

Unmarked resultatives in Abaza and passive lability

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This paper describes the peculiar unmarked objective resultative construction in Abaza, a polysynthetic Northwest Caucasian language. I discuss the degree of similarity of this construction and its inceptive derivative to the cross-linguistic prototype of the passive. Given that the Abaza resultative is morphologically unmarked, I argue that it can be considered an instance of “passive lability”, which is a characteristic trait of the Mande languages. I also propose a tentative typology of passive lability based on the parameters of productivity, Aktionsart and the availability of agent expression.

1. Introduction

One of the striking features of the grammar of the Mande languages is the pervasiveness of lability, i.e. formally unmarked valency alternations (Letuchiy 2009a, 2013), see e.g. Vydrin (2017: 37; 2018) and Lüpke (2005), Vydrina (2011), Creissels (2015), Khachaturyan (2021). The most typologically unusual type of lability widely attested in the Mande languages is the so-called “passive lability”, whereby the distinction between active and passive constructions does not involve any dedicated formal marking on the verb apart from, possibly, concomitant use of transitive resp. intransitive variants of inflectional or periphrastic markers of such verbal categories as TAM, negation or person, see e.g. Cobbinah (2008), Vydrina (2011), Cobbinah & Lüpke (2012), Creissels (2014, 2015). Consider the following examples from Kakabe:

Kakabe (Western Mande, Guinea; Vydrina 2011: 190)

- (1) a. *Wùlèè bati Séeku kín*
dog.ART PRF Seeku bite
‘The dog bit Seeku.’
b. *Séeku bati kín*
Seeku PRF bite
‘Seeku has been bitten.’

While (1a) shows a transitive clause with two arguments, the agentive subject in the position before the analytic TAM marker and the patientive direct object in the position between the TAM marker and the verb, in (1b) we see an intransitive clause whose only argument (the subject) is interpreted as the patient.¹ There is no difference in the form of either the verb ‘bite’ itself or the TAM marker. Notably, the lexical semantics of the verb precludes the interpretation of (1b) as an anticausative construction not implying an agent (for a discussion of the rather vague boundaries between anticausative and passive types of lability, see e.g. Creissels 2014; Vydrina 2011: 198–202).

Example (2) from Mandinka differs from (1) in that here the active and passive clauses show distinct — transitive resp. intransitive — variants of the Incomplete Negative marker.

¹ Note that the position of the analytic TAM marker rules out the possibility of treating (1b) as involving subject ellipsis.

Still, the intransitive Incomplete Negative marker, as well as some other synthetic and analytic TAM markers signaling intransitivity in Mandinka, is not limited to passive constructions and hence cannot be considered a dedicated passive marker. Again, the lexical semantics of the verb necessarily implies activity by an agent, even if the latter cannot be expressed.

Mandinka (Western Mande, Senegal; Creissels 2015: 227)

- (2) a. *kew-ó te kúlúŋ-o dádáa-la*
 man-DEF INCMP.NEG.TR boat-DEF repair-INF
 ‘The man will not repair the boat.’
 b. *kúlúŋ-o tê dádáa-la*
 boat-DEF INCMP.NEG.INTR repair-INF
 ‘The boat will not be repaired.’

Although the Mande language family probably shows the greatest concentration of passive lability among the languages of the world (cf. Creissels 2018: 745), formally unmarked passive constructions are also sporadically found elsewhere (see Cobbinah 2008; Letuchiy 2013: 136–145; Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019: 188–189), and, notably, not only in languages with little morphology. Example (3) shows that in Central Alaskan Yupik the active and passive constructions differ only in the number of arguments and in the concomitant indexing of these arguments by verbal morphology; no dedicated passive marker is apparent² (see Mithun 2000: 90–93; Miyaoka 2012: 151–152, 904–909 on passive-like suffixes in Central Alaskan Yupik).

Central Alaskan Yupik (Miyaoka 2015: 1177, 1184; glossing modified)

- (3) a. *angute-m neqa ner-a-a*
 man-ERG.SG fish.ABS.SG eat-TR-IND.3SG>3SG
 ‘The man is eating the fish.’
 b. *neqa ner’-u-q ak’a*
 fish.ABS.SG eat-INTR-IND.3SG IAM
 ‘The fish is/has been eaten.’

Now consider example (4) from Abaza, a polysynthetic Northwest Caucasian minority language of Russia. In (4a), a transitive construction is shown featuring two arguments, neither of which is case-marked due to the absence of any core case-marking in Abaza, but both of which are cross-referenced on the verb. By contrast, in (4b) we see a stative intransitive construction glossed Resultative, whose only argument corresponds to the patient of (4a). Apart from the difference in cross-referencing and TAM inflection, the intransitive construction in (4b) does not contain any overt marker signaling the change in diathesis.

Abaza (Northwest Caucasian, Russia; elicited)³

- (4) a. *s-aká sará sə-j-χʷə́-d*
 1SG.PR-enemy 1SG 1SG.ABS-3SG.M.ERG-wound/AOR-DCL
 ‘My enemy wounded me.’

² Treating the “intransitive” suffix *-u* in (3b) as a marker of passive would be erroneous, at least because it occurs on intransitive verbal forms regardless of their relationship (if at all) to transitive ones.

³ The Abaza examples are given in the Caucasological transcription rather than in IPA. The most important divergences from IPA are as follows: ejective consonants are marked by a dot below or above the symbol; palatalization is marked by an apostrophe; *c*, *č*, *š*, *ʒ*, *ʃ*, *ž* denote dento-alveolar affricates and fricatives; *š*, *ž*, *č* denote the so-called hissing-hushing sounds whose phonetic interpretation remains controversial and which do not have corresponding IPA symbols. Stress is indicated in those cases when it was confirmed by native speakers, otherwise it is left unmarked.

- b. *sará* *s-χ^wə-b*
 1SG 1SG.ABS-wound/RES-NPST.DCL
 ‘I am wounded.’

This article focuses on the diathetic alternation shown in (4) and its relations to passive (see also Arkadiev 2018) and lability. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: In section 2 I present the basic features of Abaza morphosyntax necessary for my exposition. In section 3 I describe the unmarked resultative construction in Abaza and the inchoative derivation based on it, and in section 4 I discuss it from the cross-linguistic perspective of passive lability and offer a tentative typology of the latter.

2. The basic features of Abaza

Abaza (*abáza bəzšá*, ISO 639-3 *abq*) belongs to the Abkhaz-Abaza branch of the Northwest Caucasian family and is spoken by ca. 38 thousand people,⁴ mainly in the Abazinsky district of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic in Russia, as well as by ca. ten thousand people in Turkey (Chirikba 2012). In Russia, Abaza is one of the official languages of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic and has a written standard. Its current use, however, is largely restricted to colloquial situations and rural environments. Most speakers of Abaza in Russia are bilingual in Abaza and Russian, and many are trilingual, also speaking Kabardian (East Circassian), which belongs to a different branch of the same language family and has exerted considerable influence on Abaza. Even though Abaza is classified by Ethnologue as “stable”⁵ rather than “endangered”, together with other minority languages of Russia it is under a constant pressure from Russian. The main dialect of Abaza is Tapanta, often considered to be the only “Abaza-proper” variant (see e.g. the genealogical tree of the Abkhaz-Abaza dialects in Chirikba 2003: 14).

The data discussed in this paper has been mainly collected in 2017 and 2018 in the village Inzhich-Chukun (*jənž’əg’-č’kʷən*) of the Abazinsky district of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic during fieldtrips organized by HSE University and the Russian State University for the Humanities (Moscow). Most examples come from targeted elicitation (further marked “e”), but data from a small collection of oral narratives recorded and annotated by the members of our research team as well as from published texts are also used (marker “t”). Abaza is rather underdescribed; published sources include the grammars by Genko (1955) and Tabulova (1976) (in Russian), a short sketch by Lomtadze et al. (1989) and a generative account of certain aspects of morphosyntax by O’Herin (2002) (in English).

Like the other languages of the Northwest Caucasian family (see Hewitt 2005; Arkadiev & Lander 2020), Abaza is polysynthetic and predominantly morphologically ergative. It shows consistent head-marking, whereby all arguments are expressed by prefixal pronominal markers on verbs as well as possessed nouns and postpositions, while overt nominals thus cross-referenced lack any case marking. Abaza verbs also include affixes expressing valency change (causative, numerous applicatives, reflexive and reciprocal), evaluative, aspectual, modal, temporal and spatial meanings, negation, as well as the independent vs. dependent status of predication. The schematic structure of the verbal complex is shown in Table 1.

⁴ https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/documents/vol4/pub-04-05.pdf, accessed 30 January 2023.

⁵ <https://www.ethnologue.com/size-and-vitality/abq>, accessed 26 January 2023.

Table 1. The Abaza verbal template

		“preverbs”									“stem”					“endings”				
−12	−11	−10	−9	−8	−7	−6	−5	−4	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	
absolute	subordinators, negation	repetitive	potential, involuntative	applicatives	directional preverbs	locative preverbs	indirect object	ergative	negation	causative	sociative	root	directional suffixes	event operators	plural	aspect, tense	negation	past tense, modality	subordinators, force, emphasis	

Morphological ergativity in Abaza primarily manifests itself in the distinction between the *absolute* and the *oblique* series of pronominal and relative markers, see Table 2.

Table 2. Abaza absolute and oblique pronominal prefixes

	Absolute	Oblique
1Sg	<i>s(ə)-</i>	<i>s(ə)-/z-</i>
2SgM	<i>w(ə)-</i>	<i>w(ə)-</i>
2SgF	<i>b(ə)-</i>	<i>b(ə)-/p-</i>
3SgM	<i>d(ə)-</i>	<i>j(ə)-</i>
3SgF		<i>l(ə)-</i>
3SgN	<i>j(ə)-</i>	<i>a-/na-</i>
1Pl	<i>h(ə)-</i>	<i>h(ə)-/ʕ-</i>
2Pl	<i>ʂ(ə)-</i>	<i>ʂ(ə)-/ʒ-</i>
3Pl	<i>j(ə)-</i>	<i>r(ə)-/d(ə)-</i>
Rel	<i>j(ə)-</i>	<i>z(ə)-</i>

The prefixes of the absolute series occur in the leftmost slot –12 and are used for the S argument of intransitive verbs (5a,d) and the P argument of transitive verbs (5b,c). The prefixes of the oblique series are used to cross-reference the ergative A of transitive verbs in slot –4 (5b,c), the indirect and applied objects in slots –9, –8, –6 and –5 (5c), as well as adnominal possessors (5d) and adpositional objects (5d).

- (5) a. *d-ĉəw-əj-d*
3SG.H.ABS-cry-PRS-DCL
‘[The child] is crying.’ (t)
- b. *d-ʕa-r-g-χ-d*
3SG.H.ABS-CSL-3PL.ERG-carry/AOR-RE-DCL
‘They brought [the child] back.’ (t)
- c. *j-rə-z-ʕá-ʕ-ga-t*
3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-CSL-1PL.ERG-carry/AOR-DCL
‘We brought it for them.’ (t)
- d. *h-babəwʂka l-pnə h-ʕa-n.χa-n*
1PL.PR-granny 3SG.F.IO-at 1PL.ABS-CSL-remain-PST
‘We remained at our granny’s place’ (t)

Pronominal prefixes are obligatorily overt with one general exception: the 3rd person singular non-human and 3rd person plural absolute prefix *j(ə)-* is usually dropped if the predicate is immediately preceded by the corresponding full noun phrase, cf. examples (6a) and (6b).

- (6) a. *a-sabáj-k^wa-g'áj* *bzaj* *jə-ʕ-b-áj-t*
 DEF-child-PL-ADD good 3PL.ABS-1PL.ERG-see-PRS-DCL
 ‘We love (lit. see well) the children, too.’ (t)
- b. *piróg-g'áj* *[j-]s-č'p-áj-t*
 pie-ADD [3SG.N.ABS-]1SG.ERG-do-PRS-DCL
 ‘I also make pies.’ (t)

The formal difference between transitive and intransitive verbs in Abaza manifests itself in that only transitive verbs express their more agentive argument by a pronominal prefix in the ergative slot –4, as in the examples (5b), (5c) and (6). In addition to that, only transitive verbs omit their 2nd person singular ergative prefix in the imperative, cf. examples (7a) vs. (7b).

- (7) a. *bacaçaχ^wa* *sə-z-ʕa-Ø-gá*
 rods [3SG.N.ABS]1SG.IO-BEN-CSL-2SG.M.ERG-carry/IMP
 ‘Bring me some rods!’ (t)
- b. *w-ʕa-j* *wara!*
 2SG.M.ABS-CSL-come/IMP 2SG.M
 ‘Come with me!’ (t)

The majority of Abaza verbs unequivocally fall either into the transitive or into the intransitive class. Detransitivisation is rather marginal in Abaza apart from the construction discussed in this paper. Notably, reflexive derivatives of transitive verbs remain morphologically transitive and take the ergative prefix (Arkadiev & Durneva 2023). By contrast, intransitive verbs can be made transitive by the causative prefix *rə-*, cf. examples (8a) and (8b).

- (8) a. *h-ca-χ-t*
 1PL.ABS-go/AOR-RE-DCL
 ‘We went back.’ (t)
- b. *s-jə-r-ca-χ-t*
 1SG.ABS-3SG.M.ERG-CAUS-go/AOR-RE-DCL
 ‘He led me (home).’ (t)

However, there is also a number of genuinely labile verbs (see e.g. Gagiev 2000: 179–187) that can occur both in the transitive and the intransitive frames without any overt markers of valency change. Among them are P-labile verbs alternating between transitive and anticausative uses, see examples in (9). P-lability in Abaza is lexically restricted and resembles the corresponding phenomenon in West Circassian (see Letuchiy 2009b: 408–423).

- (9) a. *a-sabáj-k^wa* *a-qáš* *pə-r-čá-t*
 DEF-child-PL DEF-window LOC-3PL.ERG-break/AOR-DCL
 ‘The children broke the window.’ (e)
- b. *a-qáš* *p-čá-t*
 DEF-window LOC-break/AOR-DCL
 ‘The window broke.’ (e)

Another division of predicates in Abaza relevant for my exposition is that between static and dynamic verbs (see e.g. Tabulova 1976: 103–107). Static predicates comprise a closed class of verbs denoting posture, location, possession, and certain modal meanings. Besides that, nominals assume static verbal inflection when used predicatively. Dynamic predicates

form an open class, including not only verbs denoting activities and events, but some semantically stative predicates as well, e.g. ‘know’. All transitive verbs belong to the dynamic class.

The two classes differ in their morphology, most notably in the domain of TAM. While static predicates only distinguish between a present and a past tense form and lack the imperative, dynamic verbs have two future tenses (one of which formally coincides with the present tense of static verbs) and show an opposition between a perfective (Aorist) and an imperfective (Imperfect) past tense. On top of that, both classes show a distinction between so-called “basic” and “retrospectivised” tenses, which for static predicates boils down to Present vs. Past, whereas dynamic verbs have at least eight different forms. Table 3 shows the non-negative finite and non-finite tense forms of static and dynamic verbs. The two classes of verbs also take distinct suffixes of the Permissive mood: static *-zɬ/-zd* vs. dynamic *-rʂaɬ/-rʂad*.

Table 3. Tense forms of static and dynamic verbs

basic			retrospectivised		
	finite	non-finite		finite	non-finite
Static verbs					
Present	<i>-p̥/b</i>	<i>-əw</i>	Past	<i>-n</i>	<i>-z</i>
Dynamic verbs					
Present	<i>-əj-t̪/d</i>	<i>-wa</i>	Imperfect	<i>-wa-n</i>	<i>-wa-z</i>
Aorist	<i>-t̪/d</i>	∅	Retro-Aorist	<i>-n</i>	<i>-z</i>
Future I	<i>-wa-š-t̪/d</i>	<i>-wa-š</i>	Subjunctive I	<i>-wa-šə-n</i>	<i>-wa-šə-z</i>
Future II	<i>-p̥/b</i>	<i>-ra</i>	Subjunctive II	<i>-rə-n</i>	<i>-rə-z</i>

As can be seen from Table 3, the Present tense of static verbs is identical to one of the future forms of dynamic verbs, i.e. to Future II, which usually has some modal flavours, compare (10a) and (10b).

- (10) a. *d-ç̣a-p̥*
 3SG.H.ABS-sit-NPST.DCL
 ‘He is sitting.’ (Tabulova 1976: 179)
- b. *hə-j-ç̣ʂá-p̥* *aráʔa* *h-tə-j-š'tə-rnəs*
 1PL.ABS-3SG.M.IO-ask-NPST.DCL PROX.LOC 1PL.ABS-LOC.ELAT-3SG.M.ERG-let_go-PURP
 ‘Let’s ask him (God) to let us from here.’ (t)

Static verbs can be turned dynamic by means of the causative prefix *rə-* as well as the Inceptive suffix *-χa* and the Dynamic suffix *-zla*.⁶ The latter allows static verbs to build those forms that cannot be formed directly, e.g. the Future, cf. (11).

- (11) *ársa* *h-š'tá-zl-əw-š-ma?*
 PROX.ADV 1PL.ABS-be_down-DYN-IPFV-FUT-Q
 ‘Are we going to lie down in this way?’ (t)

There are also ways to turn dynamic verbs static, e.g. the Facilitative suffix *-χʷə* and the Difficultative suffix *-waç̣a*, both of which create monovalent intransitive predicates denoting a state of it being easy resp. hard to undergo the event expressed by the base verb, cf. (12).

⁶ The vowels of the Dynamic *-zla* and Imperfective *-wa* coalesce into *əw* [u] by a general morpho-phonological rule.

- (12) a. *awaʔa s-ʕa-j-ba-t*
 DIST.LOC 1SG.ABS-CSL-3SG.M.ERG-see/AOR-DCL
 ‘He saw me there.’ (t)
- b. *aʕaʂ’aʕ^w j-wəs a-çəq^wa ba-waĉa-ḥ*
 lazy_person 3SG.M.PR-work 3SG.N.IO-end [3SG.N.ABS]see-DFC-NPST.DCL
 ‘The end of a lazy person’s work is hard to see.’ (Tabulova 1976: 207)

Another, more productive means of “stativisation” of dynamic verbs is the construction shown in (4) above, which is the main focus of this article.

3. The unmarked resultative construction in Abaza

The diathetic alternation exemplified above in (4) and below in (13) is characterised by two features. The first is the elimination of the ergative A argument and hence a change from a transitive to an intransitive construction; the second is semantic stativisation and the conversion of the verb from the dynamic to the static class.

- (13) a. *a-ph^wʔspa a-ŕ ʕa-l-tə-d*
 DEF-girl DEF-door [3SG.N.ABS]CSL-3SG.F.ERG-open/AOR-DCL
 ‘The girl opened the door.’ (e)
- b. *sə-ŕ-k^wa w-zə-t-ḥ*
 1SG.PR-door-PL [3SG.N.ABS]2SG.M.IO-BEN-open/RES-NPST.DCL
 ‘My doors are open for you.’ (AbPo 2017: 16)

That the predicates like those shown in (4b) and (13b) belong to the static morphological class is supported by both morphological and syntactic evidence. First, such predicates take the suffix *-ḥ/b* in the Present tense (13b), the suffix *-n* in the Past tense (14a), suffix *-əw* in the non-finite forms of the Present tense (14b), as well as the static Permissive *-zə/-zd* (15a), as opposed to the dynamic Permissive *-rʕaṭ/-rʕad* in (15b).

- (14) a. *sará s-an-ʕá-j a-ŕ tə-n*
 1SG 1SG.ABS-REL.TMP-CSL-come DEF-door [3SG.N.ABS]open/RES-PST
 ‘When I came, the door was open.’ (e)
- b. *a-ŕ j-ʔá.ʒa-t-əw w-na-šəl-ra*
 DEF-door 3SG.N.ABS-REL.LIM-open/RES-PRS.NFIN 2SG.M.ABS-TRL-go_in-MSD
j-a-taqə-b
 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-need-NPST.DCL
 ‘While the door is open, you should go in.’ (e)
- (15) a. *a-ŕ tə-zd*
 DEF-door [3SG.N.ABS]open/RES-PRM.ST
 ‘Let the door be open.’ (e)
- b. *awəj a-ŕ sə-z-ʕá-l-tə-rʕa.d*
 DIST.SG DEF-door [3SG.N.ABS]1SG.IO-BEN-CSL-3SG.F.ERG-open-PRM.DYN
 ‘Let her open the door for me.’ (e)

Second, they combine with the Dynamic suffix *-zla* to form the Future tense (16a) and the non-finite Masdar form (16b):

- (16) a. *s-an-ʕá-j-ra a-ŕ tə-zl-əw-š-d*
 1SG.ABS-REL.TMP-CSL-come-FUT.NFIN DEF-door [3SG.N.ABS]open/RES-DYN-IPFV-FUT-DCL
 ‘When I come, the door will be open.’ (e)

- b. *waqǎn-la a-ŝ j-a.r.ḵǎ-zla-ra j-a-taqǎ-b*
 night-INS DEF-door 3SG.N.ABS-close/RES-DYN-MSD 3SG.N.ABS-3SG.N.IO-need-NPST.DCL
 ‘At night the door must be closed.’ (e)

Third, such forms can modify nouns similarly to adjectives by forming compounds with their heads, compare examples (17a) with a Resultative and (17b) with an underived adjective.

- (17) a. *awát ʒǎ-ŝa-r-šǎ rǎ-ça-h-čǎ-χ-t*
 DIST.PL water-CSL-CAUS-boil/RES [3SG.N.ABS]3PL.IO-LOC-1PL.ERG-pour/AOR-RE-DCL
 ‘We poured water into them.’ (t)
- b. *taba-dǎw-k^wa-la jǎ-h-rǎ-ʒǎ-n*
 pan-big-PL-INS 3SG.N.ABS-1PL.ERG-CAUS-roast-PST
 ‘We roasted it in large pans.’ (t)

Importantly, I contend that the use in the Resultative forms of morphological markers characteristic of static predicates does not legitimise an analysis of these markers as “expressing” the Resultative, just like the use of the Intransitive inflection in the Central Alaskan Yupik verbal form in (3b) above does not in and of itself “mark” the passive. The use of such markers is an automatic formal consequence of the change in transitivity and, in the case of Abaza, lexically encoded Aktionsart, which is **indirectly coded** (Lehmann 2014) by the use of the appropriate morphology but is not **signalled** (directly coded) by any dedicated or polysemous marker itself. This understanding is in line with the definition of **conversion** as a “word-formation process where the form of the converted item does not change, while its inflectional potential, its syntactic function and its meaning do, such that the item displays inflectional, syntactic and semantic properties of a new word class” (Valera 2015: 322); conversion does not preclude, but rather requires the use of the inflectional morphology associated with the different categories a lexical element can belong to without changing its own form.

Semantically, the forms in question instantiate clear cases of **objective resultatives** (Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988: 9), i.e. predicates that denote a state brought about by the event expressed by the base verb, and whose subject corresponds to the patient (direct object) of that verb. They manifest all the properties characteristic of resultatives as opposed to event-denoting predicates (Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988: 15–17): they are only formed from transitive telic verbs implying a change of state of the patient and only combine with those temporal adverbials and aspectual operators that modify states.

The latter property can be illustrated by adverbial expressions of temporal localisation, which yield a simultaneous reading in combination with stative predicates, including Resultatives (18a), in contrast to the sequential reading when combined with perfective forms of dynamic verbs (18b).

- (18) a. *s-an-ŝá-j a-ŝ tǎ-n*
 1SG.ABS-REL.TMP-CSL-come DEF-door [3SG.N.ABS]open/RES-PST
 ‘When I came, the door was open.’ (e)
- b. *osmán d-an-ps-g’ǎj*
 Osman 3SG.H.ABS-REL.TMP-die-ADD
- jará awáʔa dǎ-ça-r-ça-χ-t*
 3SG.M DIST.LOC 3SG.H.ABS-LOC-3PL.ERG-put/AOR-RE-DCL
 ‘When Osman died, they buried him there, too.’ (t)

Likewise, the Resultative forms can combine with adverbials of temporal duration like ‘for an hour’ (19a), but not with adverbials of temporal extent like ‘in a hour’, which only co-occur with predicates denoting a change of state (19b). Such adverbials are marked by the Instrumental case in Abaza.

- (19) a. *a-qás* *sahat-bžá-k* *j-tə-n*
 DEF-window hour-half-NUM 3SG.N.ABS-open/RES-PST
 ‘The window was open for half an hour.’ (e)
- b. *aráj* *a-tžó* *ʕwó-skʷša-la* *jə-r-č’pá-t*
 PROX.SG DEF-house two-year-INS 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-make/AOR-DCL
 ‘It took two years to build this house (lit. they built this house in two years).’ (e)

Besides that, the Resultative forms can combine with the Continuative suffix *-rkʷa* ‘still’ (20a), implying that the resultant state still holds at reference time. With dynamic verbs, the Continuative is only admitted with imperfective tenses (20b). For more details, see Klyagina & Panova (2019, 2021), Panova (2021: 48–52).

- (20) a. *a-qás* *p-čə-rkʷá-p*
 DEF-window [3SG.N.ABS]LOC-break/RES-CNT-NPST.DCL
 ‘The window is still broken.’ (e)
- b. *awəj* *a-č’mazaʕwtara* *də-n.χa-wa-rkʷ-əw-n*
 DIST.SG DEF-hospital 3SG.H.ABS-work-IPFV-CNT-IPFV-PST
 ‘S/he was still working in a hospital.’ (e) (Panova 2021: 49)

The Resultative forms, being stative, do not normally combine with expressions whose interpretation hinges on the dynamic and agentive components of the base verb’s meaning. These include such adverbials as ‘quickly’ (21a) and purpose clauses (22a), which freely combine with the transitive forms of the same verbs, see (21b) and (22b).

- (21) a. *ʔʔsağámšʔa* *lasó-ta* *j-ʕwə-b*
 letter quick-ADV 3SG.N.ABS-write/RES-NPST.DCL
 intended ‘The letter has been written quickly.’ (e)
- b. *sağámšʔa* *lasó-ta* *j-z-ʕwə-d*
 letter quick-ADV 3SG.N.ABS-1SG.ERG-write/AOR-DCL
 ‘I wrote the letter quickly.’ (e)
- (22) a. **a-tžó* *blə-p*
 DEF-house [3SG.N.ABS]burn/RES-NPST.DCL
a-straxófka *ʕa-ró-r-t-ra* *á.qaz.la*
 DEF-insurance [3SG.N.ABS]CSL-3PL.IO-3PL.ERG-give-MSD for
 intended: ‘The house is burnt in order (for them) to get insurance.’ (e)
- b. *a-tžó* *r-blə-t*
 DEF-house [3SG.N.ABS]3PL.ERG-burn/AOR-DCL
a-straxófka *ʕa-ró-r-t-ra* *á.qaz.la*
 DEF-insurance [3SG.N.ABS]CSL-3PL.IO-3PL.ERG-give-MSD for
 ‘They burnt the house in order to get insurance.’ (e)

I have also tested the possibility of expressing the agent in the Resultative construction by means of a phrase in the Instrumental case, but the speakers I consulted gave divergent

judgments. Examples like (23a,b) are accepted by some speakers and rejected by others and so far have not been attested in natural texts.

- (23) a. *%a-çapça-k^wá č'k^wən-k-la j-śá-w-ṗ*
 DEF-key-PL boy-INDF-INS 3PL.ABS-CSL-find/RES-NPST.DCL
 'The keys have been found by some boy.' (e)
- b. *%aráj á-č'k^wən j-ába j-aš'á-la d-bž'a-ṗ*
 PROX.SG DEF-boy 3SG.M.PR-father 3SG.M.PR-brother-INS 3SG.H.ABS-raise/RES-NPST.DCL
 'This boy has been raised by his uncle.' (e)

Nevertheless, the Resultative is often formed from verbs denoting events whose resultant states cannot come about spontaneously without an agent being involved, cf. (24) and (25). This shows that even though the Resultative suppresses the meaning components related to the activity of the agent bringing about the resultant state, such activity is implied in many if not most uses of the construction.

- (24) *a-č-k^wa a-ça-h^wa-ta h-čak^wa-t*
 DEF-ox-PL 3SG.N.IO-LOC-yoke/RES-ADV 1PL.ABS-plough/AOR-DCL
 'We ploughed with the oxen yoked in.' (t)
- (25) *awāj a-garod g'-k^wə-r-ša-mə-z-t*
 DIST.SG DEF-orchard [3SG.N.ABS]NEG.EMP-LOC-CAUS-surround/RES-NEG-PST.NFIN-DCL
 'The orchard was not fenced.' (t)

Further, like adjectives, the Resultative can attach the Inceptive suffix *-χα*, which turns it into a dynamic predicate denoting the resultant state's coming into being, compare examples (26a) and (26b).

- (26) a. *s-áχč'a-k^wa βəč'-ṗ*
 1SG.PR-money-PL [3SG.N.ABS]steal/RES-NPST.DCL
 'My money is stolen.' (state) (e)
- b. *s-áχč'a-k^wa βəč'-χα-t*
 1SG.PR-money-PL [3SG.N.ABS]steal/RES-INC/AOR-DCL
 'My money got stolen.' (event) (e)

This form, which I shall call "Inceptive", inherits from the Resultative the suppression of the agent and intransitivity, hence, like the Resultative, it does not combine with purpose clauses, compare (22a) above and (27a), and only marginally admits agent phrases in the Instrumental, compare (23) above and (27b).

- (27) a. **a-tzǝ blə-χα-t*
 DEF-house [3SG.N.ABS]burn/RES-INC/AOR-DCL
a-straxófkā řa-rǝ-r-t-ra á.qaz.la
 DEF-insurance [3SG.N.ABS]CSL-3PL.IO-3PL.ERG-give-MSD for
 intended: 'The house got burnt in order (for them) to get insurance.' (e)
- b. *%á-mačā-k^wa a-sabáj-k^wa-la j-žž'a-χá-d*
 DEF-dish-PL DEF-child-PL-INS 3PL.ABS-wash/RES-INC/AOR-DCL
 'The dishes were washed by the children.' (e)

However, being a dynamic telic predicate, the Inceptive, in contrast to the Resultative, combines with such adverbials as 'in half an hour' (28a) and 'quickly' (28b).

- (28) a. *a-həjsáp sahat-bžá-k-la j-č'pa-χá-d*
 DEF-problem hour-half-NUM-INS 3SG.N.ABS-make[RES]-INC[AOR]-DCL
 'The problem was solved in half an hour.' (e)
- b. *a-sažámšʔa lasó-ta j-ŋʷ-χa-d*
 DEF-letter quick-ADV 3SG.N.ABS-write[RES]-INC[AOR]-DCL
 'The letter was written quickly.' (e)

The Inceptive seems to be a rare construction, and it is probable that the examples just shown have been influenced by the Russian models used during elicitation (e.g. *письмо было написано быстро* for (28b)). Interestingly, the construction is systematically used in the Abaza translation of the Gospel of Luke (AbLu 2013⁷) in those loci where the Russian⁸ or English⁹ translations would use the passive, see (29) and (30).

- (29) *jg'əj j-a.ŋʷ.žá-χa-t* *a-nəhʷarta a-prapsa ŋʷ-ba-ta*
 and 3SG.N.ABS-tear_apart/RES-INC/AOR-DCL DEF-temple 3SG.N.IO-curtain two-CL.N-ADV
 'And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.' (Luke 23:45; Russian Synodal translation: *и завеса в храме раздралась со средине*)
- (30) *š-a-hʷa, jg'əj j-šə-t-χ-əw-š-t*
 2PL.ABS-DAT-ask/IMP and 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-give/RES-INC-IPFV-FUT-DCL
 'Ask, and it will be given you.' (Luke 11:9; Russian Synodal translation: *просите, и дано будет вам*)

Examples like (29) and (30) do not seem to be attested in the non-translated texts, at least in the two folklore collections I consulted (AbTales 2015 and AbTales 2016), and one might suspect that they sound rather artificial, even if they exploit a pattern existing in the language.

4. Does Abaza have passive lability?

As the previous section makes clear, the Abaza morphologically unmarked objective Resultative construction shares with passives the feature of elimination of the agent and pragmatic and syntactic foregrounding of the patient, but differs from canonical passives in several respects besides the absence of dedicated formal marking. The Resultative is lexically restricted, being only formed from telic verbs, and, as a fully stative construction, it is semantically non-equivalent to the base verb, with concomitant constraints on combinations with tense and aspect morphology and adverbial expressions. Thus, it can at best be considered a "statal passive", in contrast to the "actional passives" that denote the same event as the corresponding active (Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988: 45).

In this respect the Abaza unmarked Resultative differs sharply from e.g. the unmarked Passive construction in Kakabe, which, according to Vydrina (2011: 190–193), is admitted with virtually all transitive verbs and, even though it cannot include an overt expression of the agent, is clearly "actional" and not "statal", as can be seen in example (31).

⁷ Unfortunately, the electronic version of the translation available to me does not contain any metadata indicating the source(s) of translation.

⁸ Quoted after <https://allbible.info/bible/sinodal/lu/>, accessed 28 January 2023.

⁹ New International Version, quoted after <https://www.biblegateway.com/>, accessed 28 January 2023.

Kakabe (Vydrina 2011: 190)

- (31) a. *Fánta bi Séeke kéle-la*
 Fanta IPFV Seeku call-IPFV
 ‘Fanta is calling Seeku.’
 b. *Séeke bi kéle-la*
 Seeku IPFV call-IPFV
 ‘Seeku is being called.’

Other Mande languages even allow obliquely encoded agent phrases in their unmarked passive constructions, consider example (32) from Bambara.

Bambara (Western Mande, Mali; Creissels 2014: 920)

- (32) a. *wùlu má sògo dún*
 dog.DEF PFV.NEG meat.DEF eat
 ‘The dog has not eaten the meat.’
 b. *sògo má dún wùlu fê*
 meat.DEF PFV.NEG eat dog.DEF by
 ‘The meat has not been eaten by the dog.’

The unmarked passive in the Austronesian language Manggarai also freely admits oblique agent phrases, including personal pronouns, see (33). Moreover, according to Arka & Kosmas (2005: 100–102), such agent phrases are close to obligatoriness, since “otherwise no passive structure would be recognised”, although they admit that the agent expression can be omitted if the identity of the agent is either inferrable from the context or unimportant.

Manggarai (Austronesian, Indonesia; Arka & Kosmas 2005: 95)

- (33) a. *aku cero latung=k*
 1SG fry corn=1SG
 ‘I fry / am frying corn.’
 b. *latung hitu cero l=aku=i*
 corn that fry OBL=1SG=3SG
 ‘The corn is (being) fried by me.’

Still, even if non-canonical, statal passives can be considered a subtype of passive (cf. e.g. Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019: 98–99), and indeed Letuchiy (2013: 139–141) singles out the “stative type” as one of the subclasses of passive lability. Examples of labile verbs alternating between transitive and objective resultative uses come from such languages of Africa as Berber (Mettouchi 2004; Gutova 2013), Coptic (Cobbinah 2008: 18–20) and Songhay (e.g. Galiamina 2006: 367–368), example (34), as well as from some South American languages, e.g. Sanumá (Borgman 1990: 201–202), example (35). In none of these languages is the overt expression of the agent possible in the resultative construction.

Koyraboro Senni (Songhay, Mali; Heath 1999: 163)

- (34) a. *ay na kus-oo too hari*
 1SG.SBJ TR jar-DEF.SG fill water
 ‘I filled the jar with water.’
 b. *bidon-oo ga too hari*
 jug-DEF.SG IPFV be_full water
 ‘The jug is full of water.’

Sanumá (Yanomamic, Venezuela; Borgman 1990: 202)

- (35) *sama a pa-ki ke*
 tapir 3SG lie_on_ground-FOC IMMED.PST
 i. ‘(He) laid the tapir (on the ground).’
 ii. ‘The tapir lay down (on the ground).’

Notably, both in Sanumá and Songhay the classes of verbs showing passive lability of the stative type are lexically restricted. Thus, Borgman (1990: 201–202) speaks about “certain verbs” in Sanumá, specifically discussing positionals. For Koyraboro Senni, Heath (1999: 164) gives a small list of verbs without indicating how representative it is, while Galiamina (2006: 367) speaks of a “much smaller group of P-labile verbs” as compared to the group displaying the cross-linguistically common anticausative lability. By contrast, in Abaza the unmarked Resultative apparently can take any semantically appropriate transitive verb,¹⁰ which brings it closer to the Mande type of passive lability, and the situation in Tarifiyt Berber appears to be similar (Gutova 2013: 10–12).

In Table 4 I propose a tentative typology of passive lability based on the data from the languages mentioned above and on such parameters as the size of the class of verbs allowing passive lability, semantics of their passive use (stative vs. dynamic), and the possibility to express the agent.

Table 4. Types of passive lability

Language	Lexical restrictions	Semantic type	Agent expression
Bambara, Manggarai	none	dynamic	yes
Kakabe, Mandinka	none	dynamic	no
CA Yupik	telic impact on P	dynamic	no
Abaza	telic impact on P	stative ~ dynamic Inc	marginal
Berber	telic impact on P	stative	no
Koyraboro Senni, Sanumá	non-productive	stative	no

Table 4 shows a cline from apparently lexically severely restricted unmarked stative derivations in Koyraboro Senni and Sanumá to fully productive agented passives in Bambara and Manggarayi, with other languages falling in between and Abaza together with Berber providing examples of a highly productive stative-resultative type of lability. Of course, more languages could be added to this typology, some of them probably requiring a finer-grained set of parameters. Whether a meaningful boundary between “true passives” and “non-passives” can be drawn anywhere in a non-arbitrary fashion, is doubtful.¹¹ In my view, however, the potentially quantifiable parameter of lexical input and productivity of the construction is at least as important as that of its aspectual meaning.

¹⁰ I have to admit that I have not systematically studied lexical restrictions on the formation of the Resultative. It is clearly disallowed with such atelic transitive verbs as *ba* ‘see’ or *dər* ‘know’, however, my consultants did not always unanimously approve Resultative forms of some telic transitive verbs as well.

¹¹ It also remains an open empirical question whether a Yupik-type unmarked dynamic passive restricted to telic transitive verbs can include an overt agent phrase. So far, I have not encountered such languages.

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Abbreviations

1 — 1st person; 2 — 2nd person; 3 — 3rd person; ABS — absolutive; ADD — additive; ADV — adverbial; AOR — aorist; ART — article; BEN — benefactive; CAUS — causative; CL — classifier; CNT — continuative; CSL — cislocative; DAT — dative applicative; DCL — declarative; DEF — definite; DFC — difficilitive; DIST — distal demonstrative; DYN — dynamic; ELAT — elative; EMP — emphatic; ERG — ergative; F — feminine; FOC — focus; FUT — future; H — human; IAM — iative; IMMED — immediate; IMP — imperative; INC — inceptive; INCOMP — incompletive; IND — indicative; INDF — indefinite; INF — infinitive; INS — instrumental; INTR — intransitive; IO — indirect object; IPFV — imperfective; LIM — limitative ‘until’; LOC — locative preverb/locative case; M — masculine; MSD — masdar; N — non-human; NEG — negation; NFIN — non-finite; NPST — non-past; NUM — numeral; OBL — oblique; PFV — perfective; PL — plural; PR — possessor; PRF — perfect; PRM — permissive; PROX — proximal demonstrative; PRS — present; PST — past; PURP — purposive; Q — interrogative; RE — refactive; REL — relativizer; RES — resultative; SBJ — subject; SG — singular; ST — static; TMP — temporal; TR — transitive; TRL — translocative.

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