the prosodic quasi-templates seen in Holisky's earlier study described above in §2.

Another at least ostensible feature found extensively in verbs of emission of light, in addition to the manner of speaking verbs which Holisky investigated, is the presence of one or more voiced fricatives, often /ǧ/, /ž/, /v/ or /z/:

EXPRESSIVE WITH VOICED FRICATIVE	ENGLISH GLOSS
živživ-eb-s	twinkles, glimmers; tweets
žik'žik'-eb-s	twinkles, glimmers
žol-av-s	flickers, glimmers
žužǧ-av-s	flickers, glimmers
bzin-av-s	sparkles, glitters
ǧudǧud-eb-s	sparkles, dazzles with brightness
ǧadǧad-eb-s	sparkles, glows

vasvas-eb-s	flashes, sparkles, shimmers
ğvelp-av-s	burns down to embers
varvar-a	incandescent glow
na-ğverd-al-i	glowing embers/coals
ğviv-i-s	glows, flashes red, simmers
ğuzğuz-eb-s	(fire) crackles
gizgiz-eb-s	blazes up, roars
elvar-eb-s	dazzles, shines brightly

**Table 8. Salience of voiced fricatives in expressives depicting emission of light**

Do these voiced fricatives have the same causal role in expressive formation that reduplication, medial verbs or root clusters do? Here we can see the usefulness of the control sample, where voiced fricatives occur at approximately the same rate (21% of all expressives in Table 5) as the control sample (23%). Thus we can exclude this feature as an artefact of the sample creation, a merely apparent, and not actual, causal factor in expressive formation.

Lastly, there is one category of expressive that did not cohere with Holisky (1988)'s results, but in an indirect way they throw her generalizations into sharper relief. These are the set of expressive verbs with ingressive aspect, which in Georgian are treated morphosyntactically as a kind of synthetic passive verb with an ingressive – *d* suffix:

INGRESSIVE EXPRESSIVE	ENGLISH GLOSS
ga-bdğvin-d-eb-a	will (begin to) sparkle, dazzle
ga-ğadğad-d-eb-a	(fire) will (begin to) sparkle/glow
ča-nak'vercxl-d-eb-a	(wood) will turn into glowing embers
ga-picx-d-eb-a	will get hot, heated
t'q'd-eb-a	break, shatter
še-mo-braxun-d-eb-a	will come stomping in
čačxap'un-d-eb-a	will rush down noisily
č'ianur-d-eb-a	drags itself out endlessly; is badly delayed
a-baban-d-eb-a	will stagger, shiver from fever

a-ğant'al-d-eb-a	will stagger (from one's bed)
dzundzul-d-eb-a	come out at a trot
c'a-ğerget'-d-eb-a	waddle about like a goose
a-q'vir-d-eb-a	will begin to cry out, clamor
a-raxrax-d-eb-a	will begin to rumble
a-prut'un-d-eb-a	will snort

**Table 9. Ingressive expressive predicates**

Although in some cases these verbs are lexically underived (e.g. *t'q'd-eb-a* 'it will break, shatter') many of these verbs are effectively ingressivized forms of noningressive alternants seen above and in the rest of the database. Such forms often have reduplication, large consonant clusters, and depictive semantics like noningressive expressives. They differ however in one very important point: they are never medial verbs. Instead, they have the morphological and syntactic properties of the second class of intransitive verb in Georgian: the stative intransitives (see Table 3). Like statives, they form their future desinences with a lexically specific preverb, inflect their present tense forms with stative *-a* (unlike the transitive and medial *-s*; see Table 4), and they assign exclusively nominative case to their single argument, as in the examples in Table 10. Thus the exceptions to Holisky's generalization about expressives themselves constitute a formal class.

	EMISSION OF LIGHT	EMISSION OF SOUND	SALIENT MOVEMENT
<i>PRES/ FUT</i>	cecxl-i ga-bdğvrin-d-eb-a fire-NOM PVB-sparkle-INGR-TH-3SG 'The fire will start to sparkle'	panjara a-raxrax-d-eb-a window.NOM PVB-rumble-INGR-TH-3SG 'The window will start to rumble'	bavšv-i še-mo-braxun-d-eb-a child-NOM PVB-VENTstomp-TH-3SG 'The child will come stomping in'
<i>AOR</i>	cecxl-i ga-bdğvrin-d-a fire-NOM PRV-sparkle-AOR.3SG 'The fire started to sparkle'	panjara a-raxrax-d-a window-NOM PVB-rumble-INGR- AOR.3SG 'The window rumble'	bavšv-i še-mo-braxun-d-a child-NOM PVB-VENT-stomp-INGR- AOR.3SG 'The child came in stomping'
<i>PERF- EVID</i>	cecxl-i ga-bdğvrin-eb-ul-a fire-NOM PRV-sparkle-TH-PF-3SG 'The fire has apparently started to sparkled'	panjara-i a-raxrax-eb-ul-a window-NOM PVB-rumble-TH-PF-3SG 'The window has apparently started to rumble'	bavšv-i še-mo-braxun-eb-ul-a child-NOM PVB-VENT-stomp-TH-PF- 3SG 'The child has apparently come in stomping'

**Table 10. Case assignment of different classes of ingressive expressives across tense-aspect series**

Thus unlike the forms in Table 6 which change from one series to the next, the expressives in Table 10 take *-i* nominative case subjects across tense/aspect series and consistently take preverbs characteristic of ingressives and stative intransitive verbs.

The implication of this second class of expressive predicate is that the morphosyntactic features of expressives – the way they assign case to their arguments, the way aspectual desinences are assigned in a given paradigm -- cannot be a direct expression of any one of their thematic roles, or of grammatical function, or of argument structure, or of their lexical semantics. Instead, the two different classes of expressives illustrate how the many-to-many relationship of case, agreement and tense-aspect marking is an underlying one, in which different parts of the grammatical architecture can trigger assignment to one or more of these paradigmatic subsystems. Thus expressives may be assigned to the medial class of atelic, agentive intransitive verbs, but if they take on ingressive semantics, this triggers wholesale reassignment to the class of ingressive predicates, with a consequent total shift of case-assignment, agreement and tense-aspect formation.

#### **§4. Concluding remarks**

This paper has surveyed the different ways in which expressive predicates behave across the understudied languages of the Caucasus. We have seen how expressive constructions exhibit marked variation in exponence, ranging from verbal stem suffixation, to nominal cliticization, to dedicated templatic slots on the verb, to complicated systems ideophones being incorporated in different ways into light-verbs. We have also seen how the extreme typological diversity of the Caucasus has acted as a constraint on how expressive language may manifest itself in different languages. Because the three autochthonous families differ so radically from each other in their phonological, morphological and syntactic profiles, it is difficult to find traits common to expressive constructions across the region which are yet not also common cross-linguistic properties found in expressives around the world. What works for a dependent-marking language with many phonemic vowels in Nakh-Daghestanian simply won't work for more polysynthetic languages with few vowels found in Abkhaz-Adyghean, nor yet again for Kartvelian which is both polysynthetic and yet has a famously complicated system of dependent case-assignment.

This paper also looked in considerable depth at the behavior of one Caucasian language, Georgian, and found that the behavior of expressives is not uniform even



within this one language. Different subclasses of expressives may manifest different kinds of exponence, either categorically or statistically, and other categories may crosscut these generalizations. Thus while verbs for manner of speaking, emission of light, emission of sound, and salient kinds of movement all have a tendency to behave in Georgian like ‘medial’ verbs which are atelic and agentive, verbs of emission of light are far more likely to have extreme consonant clusters in verb stems. On the other hand, all ingressive expressives, irrespective of their lexical semantics, belong to another morphosyntactic class altogether. Because the different classes of expressive behave in different ways in different contexts, Georgian thus shows that expressives are not one thing, but many different things, one thrown into sharp relief by the fascinating but typologically unusual system of Georgian morphosyntax more generally.

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