Burushaski

—

An Extraordinary Language
in the
Karakoram Mountains

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1   Introduction

Burúshaski (stress on the second syllable) is spoken by some fifty thousand people in northern Pakistan, the Hunzakuts, who live in the valleys of the Hunza and Yasin rivers (north of Gilgit) where these cut through the Karakoram Range [lit.ref. 5]. The language is not obviously related to any of the surrounding languages: the Indic languages of Pakistan or the Tibetan languages of China and northern Kashmir.

Although Burushaski has been compared to almost any language on earth, no fully convincing relationships have yet been established. Modern taxonomic methods are, however, beginning to yield results. Ruhlen (1989) [lit.ref. 7] still classified Burushaski as a language isolate: 'its genetic affiliation remains a complete mystery' (p. 126), but Ruhlen (1992) [lit.ref. 7] reports on a possible classification of Burushaski as a separate branch of a newly proposed Dené-Caucasian superstock. More recently, Blažek and Bengtson (1995) [lit.ref. 8] list tens of etymologies relating Burushaski to the Yeniseian languages, spoken by a hundred people along the Yenisei river in Siberia. Where appropriate, we have included these etymolgies in this survey. These etymologies are not (yet) supported by full reconstructions; to emphasize their tentative nature, we show them between square brackets.

The proposed Dene-Caucasian superstock comprises Basque, the North-Caucasian languages, Burushaski, the Yeniseian languages and the Sino-Tibetan languages in Eurasia, and the Na-Dené (Atabaskan) languages in North America. Blažek and Bengtson [lit.ref. 8] list 219 etymologies, some very convincing, others less so, to establish its existence. The group is estimated to have a time depth of more than 10000 years, and is thought to represent some (or perhaps all) of the "old languages" of Eurasia.

Burushaski exists in two dialectal variants, Hunza and Yásin (= Werchikwár), spoken in their respective river valleys; both rivers run north-south from the Karakoram Range –the Hunza about a hundred kilometers east of the Yasin– and flow into the Gilgit river. The differences between them seem smaller than those between the London and Liverpool variants of English (but larger than those between British and American English). Speakers of Hunza and Yasin Burushaski have little difficulty understanding each other. For an impression of the differences, see the chapter 'Numerals: Hunza Burushaski and Yasin Burushaski compared'. Lorimer [lit.ref. 4] contains extensive comparisons.

This survey is based on Yasin Burushaski, mainly because for this variant the most modern material is available [lit.ref. 1,2,3]. From the sometimes hesitant nature of the reports and from the differences between them it seems doubtful that together they describe the grammar of Burushaski completely, and it is obvious that the dictionaries are far from complete. The definitive work on Burushaski has not yet been written and much research remains to be done.

Although many adult speakers of Burushaski also speak Khowar, Shina or Urdu, Burushaski is the normal means of communication in both the Hunza and the Yasin valleys; it was and still is the carrier of a vigorous story-telling culture. Burushaski is not an endangered language.

Until recently, Burushaski was not a written language and original historical material is very scarce. Some texts have been written down by native speakers at the request of researchers; these texts are in the Urdu variant of the Arabic/Persian script. Lorimer [lit.ref. 4], part 2, contains many texts in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Berger [lit.ref. 1] and Tiffou [lit.ref. 2] supply more than a hundred

pages of text in romanization; we will use almost the same romanization in this survey. With the advent of the Karakoram Highway along the Hunza valley, the Hunzakut society has opened up, and literature is now being written in Burushaski [lit.ref. 5].

Due to external influences, more than half the present-day Burushaski vocabulary is of Urdu, Khowar and Shina origin (Khowar and Shina are two Northern Indic (Dardic) languages, closely related to Kashmiri and, somewhat further away, to Hindi/Urdu). It is the rest of its vocabulary and its structure that make Burushaski a language isolate. There are perhaps half a dozen loans from Turkish and one or two from the Tibetan language Balti, spoken on the other side of the Karakoram range.

2   General Structure and Phonetic Features

For all its romantic and exotic associations, Burushaski is not much weirder than Latin, Turkish or Finnish; of these three it is most reminiscent of Turkish in its structure. It has two or three cases for the nouns (see below) and a small number of locative suffixes; it has essentially one conjugation for the verb, plus a number of composite conjugations; and its sentence structure is similar to that of Turkish but much simpler. Its most remarkable features are that it has four genders for the nouns and that the indications of the object of the verb are the same as those for possession on the noun: 'I hit him' is expressed roughly as 'I do his hitting', as in many Amerind languages.

p	-	as in French *père* (i.e., voiceless)
ph	-	as in English *pair* (i.e., aspirated)
b	-	as in English *bear* (i.e., voiced)
t	-	as in French *tant*
th	-	as in English *tan*
d	-	as in English *Dan*
ṭ	-	retroflex t (i.e., with the tongue curled back)
ṭh	-	retroflex th (an aspirated ṭ, *not* the English *th*
ḍ	-	retroflex d
k	-	as in French *quand*
kh	-	as in English *can't*
g	-	as in English *gone*
q	-	the Arabic qof
x	-	as in Scottish *loch*
ɣ	-	a voiced version of x

Figure 1: Plosives in sets of three

c	-	English *ts*	ć	-	like English *ch*	c̣	-	retroflex ć
s	-	English *s*	ś	-	like English *sh*	ṣ	-	retroflex ś
z	-	English *z*	j	-	like English *j*	j̣	-	retroflex j

Figure 2: Sibilants in sets of three

2.1   Phonetic features

The consonant system of Burushaski is rather similar to that of Hindi/Urdu, except that the voiced aspirates (bh, dh, ḍh, gh, jh) and the retroflex n (ṇ) are missing. Most consonants in Burushaski come in groups of three: voiceless, aspirated and voiced. The plosives are shown in Figure 1, the sibilants (s-like sounds) in Figure 2. This arrangement in groups of three is significant in the language, since there is a phonetic change, called 'hardening', which turns the third consonant of each group into the first (and which does not affect the others); that is, b turns into p, ɣ into q, j into ć, etc. For one situation in which hardening occurs, see under 'Negation' below.

The other consonants are:

```
h, m, n, ng, w, y  - as in English
l                  - as in German, but often almost voiceless, especially before t
r                  - rolled, as in Spanish
```

In some words that start with `h-` the `h` hardens to `-k-`. It is possible that the frequent combination `-lt-` should be considered as a single consonant.

Burushaski has the usual five vowels `a`, `e`, `i`, `o`, and `u`. Stressed they sound like their Italian counterparts, unstressed they sound like the English vowels in *but*, *bell*, *hit*, *hot*, and *put*, as they would in Hindi. The great majority of Burushaski vowels is short, but stressed vowels can be long; a long vowel is marked by a circumflex ˆ by Berger and –more scientifically but less conveniently– by a macron ¯ by Tiffou. We use the circumflex: `ne` = *he*, `nê` = *him-of* = *his*. Occasionally an unstressed vowel is found to be long, or at least to have the (Italian) sound of a stressed vowel. In unstressed position, the difference between `e` and `i` tends to disappear, as it does between `o` and `u`. Berger writes `gúsmu` = *of a woman* where Tiffou writes `gúsmo`. If the first syllable is unstressed, the vowel in it tends to disappear at all: Berger writes `ceré-` = *to go*, Tiffou writes `cré-` (pronounce *tsre-*, not *kre*-!). Also, the word 'Burushaski' is often pronounced 'Brúshaski'.

Stress is fairly prominent, more so than in Italian but less than in English; its normal position is on the second syllable (as in Burúshaski), but all other positions are possible. Stress is indicated by an acute mark (´) on the vowel, except in words of one syllable which always carry stress; there are no 'small' unstressed words such as the English *an* in Burushaski.

Since the nature of a Burushaski vowel is determined by four factors, position (`a`, `e`, `i`, `o`, `u`), colour (what was called Italian versus English above), stress and length, a complicated picture emerges that is interpreted somewhat differently by the different authors. It would seem that the original Burushaski vocabulary has no long vowels, and that long vowels result only from two equal short vowels running together. Indeed `nê` = *his* can be interpreted as `né-e` = *he-of*, analogous to `hír-e` = *man-of* = *of a man* from `hir` = *man*. Many other examples of this phenomenon can be found in this and other texts. In addition to these composite long vowels, foreign loans and onomatopoeic words can also contain long vowels; an example is `ćâp ét-` = *to type* (lit. *to do "chahp"*). The Burushaski language section of the Lonely Planet Walking Guide "Trekking in the Karakoram and Hindukush" [lit.ref. 6] marks all stressed vowels as long.

Many nouns and verbs require a prefix and/or a suffix and may then require the stress to be on either of them. These nouns and verbs are shown in the dictionary with the acute mark on the hyphen before or after the word: an entry `´-skil` = *face* means that the word `skil` = *face* requires a (possessive) prefix which will carry the stress; e.g. `áskil` = *my face*.

3   Concerning the Burushaski Noun

Nouns are classified into four categories, similar to the genders in German or Latin; the criteria for the classification are somewhat different, though. The classification is based on three distinctions. The first and most important distinction is between countable and uncountable. Examples of countable things are `hir` = *man*, `huk` = *dog*, `balt` = *apple*, etc; examples of uncountable things are `cel` = *water*, `dayóm` = *flour*, `ji` = *life/soul*, etc. The group of countable things is called 'hx', that of uncountable things 'y', for reasons that will become clear in the next paragraph.

The second distinction is that countable things are divided in human and non-human; the human class is called 'h' and the non-human countable class 'x' (all humans are countable, of course). Third, the human class is split into masculine and feminine: 'hm' and 'hf'. In total this gives us the following classification:

Class	Description	Singular	Plural
hm	human males	n	w
hf	human females	m	w
x	animals and countable objects	s	c
y	materials and abstracta	t	k

The class of a noun shows up in many conjugations and declensions, often through the presence of a specific consonant associated with the class; for convenience these consonants are given in the columns 'Singular' and 'Plural'. An example of this phenomenon is:

```
khené  = this (man here)
khomó  = this (woman here)
gusé   = this (animal or thing here)
guté   = this (material here)
```

in which the `kh-`/`gu-` part expresses nearness and the rest (`-né`, `-mó`, `-sé`, `-té`) expresses the gender; a similar set exists for the plural.

In general, the above classification is more in accordance with reality than that of the Latin nouns in masculine, feminine, and neuter. All nouns referring to human males are hm, all nouns referring to human females are hf, all animals are x and almost all materials and abstracta are y. For concrete non-animate things, however, the situation is less clear. First there are a number of words that can be both x and y, with the expected difference in meaning: `bayú` = *salt* is y, and `bayú` = *lump of rock salt* is x. This is comparable to Dutch *de doek* = *the cloth, the rag* versus *het doek* = *the cloth, the material*. Something similar happens with fruits: `balt` = *apple* is x (as expected), but the same word `balt` = *apple tree* is y, as if apple trees were a continuous material from which apples are the lump-like manifestation. Another glimpse at the underlying difference between x and y is given by `-úl` (x) = *intestines of living animals* and `-úl` (y) = *intestines of dead animals*. [Yeniseian has `tūḷ` = *intestine*.]

Some gender assignations are not so easily explained: `ha` = *house*, e.g., is y, although it is countable and not a material, nor abstract; `íran` = *cream* is x, although it is a material and not countable; and `náus` = *stinginess* is x, although is an abstract. Especially, small plants are divided 50-50 over x and y. Another, somewhat amusing fact is that female spirits and fairies are hf, but male jinns and monsters are x rather than hm; `Xudá` = *God* is hm, though.

3.1 Noun forms

Nouns in Burushaski are used in noun forms. A noun form tells something about the function of the noun in the sentence; it often corresponds to a noun phrase in English: 'in my hand', 'for the benefit of the town'. A noun form normally has only one stressed syllable; some noun forms are so long as to have two stressed syllables and are then considered two separate words. The noun form consists of two parts: the noun part and the endings part. The noun part contains in order:
- possibly the owner (i.e., *my, your, his*, etc.), followed by
- the stem of the noun, followed by
- a number indicator, if applicable.

The ending part is either
- a case ending (absolutive, oblique or genitive), or
- a location ending, optionally followed by a direction ending, or
- a pseudo-case ending.

The main difference between the case endings and the pseudo-case endings is that at least one of the first group occurs in every sentence. An example of a noun form is `arénća` = *into my hand*, which consists of `a-rén-ći-a` = *my-hand-in-towards*. An example of a two-word noun form is: `sáhare gandíći` = *for the benefit of the town*, which consists of `sáhar-e gandí-ći` = *town-of benefit-in*.

Almost all endings are preceded by the hf indicator `-mu-` in hf words.

We shall now look at each of the above components, starting with the number indicator.

3.2 Number

Nouns can be singular in number, indefinite, plural or grouped. The simple form of the word indicates the singular: `haɣór` = *the horse(x)*. The indefinite is formed by suffixing `-en` to h nouns and `-an` to xy nouns (compare the h and xy forms of the word for 'one' under Numerals): `haɣóran` = *horse-some(x)* = *some horse*. The meaning of the indefinite is *some not yet mentioned X* and it is used to introduce new topics: `Hen híren bam, ...` = *one man-some was, ...* = *Once upon a time there was a man, ...* .

3.3 The plural

The plural is formed in quite a diverse number of ways; its use is equivalent to that in English: `haɣóra` = *the horses*. A group plural (also called 'double plural') is formed by adding `-ek` to the singular or plural of the word: `haɣórek` = *groups of horses*. This suggests that the real meaning of a plural like `haɣóra` is *group of horses* rather than just *horses*. Another example is `sésen` = *some person*, `ses` = *a group of people*, and `sések` = *groups of people*.

Words of the y class can also have plurals, even if they denote materials: `cel` = *water*, `celmíng` = *gushes of water*, `celmíngek` = *several gushes of water*.

Very broadly speaking, the regular plural ending for hx words is `-u` and that for y words is `-ing`; hx words of one syllable get `-ánc`. There are many particulars, however, and some two hundred nouns do not fall under these rules. Since the plural is difficult to predict and since the plural ending almost

always tells you if a word is class x or class y (hm and hf are never a problem), the dictionary gives the plural of each word, thus supplying two pieces of information for the price of one. [Yeniseian nouns have a plural in `-ng` and a collective plural in `-n`.]

The way the `-u` is connected to the noun for hx words depends on the final letter of the word. Words ending in a vowel get `-mu`: `páqu` = *loaf*, `páqumu` = *loaves*; those in `-n` have the `-n` replaced by `-yu`: `duśmán` = *enemy*, `duśmáyu` = *enemies*; those in `-s` have the `-s` replaced by `-śu`: `gilás` = *drinking glass* (from English), `giláśu` = *drinking glasses*; and the rest gets `-iśu`: `dōst` = *friend*, `dōstiśu` = *friends*.

Words of the y class get `-ing`, as explained above: `asqór` = *flower*, `asqóring` = *flowers*, except those ending in `-i`, which get `-ng`, unsurprisingly: `ćápi` = *pliers*, `ćáping` = *pairs of pliers*.

In both classes there are irregular plurals by the dozens; Figure 3 shows some examples which will give an impression of the variety (in addition to the `haγóra` = *horses* shown above). We see that the plural of `dasén` = *girl* is a word totally unrelated to `dasén` (although it is clearly related to `gus` = *woman*). This phenomenon, which is called 'suppletion', is rare in Burushaski, as it is in English (*I go* versus *I went* is an example). Hunza Burushaski has no suppletion is this case: `dasín` = *girl*, `dasíwanc` = *girls*. [Burushaski `gus` = *woman* may be related to Yeniseian `qos` = *witch*.]

Class	Singular	Plural
hm	`hir` - man	`hurí` (also `huríkia`) - men
hf	`gus` - woman	`guśínga` - women
hf	`dasén` - girl	`guśéngia` - girls
h	`gamáiç` - neighbour	`gamáiću` (ć, not ç!) - neighbours
x	`hal` - fox	`haljó` - foxes
y	`ha` - house	`hakíćang` - houses
y	`cel` - water	`celmíng` - gushes of water

Figure 3: Examples of plurals

4 Possession, Location, Direction

The possessor of a noun is expressed by putting a form of the personal pronoun before the noun, as it is in English: *my foot*; but there the similarity ends. Figure 4 shows the various forms of the possessive pronoun prefixes in Burushaski. The unstressed `i-` is almost universally left out (indicated by the square brackets in Figure 4); the unstressed `u-` is also often omitted.

	Possessive/Experiencer		
person	Type I	Type II	Type III
I	`a-`	`á-`	`â-`
you	`gu-`	`gó-`	`gô-`
he (hm)	`[i-]`	`é-`	`ê-`
she (hf)	`mu-`	`mó-`	`mô-`
it (x)	`[i-]`	`é-`	`ê-`
it (y)	`[i-]`	`é-`	`ê-`
we	`mi-`	`mé-`	`mê-`
you	`ma-`	`má-`	`mâ-`
they (hmf)	`u-`	`ó-`	`ô-`
they (x)	`u-`	`ó-`	`ô-`
they (y)	`[i-]`	`é-`	`ê-`

Figure 4: The personal pronoun prefixes

There are two types of nouns in Burushaski with respect to possession: those that can occur without a possessor and those that cannot; the latter are called 'inalienable'. Most words, and certainly all foreign words can occur without a possessor, but most family relations and body parts require a possessor upon each and every use, as in many American Indian languages (for instance Navaho and Hopi, but also in many, many others). Although the dictionary says that the word for 'hand' is `-rén`,

the hyphen before it shows that this word always requires a possessor and that there is in reality no word for just 'hand'. A speaker of Burushaski, asked 'What is the word for "hand"', will answer **arén** = *my-hand* or **gurén** = *your-hand*, depending on where you point.

Words that do not require a possessor can be given a possessor by putting the genitive of the corresponding pronoun (see Figure 5) in front of the word, much like the English *my, your*, etc.:

jâ haɣór	= *of-me horse*	= *my horse*
gô haɣór	= *of-you horse*	= *your horse*
nê haɣór	= *of-him horse*	= *his horse*
mô haɣór	= *of-her horse*	= *her horse*
etc.		

Most of the inalienable words get Type I prefixes; a few get Type II and only two get Type III. The Type I words come in two varieties, those that have the stress on the word itself (e.g. **-rén** (y) = *hand*) and those that have the stress on the prefix (e.g. **-skil** (y) = *face*). So we get

arén	= *my hand*		**áskil**	= *my face*
gurén	= *your hand*		**gúskil**	= *your face*
ren	= *his hand*		**ískil**	= *his face*
murén	= *her hand*		**múskil**	= *her face*
etc.				

Note that we have **ren** = *his hand*, rather than **irén**, since the unstressed **i-** is normally omitted. So there *is* a word **ren** from **-rén** = *hand* after all, but it means *his hand* rather than *hand*. Often the genitive of the pronoun is put before these forms, for good measure: **jâ arén** = *of-me my-hand*, **nê ren** = *of-him his-hand*.

A very probable theory says that Type II words were originally Type I words that started with a short **-a-**, and that the **-a-** has become assimilated to the Type I prefixes to form the Type II prefixes. Basing ourselves on this theory, we mark the hyphen before the Type II words with a small a: **açu** = *sibling of the same sex (brother/sister)*. Type II prefixes always carry the stress; so with this word we get:

áçu	= *my brother/sister*
góçu	= *your brother/sister*
éçu	= *his brother*
móçu	= *her sister*
etc.	

(Berger [lit.ref. 1] uses a hyphen with a dot on top: ⸱, which is difficult to distinguish from ⸱. Lorimer [lit.ref. 4] writes the hypothetical **a** (**-aço** for Hunza Burushaski) but the word does not really occur in this form).

The two nouns that get Type III endings are **Askir** = *father-in-law* and **Askus** = *mother-in-law*, in which the Type III has been indicated by a small capital **A** over the hyphen. This yields forms like **âskus** = *my-mother-in-law*. One can suppose that these words derive from **hir** = *man* and **gus** = *woman*, resp., through an infix **-s-** which produces hardening of the following consonant. What the meaning of this infix would be is unknown.

To emphasize ownership, **-ya** = *own* can be used: **áya ha** = *my own house*. The word **-ya** is also used in a number of idiomatic expressions, for example:

áya	**bi**	= *it is mine*
my-own	it-is	

4.1   Case endings

There are three cases: absolutive, oblique and genitive, but the forms of the oblique and the genitive are almost always the same, so the impression may easily arise that there are only two cases.

The absolutive has no ending, and the oblique and the genitive are both marked by an ending **-e**. One difference between them is that the genitive **-e** is preceded by the hf indicator **-mu-** for hf words in the singular, and the oblique is not. Another is that the genitive of *you* is **gô** and the oblique is **un** (see Figure 5). Also, older material and some frozen expressions suggest that the genitive ending was **-o** in the past. All this shows that the oblique and the genitive are indeed different cases.

[Yeniseian has **'aj** = *I* for Burushaski **ja**, and **'u, ku** = *you* for Burushaski **un, gu**. This is one of the most convincing correspondences.]

6

	Case		
person	abs.	obl.	gen.
I	ja	jâ	jâ
you	un	un	gô
he (hm)	ne	nê	nê
she (hf)	mo	mô	mô
it (x)	se	sê	sê
it (y)	te	tê	tê
we	mi	mî	mî
you	ma	mâ	mâ
they (hmf)	we/u	wê/u	wê/u
they (x)	ce	cê	cê
they (y)	ke	kê	kê

Figure 5: The personal pronouns

The `-e` disappears after unstressed final vowels, but lengthens stressed vowels; examples are shown in Figure 6. Many additional examples that follow the above rules can be found among the pronouns shown in Figure 5. The forms separated by / are alternative forms; the left ones are the more usual ones.

Noun	Absolutive	Oblique	Genitive	Comment
a man	hir	híre	híre	
a woman	gus	gúse	gúsmu	-e disappears
some man	híren	hírene	hírene	indefinite number
some woman	gúsen	gúsene	gúsenmu	-mu with indef.
women	guśínga	guśínga	guśínga	no -mu with plural
a horse	haɣór	haɣóre	haɣóre	
horses	haɣóra	haɣóra	haɣóra	-e disappears
a cow	biá	biâ	biâ	stressed -á lengthened
my brother	áçu	áçu	áçu	man speaking
my sister	áçu	áçu	áçumu	woman speaking
the dog and	huk ka	huk ka	huk ka	-e to last noun only
the cat	buś	búśe	búśe	

Figure 6: Examples of case endings

When case endings are added to a compound consisting of more than one noun, only the last noun gets the endings, as can be seen in the last example in Figure 6.

The third person pronouns double as articles, both in the singular: `hir` = *a man*, `ne hir` = *the man*, and in the plural: `haɣóra` = *horses*, `ce haɣóra` = *the horses*. In the oblique, only the noun gets the ending `-e`: `ne hire` = *the man (oblique)*.

The absolutive is used for the subject of the intransitive verb and for the object of the transitive verb; the oblique is used for the subject of the transitive verb only. In other words, the absolutive indicates the 'experiencer' and the oblique the 'actor' of an event. This is profoundly different from the nominative-accusative scheme Europeans (except the Basques!) are used to, which is why different terminology is used. Examples are:

ne	hir	wáli	
the	man(abs)	fell-he	= *the man fell*

ne	híre	mo	gus	muyéci	
the	man(obl)	the	woman(abs)	her-saw-he)	= *the man saw the woman*

mo	gúse	ne	hir	yécu	
the	woman(obl)	the	man(abs)	him-saw-she	= *the man saw the woman*

Now it would be tempting to say that Burushaski just has subject and object reversed, and that the verb **-yéc-** which the dictionary says means 'to see' actually means 'to be seen', but this is incorrect: the verb's ending is determined in each case by the real subject of the sentence! In **ne hir wáli** = *the man (absolutive) fell*, the final **-i** indicates an hm subject and derives from the absolute form **hir** = *man (absolute)*, but the final **-i** in **ne híre mo gus muyéci** = *the man (oblique) saw the woman (absolutive)* indicates again an hm subject but derives from the oblique form **ne híre** = *the man (oblique)*. And in **mo gúse ne hir yécu** = *the woman (oblique) saw the man (absolutive)*, the final **-u** on **yécu** = *him-saw-she* is in accordance with the hf nature of **mo gúse** = *the woman (oblique)*.

4.2 Location and direction endings

There are three location endings:

-ći	=	*in*
-ce	=	*at, near, attached/pressed to the outside of*
-yaṭe	=	*on, with (= by using)*

and two direction endings:

-a (**-ɣa** after vowels)	=	*to, towards*
-um	=	*from*

Each of these can be used as is, or be combined with one of the other group, where the location endings come first and lose their final vowel. These endings are, like all endings except the oblique **e**, preceded by the hf indicator **-mu-** for hf words in the singular. The location ending **-ce** lengthens a preceding stressed vowel, **-ći** and **-yaṭe** do not. Figure 7 shows some examples.

Form	Ending	
jáɣa	**-ɣa**	= *for me*
jâcum	**-cum**	= *from me* (lengthened vowel)
gógocum	**-cum**	= *from you* (irregular, your-you-at-from)
mómuɣa	**-ɣa**	= *for her* (with inserted **-mu-**)
áćumucum	**-cum**	= *from my sister* (with inserted **-mu-**)
śáhara	**-a**	= *to town*
śáharum	**-um**	= *from town*
arénćum	**-ćum**	= *out of my hand* (my-hand-in-from)
dányaṭe	**-yaṭe**	= *on a stone / with a stone*
háyaṭum	**-yaṭum**	= *down from the house* (house-on-from)
gúnccum gunc	**-cum**	= *from day to day* (day-at-from day)
téyaṭe	**-yaṭe**	= *then, next* (that(y)-with)

Figure 7: Examples of location endings

The ending **-ce** has no direct English equivalent and often requires a special translation, as in:

góṣṭingce
your-waist-(attached-to) = *around your waist*

from **aṣṭing** = *waist (y plural)*.

4.3 Pseudo-case endings and composite noun forms

There are two or three other less frequent case endings, of which we will only mention **-ule** = *at (at a certain time)*:

te gúncule
that day-at = *on that day.*

And then there are dozens of compound endings, corresponding to English structures like 'on account of', 'according to', etc. We have already seen

śáhare gandíći
town-of benefit-in = *for the benefit of the town;*

another is

$$\frac{\text{sénde} \quad \text{it}}{\text{river-of} \quad \text{remote-side}} = \textit{at the other side of the river.}$$

5 Concerning Adjectives and Adverbs in Burushaski

Adjectives behave to a large extent as nouns; there is an adjective śuá = *good*, but it is difficult to tell whether it means 'good' or 'a good person or thing'. It may be used attributively (directly with the noun), as in se śuá haɣór = *this good horse*; but when used predicatively (in a statement) it is used as a noun:

$$\frac{\text{se} \quad \text{haɣór} \quad \text{śuán} \qquad \text{bi}}{\text{this} \quad \text{horse} \quad \text{a-good-one} \quad \text{is}} = \textit{this horse is good.}$$

Many Burushaski adjectives end in **-um**, which may be related to the ending **-um** = *from*, which we have seen above. The nature of this relation may be shown by examples like **śáharum ses** = *town-from people*, which can either be interpreted as 'people from town' (case ending) or 'town people' (adjective).

The main property of adjectives in Burushaski which distinguishes them from nouns is that they may be used with different classes. Quite a number of adjectives have different forms for singular, hx plural and y plural, much along the same lines as nouns:

matúm haɣór	= *a black horse* (x singular)
matúmiśu haɣóra	= *black horses* (x plural)
matúming réing	= *his black hands* (y plural)

and some are irregular:

bárdum balt	= *a red apple* (x singular)
bárju balt	= *red apples* (x plural)

(the word **balt** = *apple* is irregular too, since it does not change its shape in the plural). But most have one form only; **śuá** = *good* is an example:

śuá hir	= *a good man* (hm singular)
śuá báltiśu	= *good kinds of apples* (x double plural)

5.1 Comparison

Comparison ('more') is expressed with the location ending **-cum** = *from* in the following way:

$$\frac{\text{Jâcum} \qquad \text{nê} \quad \text{buṭ} \quad \text{hem} \qquad \text{bái.}}{\text{me-from} \quad \text{he} \quad \text{much} \quad \text{knowing} \quad \text{is.}} = \textit{He knows more than I do.}$$

that is, 'From me as a point of reference he knows much'.

For the superlative ('most') comparing to **khul** = *all* is used:

$$\frac{\text{khúlcum} \quad \text{śuá} \quad \text{haɣór}}{\text{all-from} \quad \text{good} \quad \text{horse}} = \textit{the best horse.}$$

And the English expression 'the very best' is rendered as 'the good of good', quite reasonably:

śuácum śuá gaṭúnc = *the very best trousers.*

This expression looks remarkably like *summa summorum*, *the book of books*, etc.

5.2 Adverbs

There are very few adverbs in Burushaski, and those that exist are not derived from the corresponding adjective:

humálkum	= *quick*
ṣáu	= *quickly*

An unexpected source of adverbs are the composite verbs (explained below):

ɣaṣáp ét-	= *to sweep the floor* (lit. *to do 'ɣaṣáp'*)
ɣaṣáp	= *swiftly*

5.3 Adverbs of place

The adverbs of place in Burushaski come in three series, one derived from `akhó-` for close proximity, one from `tó-` for further away and one from `ít-` for 'at the other side'; we show here the basic forms plus those with the simple direction endings, but there are many more:

akhó = *here*	to = *there*	it = *over there*
akhóla = *hither*	tóla = *thither*	íta = *to over there*
akhólum = *from here*	tólum = *from there*	ítum = *from over there*

6 Strange Things about Verbs

The bad news is that Burushaski has perhaps as many paradigms as Latin, but the good news is that they are much more regular. Except for the verbs 'to be', 'to come' and 'to go', there are no really irregular verbs. Therefore the paradigms can be given using any verb. Traditionally, (that is, both by Lorimer and Berger), verb paradigms are shown for the verb `ᴀt-` = *to do*. Since it requires an experiencer (a 'possessor'), the actual form used is `ét-` = *to do it (y)*. Before we can present a paradigm, we first have to discuss two features of the Burushaski verb: its three stems and its prefix and suffix scheme. After these and the paradigms, we will discuss the d-verbs, the consecutive, the imperative and negation.

6.1 The three stems

The Burushaski verb has three stems: a past stem, a present stem, and a consecutive stem. The past stem is the unadorned root of the verb, and it is the one given in the dictionary. It is used for the past tenses but also for other purposes, for instance for the imperative, and, with the directional ending `-a` = *towards*, for a kind of infinitive of purpose: `éta` = *in order to do it*.

The present stem is in principle derived from the root (past stem) by suffixing `-ć`: `biśá-` = *to throw a y object* has `biśáć-` for present stem. But if the root ends in a consonant, the `-ć-` modifies this consonant according to a complicated set of rules; to avoid problems, the dictionary gives the present stem for each verb in addition to the past stem. In the verb `ét-` = *to do it (y)*, the t is absorbed into the `-ć-`, and the present stem is `éć-`.

The consecutive stem (used for such consecutive phrases as 'He picked up his coat and ...') is equal to the root, except that its initial consonant is hardened, as described in the section on phonetic features, and that it has the stress on the first syllable, regardless of where it is in the root. The consecutive stem of `biśá-` = *to throw a y object* is thus `píśa-`, with hardening and shifted stress, and that of `ét-` = *to do it (y)* is an unchanged `ét-` since it has neither an initial consonant nor shiftable stress.

6.2 Prefixes and suffixes

Whereas active languages distinguish subject and object and ergative languages have actors and experiencers, Burushaski has subjects, actors and experiencers. Whether this hybrid system is original to Burushaski or the result of external influences on an originally ergative system, is unknown. As we have seen, the experiencer is the subject of the intransitive verb and the object of the transitive verb; the actor is the subject of the transitive verb. In 'I fell', 'I' is the experiencer/subject; in 'I saw her', 'I' is the actor/subject and 'her' is the experiencer/object. This takes some getting used to.

Almost all verb forms have an experiencer prefix and a subject suffix. The experiencer prefixes are the same as the possessive prefixes; to emphasize this fact, we shall translate them as possessive in the literal translations. In `ja a-wál-a` = *I (abs.) my-fell-I* = *I fell*, the prefix `a-` designates me as the experiencer and the suffix `-a` designates me at the same time as the subject. In `jâ mu-yéc-a` = *I (obl.) her-saw-I* = *I saw her*, the prefix `mu-` designates her as the experiencer and the suffix `-a` designates me as the subject, as in the previous example. Also, `ja` in the first sentence is in the absolutive, since it is the experiencer, and `jâ` in the second is in the oblique, since it is the actor. To summarize, the full intransitive verb form consists of

experiencer-prefix + verb + subject-suffix (subject=experiencer)

and the full transitive verb form consists of

experiencer-prefix + verb + subject-suffix (subject=actor)

The forms are structurally the same, but the interpretation of the subject suffix differs.

Note that the é- in ét- = *to do it (y)* is the experiencer prefix of class y.

With all this out of the way, we can now turn to the actual paradigms.

6.3   The paradigms

To show the subject endings of the verb, we present here the paradigm for the Past I tense, which, unsurprisingly, is based on the past stem:

jâ éta - I did it   mî éten - we did it
un éta - you   mâ éten - you all
nê éti - he   wê éten - they (hm)
mô étu - she   wê éten - they (hf)
sê éti - it (x)   cê éten - they (x)
tê éti - it (y)   kê éti - they (y)

Where there is a Past I tense, the Past II tense cannot be far. Its endings are formed by inserting an -m- in the previous endings:

jâ étam - I did indeed do it   mî étemen - we did indeed do it
un étuma - you   mâ étemen - you all
nê étimi - he   wê étemen - they (hm)
mô étumu - she   wê étemen - they (hf)
sê étimi - it (x)   cê étimi - they (x) (!)
tê étimi - it (y)   kê étimi - they (y)

The Past II emphasizes the fact that it happened more than the happening itself. The translation with 'indeed' gives the idea, but is too heavy. Note that cê = *they (x)* has étimi rather than étemen.

Almost the same endings are used for the Past III tense, in which the (past) stem is immediately followed by -âsc- (pronounced '-âsts-'!):

jâ étâscam - I did it   mî étâscemen - we did it
un étâscuma - you   mâ étâscumen - you all
nê étâscimi - he   wê étâscumen - they (hm)
mô étâscumu - she   wê étâscumen - they (hf)
sê étâscimi - it (x)   cê étâscimien - they(x) (!)
tê étâscimi - it (y)   kê étâscimi - they (y)

Again the x plural form is unexpected. This is an example of a long unstressed vowel, since the stress remains on the verb: ét-. One can easily imagine that étâscam = *I did it* is composed of éta áscam in which éta is the infinitive *to do it* and áscam is the first person singular of some auxiliary verb ásc- not used otherwise.

The Past III is used for side issues, side lines in the story:

Te   zamanáule uțánc   buț qaimát   bién.
that time-at   camels(x) very expensive were(x)(Past I.)
    = *At that time camels were very expensive.*

Te   zamanáule uțánc   buț qaimát   biénâscimi,...
That time-at   camels(x) very expensive were-as-you-should-know(x)(Past III),...
    = *Now, at that time camels were very expensive, ...*

where the first is part of the main story and the second is side information.

The same Past II endings with the *present* stem provide the future (rather than the present) tense:

jâ éćam - I will do it   mî éćan - we will do it (!)
un éćuma - you   mâ éćemen - you all
nê éćimi - he   wê éćemen - they (hm)
mô éćumu - she   wê éćemen - they (hf)
sê éćimi - it (x)   cê éćimi - they (x)
tê éćimi - it (y)   kê éćimi - they (y)

Again note an unexpected form, this time for mi = *we*. Now one would expect the fourth combination, the Past I endings with the present stem, to produce a fourth tense –the present or a second future perhaps– but this combination does not exist.

The above paradigms may give the impression that the verb is ét-, but we have to keep in mind that the verb is actually a̲t- = *to do* and that the é- = *he/it (hmxy)* is the experiencer prefix. When the experiencer (object) is not hmxy, the prefix changes and we seem to get a different verb, but that is just our outlook:

nê	ja	phuṭ	áti	
he(actor)	me	glance	my-did-he	= *he looked at me*
nê mo phuṭ móti				= *he looked at her*
mô ne phuṭ étu				= *she looked at him*
mâ mi phuṭ méten				= *you all looked at us*
etc.				

And when the experiencer is the subject, as with intransitive verbs, the prefix and the ending move in unison, as seen in the Past I tense of the verb -mán- = *to become*:

ja amána - I became	mi mimánen - we became
un gumána - you	ma mamánen - you all
ne máni - he	we umánen - they (hm)
mo mumánu - she	we umánen - they (hf)
se máni - it (x)	ce umánen - they (x)
te máni - it (y)	ke máni - they (y)

6.4   Compound tenses

The above are the 'simple' tenses, simple in that the verb forms consist of one word. The compound tenses are formed by using the past or present participle with forms of the verb ba- = *to be*. The past participle is derived from the past stem by adding -m after vowels (biśám = *having thrown a y object*), and -um after consonants, except that the participle ending for the first persons singular and plural is -am: étam = *having done it (I or we)*, étum = *having done it (all other persons)*. The similarity to the -um endings of many adjectives may be significant, but unlike these adjectives the participle does not have plural forms, and is also different in other respects. The present participle is derived in the same way from the present stem: bićám = *throwing a y object*), éćam = *doing it (I or we)*, éćum = *doing it (all other persons)*.

There are many combinations of these participles with tenses of ba- = *to be*, of which we show here the present:

jâ éćam ba - I am doing it	mî éćam ban - we are doing it
un éćum ba - you	mâ éćum ban - you all
nê éćum bái - he (!)	wê éćum ban - they (hm)
mô éćum bu - she	wê éćum ban - they (hf)
sê éćum bi - it (x)	cê éćum bién - they (x) (!)
tê éćum duá - it (y) (!)	kê éćum bicá - they (y) (!)

Again the unexpected forms are marked with an exclamation mark.

The verb ba- = *to be* exists in the present tense only (if the above forms indeed represent the present tense of ba-); in addition there is a past participle, which is used alone and in combination with other participles to express compound past tenses. Its form is normally bam = *having been (...)*, but differs for hf (bum), x (bim), y (dulúm), x plural (biém) and y plural (bicúm). Examples are

ja	hurútam		bam	
I	having-been-sitting-I		was	= *I had been sitting*

mo	hurútum		bum	
she	having-been-sitting(hf)		was(hf)	= *she had been sitting*

Note the interesting and quite logical difference in meaning between

étum		bái	
it-having-done		he-is	= *he has done it (and now it's finished)*

and

éćum	bam	
it-doing	he-was	= *he was doing it (while something else was going on)*

The present participle is considered by Burushaski speakers as 'the verb itself': asked for the Burushaski translation of 'to fall', the speaker will answer walćúm = *falling*. (It will be clear that the

dictionary form `-wal-` cannot serve since it is a grammatical abstraction, not a word in the language.)

7 More Kinds of Verbs

The above straightforward simple verb is actually a minority in Burushaski; there are two other kinds of verbs, compound verbs (not to be confused with compound tenses) and d-verbs, which together are more numerous.

7.1 Compound verbs

Although many verbs consist of a root, possibly with a prefix, at least an equal number of verbs consist of a word followed by an auxiliary verb, generally **ét-** = *to do it(y)*. We have already seen three examples:

ɣaṣáp ét-	= *to sweep the floor*
phuṭ ạt-	= *to look at*
ćâp ét-	= *to type (on a typewriter)*

but many more exist. These forms are comparable in form and usage to the Japanese suru verbs: *benkyoo suru = study do = to study*.

If the verb is transitive, very often a corresponding intransitive verb exists in which the **ét-** = *to do it(y)* has been replaced by **-mán-** = *to become*:

phat ạt-	= *to allow, to abandon*
phat -mán-	= *to get loose, to be left behind*

Sometimes the word in front of the auxiliary verb is clearly a noun, as in

pháing ét-	= *to lie (lit.: to do lies, untruths)*

and the word **phat** = *left-overs (y)* may perhaps explain

phat ạt-	= *to allow, to abandon*

But in many cases the word only occurs in that specific verb and it is unclear what part of speech it is, as is the case with **ɣaṣáp**, **phuṭ** and **ćâp** above. Γaṣáp occurs also as an adverb with a vaguely related meaning ('swiftly'), as we have seen, and I have translated **phuṭ** by 'glance' above, but no such word exists. Morin and Tiffou [lit.ref. 3] relate **ćâp** to the English word *type*, but it may also be onomatopoeic.

7.2 D-verbs

The above forms are those of about half the Burushaski verbs; the other half adds a **d-** before its verb forms. An example is **d-was-** = *to stay behind*:

ja dáwasa	= *I stayed behind*
ne díwasi	= *he stayed behind*
mo dumúwasu	= *she stayed behind*
mi dimíwasen	= *we stayed behind*

We see that the experiencer 'prefix' has now turned into an infix, and a copy of the vowel of the prefix is inserted if the **d-** would otherwise collide with a consonant. The **d-** causes hardening of the consonant in the prefix, as we can see from:

un dukúwasa	= *you stayed behind*

The same insertion of the experiencer prefix occurs in the participles:

mo	d-umú-waś-um	bum	
she	*d*-her-staybehind-ing	was-she	= *she was staying behind*

(this is from the present stem **d-waś-** = *to stay behind*). As an exception, most d-verbs that have pre/infixes have a special form for the y experiencer, in which the infix is **-u-** and stress falls on the root:

te ɣéndeṣ duwási	= *the gold (y) remained*

Just as non-d verbs, there exist d-verbs without experiencer prefixes, and with Type I, II and III prefixes. When the verb does not carry an prefix, generally a vowel is added before the d- is prefixed, as in the verb došóq- = *to slacken*:

> se thanáu došóqi   = *the rope (x) slackened*

In this case we know that the do- is the d- prefix + vowel, since the word for 'loose, slack' is śóqum.

7.3   The various kinds of verbs reconsidered

As we have seen, there are d-verbs and non-d verbs (2 kinds), and there are verbs without experiencer prefixes and with Type I, II and III prefixes (4 kinds). All eight combinations exist, and no combination is rare or special. So it would be nice if we could pinpoint what each of these features means, but that is easier said than done. More d-verbs than non-d verbs have a stative (describing a state) or passive meaning. More Type II verbs than Type I verbs have a transitive or causative meaning. And many Type III verbs involve both a direct and an indirect object. But these are general observations and no more than that.

Some roots occur in one verb only, for instance d⸱ẏa- = *to itch*, as in

> ahúṭis dâẏami
> my-foot *d*-to-me-my-itched   = *my foot itched*

but many occur in clusters, of which a typical example is:

> ćaɣúrum   = *cold*
> d⸲ćaɣur-   = *to get cold (hx)*
> dućáɣur-   = *to get cold (y)*
> d⸱ćaɣur-   = *to make cold, to cool*

Many real causatives have an -s- infix, which causes hardening:

> X-cum ⸱mal-   = *to be afraid of X*
> ⸱smal-   = *to frigh*ten
>
> gír-   = *to have a colour*
> ⸱skir   = *to dye*

A clear example of the use of the latter set is given by Morin and Tiffou [lit.ref. 3, page 24]:

> Gaṭúnc   malúm gírćum   bién
> Trousers(x plural) black colour-having are(x)   = *The trousers are black*

> Mo   gúse   gaṭúnc   malúm oskírćum   bu
> The woman(hf) trousers(x) black   their(x)-dying is(hf)   = *The woman dyes the trousers black*

[It may be significant that for Proto-Sino-Tibetan a system has been reconstructed in which *d*-, *b*- and *w*- are passive and stative prefixes and *s*- is a causative prefix; and then it may not.]

The situation with Type III verbs is perhaps a little clearer. Its use almost always involves at least an indirect object:

> men⸲   = *to drink*
> ⸱men-   = *to give to dr*ink
>
> nê mel mení   = *he drank wine*
> nê   mómuẏa mel mômeni
> he(actor) her-to   wine her-caused-to-drink-he   = *he gave her wine to drink*

Here, the prefix mô- may be a double prefix, consisting of mo- = *her* and a one-vowel prefix for the experiencer, mel = *wine*. In fact, such double prefixes have occasionally been reported for Hunza Burushaski [lit.ref. 4, page 211]:

> Langabrumo Malćućo-mo muring-eṭe cil   móetimi
> Langabruno Malćućo   her-hands-on water her-its-did-he
>   = *he made Langabrumo pour water on Malćućo's hands*

where móetimi can well be seen as a combination of mo- = *her* and étimi = *he did it*. But all this remains speculation.

8 Consecutive, Imperative and Negation

To complete the picture of the Burushaski verb, three more forms have to be explained.

8.1 The consecutive

The next verb form to be discussed is the 'consecutive', which has no counterpart in English. It has the meaning of 'after having done so and so' or 'when such and such state had arisen'; it is a kind of adverbial past participle and it is used very, very frequently in Burushaski. If the verb has an experiencer prefix, this shows in the consecutive; otherwise the consecutive is the same for all persons.

In d-verbs it is the past stem without any ending, but with a possible experiencer infix:

se ćúmu díćaɣur ...   = *the fish (x) having got cold, ...*
te cel dućáɣur ...   = *the water (y) having got cold, ...*

For non-d verbs it is formed by prefixing nu- to the past stem without any ending. The ´ in the nu- indicates that it causes a shift of the stress to the second syllable. This nu- also causes hardening of the initial consonant of the root (or of the go- prefix):

nukúća   = *having-gone-to-sleep*

from gućá- = *to go to sleep* (note the stress shift).

If the verb starts with a vowel or has an experiencer prefix, n- rather than nu- is prefixed to form the consecutive:

náyec   = *after having seen me*
nukúyec   = *after having seen you*
numúyec   = *after having seen her ... / he saw her and ...*

from -yéc- = *to see*. The consecutive of at- = *to do* is nat, which gets the experiencer prefix inserted. So we get

ɣaṣáp net   = *after having swept the floor, ...*
phuṭ nat   = *having looked at me, ...*
phuṭ nomót = *having looked at her, ...*

A typical example of the extent to which the consecutive is used is the following sentence, taken (and simplified!) from [lit.ref. 1], story V:

Ílji ni te bultú nukúća;
kunçáṭ dié íya tuéq-ce núya darúɣa galí.
=
He went home and lay down to sleep that day;
the next day he got up, took his rifle and went hunting.

which contains four consecutives:

Ílji ni	= *Inside-to having-gone*
(from gal- = *to go*, completely irregular)	
te bultú nukúća	= *that day having-gone-to-sleep*
(from gućá- = *to go to sleep*)	
kunçáṭ dié	= *the-next-day having-got-up*
(from dié- = *to get up*)	
íya tuéq-ce núya	= *his rifle having-taken*
his-own rifle-with having-provided-himself	
(from X-ce -yá- = *to provide oneself with X*)	
darúɣa galí.	= *to-hunt went-he.*

This device allows the Burushaski speaker to squeeze in a lot of information, and Burushaski text is generally more compact than its English translation. (The next sentence in story V starts Bárule ni ... = *A valley-in having-gone ...*) [Burushaski kunçáṭ = *the next day* and gunc = *day* may be related to Yeniseian kans = *yesterday*.]

8.2 The imperative

As in many languages, the imperative singular is equal to the root of the verb:

Ṣaṣáp et!	= *Sweep the floor!*
Jáɣa te ɣéndeṣ biśá! me-to the gold throw	= *Throw me the gold!*

The plural is formed by adding -**ing**:

Phuṭ móting! glance her-do-you-all	= *Look at her! (to several people)*

There is also an imperative for the third person, which ends in -**iṣ** for the singular and in -**iṣen** for the plural hx; the -**i** is dropped after a vowel. Examples are:

Til ayêliṣ. forgetfulness not-his-make-sting-should-he	= *He should not forget it.*
We néṣen.	= *They should go.*

A more polite imperative can be formed by adding the question particle -**a** after the form:

Ṣaṣáp ét-a.	= *Could you please sweep the floor.*

and a polite invitation is expressed by the second person future:

Gohá míɣa mêltirćuma! your-house us-to our-show-will-you	= *Do show us your house!*

from ʌltir- = *to show.*

8.3 Negation

There is no word for 'not', although there is **be** = *no* and **awá** = *yes*. [Yeniseian also has **be** = *no*.] A sentence is negated by prefixing the verb form with **a-** = *not* (**ay-** before vowels). Just as the consecutive prefix **nu-**, the negative prefix **a-** moves the stress to the second syllable and causes hardening of the following consonant; also, if the verb has an experiencer prefix, the **i-** which is normally left out, is kept:

ja awála	= *I fell* (from -**wál**- = *to fall*)
ja ayáwala	= *I did not fall* (**ay-** before vowel)
un guwála	= *you fell*
un akúwala	= *you did not fall* (hardening and stress shift)
ne wála	= *he fell* (**i-** suppressed)
ne aíwala	= *he did not fall* (**i-** restored)

In compound forms, the entire form is negated rather than the final verb:

guwálum ba	= *you have fallen*
akúwalum ba	= *you have not fallen*

A form in which the final verb is negated exists, but has a completely different and idiomatic meaning:

amútuk guwálum apí now your-having-falling not-is	= *this way you won't fall*

in which **guwálum** = *your-having-fallen* acts as a noun as it does in English and **apí** = *not-is-it(y)* is a y form referring to the noun. (Due to the irregularities of the verb **ba-** = *to be*, the negative of **duá** = *it (y) is* (itself irregular), is **apí** = *it (y) is not*, which is clearly derived from the negation **a-** and **bi** = *he/it (hmx) is* through hardening.)

The hardening of the consonant after **a-** also extends to the **d-** of d-verbs:

un dukúwasa	= *you stayed behind*
un atúkuwasa	= *you did not stay behind*

in which both the -**t**- and the -**k**- result from hardening.

The consecutive cannot be negated: 'after the water had not got cold, ...' is not a reasonable thing to say.

[Yeniseian has '**at** = *not*; if it is related, the final -**t** may even explain the hardening that the Burushaski **a-** causes.]

8.4   Noun forms from verbs

By putting the ending **-as** after the past stem of a verb *V*, a noun or adjective is created that indicates someone who habitually or professionally does *V*. An example of the latter is **cécenas** = *carpenter* from **cécen-** = *to work wood*.

9   Syntax and Subordinate Clauses

The normal Burushaski sentence starts with zero or more consecutives, and ends with perhaps a subject (actor), perhaps an object (experiencer), and always a verb. The example given under 'The consecutive' is typical. Although the texts seem to avoid having both an actor and an experiencer, examples can still be found easily:

> ne   saudagáre   mo gus   mucúm   bam
> the merchant(actor) the woman(exp.) her-carrying-away was-he
>   = *the merchant married the woman*

(from **-cú-** = *to take (away)*). The order 'experiencer, actor, verb' also occurs; this seems to have a more passive meaning:

> ne hir   céle   cúmi
> the man(exp.) water(actor) him-carried-away-it   = *the man was carried away by the water*

but we should not forget that the ending **-mi** in **cúmi** refers to **céle** = *water (actor)* and not to **ne hir** = *the man (experiencer)*.

9.1   To have

As in many languages, there is no word for 'to have': 'I have money' is expressed as 'my money is', (as it also is, for instance, in Hungarian, where we have *pénzem van* = *money-my is*):

> jâ   paisá   duá
> of-me money(y) is(y)   = *I have money*

and of course the more probable

> jâ   paisá   apí
> of-me money(y) not-is(y)   = *I have no money*

9.2   Subordinate clauses

The constant use of the consecutive reduces the need for other forms of subordinate clauses. A number of subordinate relations can be expressed by using the past or present participle with location endings, in ways which can often be translated literally into English:

> Gílta   cúrumyaṭe
> Gilgit-to his-coming-on   = *when he came to Gilgit (upon coming to Gilgit)*

A word that features often in subordinate relations is **ka**; in isolation it means 'still, yet, and then', but it is also used to list nouns:

> huk ka buś   = *a dog and a cat*
> huk ka   buś tul
> dog and-then cat snake   = *a dog, a cat and a snake*

First it is used like the English 'that' to connect two sentences:

> ɣaní   ka   se buś wálum   bi
> he-saw and-then the cat its-having-fallen is   = *he saw that the cat had fallen*

Its second usage is for conditionals:

> Pháing étum   ba   ka   un guṣíçam.
> lies   having-done you-are and-then you your-eat-will-I
>   = *If you have lied, I will eat you. (lion to fox)*

(It is clear that the meaning cannot be *If I have lied ...*, since that would be **Pháing étAm ba ka**.)

Its third usage is for counterfactual conditions, where it is reinforced by the particle **ceq**, which seems to mean something like 'but not really' and which replaces the forms of the verb **ba-** = *to be*:

Pháing	étum	ceq	ka	un	gușíçam	ceq.
lies	having-done	but-not	and-then	you	your-eat-will-I	but-not

      = If you had lied, I would have eaten you.

Occasionally, a past participle is used as an adjective, in a construction that corresponds to a relative clause in English:

jâ	girmínum	guté	ketép	*= this book that I have written*
my	its-having-written	this	book	

but in general relative clauses play a far smaller role in Burushaski than in English.

9.3 Questions

Yes-no questions are formed by suffixing `-a` after the verb form:

Gô	paisá	duá-a?	*= Do you have money?*
of-you	money	it-is-eh?	

Many question words agree with the gender of the noun they refer to:

ámen dúlas	= *which boy (hm)*
ámen dasén	= *which girl (hf)*
ámes buś	= *which cat (x)*
ámet ha	= *which house (y)*

Others are adjectives and end in `-um`:

béltum hir	= *what kind of man*

10 Numerals

The numbers one to three have different forms for the classes hmf, x and y; in addition they have a special form used, among others, for counting, the z class. Higher numbers have two forms only, one for the hxy classes, and one for counting. See Figure 8. The forms for 80 and 90 are reminiscent of the the French *quatre-vingt = four-twenty* and *quatre-vingt dix = four-twenty ten*.

The ordinal numbers are formed by adding the adjective ending `-um` to the form used for counting, except for the word for 'first', which, as in English, is not derived from the word for 'one'. See Figure 9.

Class:	hmf	x	y	z
1	hen	han	han	hek
2	altán	altác	altó	altó
3	iské	iskó	iskó	iskí
4	wáltu	←	←	wálte
5	cendó	←	←	cendí
6	biśíndu	←	←	biśínde
7	thaló	←	←	thalé
8	altámbu	←	←	altámbe
9	huçó	←	←	hutí
10	tórum	←	←	tórum
11	turma-hén/-hán/-hék			
12	turma-altán/-altác/-altó			
	etc.			
19	turma-huçó/-hutí			
20	áltar		twenty	
30	áltar tórum		twenty ten	
40	altó-áltar		two twenty	
50	altó-áltar tórum		two twenty ten	
60	iskí-áltar		three twenty	
70	iskí-áltar tórum		three twenty ten	
80	wálte-áltar		four twenty	
90	wálte-áltar tórum		four twenty ten	
100	tha			
1000	hazár			
1999	hazár hutí tha wálte-áltar turma-hutí			

Figure 8: Numerals in Yasin Burushaski

hawélum	= *first*	(from hawél = *the one at the front*)
altóum	= *second*	
iskíum	= *third*	
wálteum	= *fourth*	
cendíum	= *fifth*	
biśíndeum	= *sixth*	
thaléum	= *seventh*	
altámbeum	= *eighth*	
hutíum	= *ninth*	
tórumum	= *tenth*	

Figure 9: Ordinals

11 Hunza Burushaski and Yasin Burushaski Compared

One of the differences between Hunza Burushaski and Yasin Burushaski lies in one of the locative endings: where Yasin Burushaski has `-a` = *to, towards, for* (`-ɣa` after vowels), Hunza Burushaski has `-ar` (`-r` after vowels). A few comparisons:

Yasin	Hunza	
híra	hírar	= *to a man*
gúsmuɣa	gúsmur	= *to a woman*
jáɣa	jar	= *to me*
góɣa	úngar(!)	= *to you*
míɣa	mímar	= *to us*

Another difference is that Hunza Burushaski uses `go-` = *you, your* as a possessive prefix only; all other forms derive from `ung-` = *you*. As we have seen, Yasin Burushaski uses `un` = *you* for the experiencer and the actor only; all other forms derive from `go-`. Where these two effects combine, that is in the form for 'to you', we get two completely different words, as marked in the examples above.

A third difference is that third person masculine Yasin forms like `étum bái` = *he has done it* and `éćum bái` = *he is doing it* contract to `étaií` and `éćaií` in Hunza Burushaski. Also, other contractions occur that are absent in Yasin Burushaski.

The Hunza Burushaski sentence

`Langabrumo Malćućo-mo muring-ețe cil móetimi`

shown above would be

`Langabrumo Malćuću-mu muréing-yațe cel môtimi`

in Yasin Burushaski.

The numerals from one to ten in Hunza Burushaski are shown in Figure 10; comparison with Figure 8 shows that the differences are minor.

Class:	hmf	x	y	z
1	hin	han	han	hik
2	áltan	áltac	álto	álto
3	ísken	úsko	úsko	íski
4	wálto	←	←	wálti
5	cundó	←	←	cindí
6	miśíndo	←	←	miśíndi
7	taló	←	←	talé
8	altámbo	←	←	altámbi
9	hunćó	←	←	huntí
10	tórumo	←	←	tórimi

Figure 10: Numerals in Hunza Burushaski

12 References

1. Hermann Berger, Das Yasin-Burushaski (Werchikwar): Grammatik, Texte, Wörterbuch, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1974, pp. 228.

   Although the book has the same structure as the three-volume work by Lorimer on Hunza Burushaski, the grammar is a real grammar, with rules and text in phonemic writing. The book is far from a text book, though; the material is presented in a linguistic rather than a pedagogical order, and requires several readings. The Burushaski texts contain some amusing and some X-rated stories. The dictionary is Burushaski-German, with a German-Burushaski index.

2. Étienne Tiffou, Jurgen Pesot, Contes du Yasin - Introduction au bourouchaski du Yasin, Études bourouchaski 1, SELAF #303, Paris, Peeters/SELAF, 1989, pp. 163.

   Assumes that the reader has read Berger's book, and extends it with more and new material. Paradigms given in full, more about vowel lengths, more stories. The dictionary is a word list to the stories only.

3. Yves Charles Morin, Étienne Tiffou, Dictionnaire complémentaire du bourouchaski du Yasin, Études bourouchaski 2, SELAF #304, Paris, Peeters/SELAF, 1989, pp. 58.

   Additions and corrections to the dictionaries of Berger, Tiffou and Lorimer. Extensive terminology on weddings and marital customs.

4. D.L.R. Lorimer, The Burushaski Language - Vol. 1, 2, 3, Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning, Oslo, 1935, pp. 464.

   Part 1 contains large amounts of very carefully described data, written phonetically rather than phonemically, organised according to subject. The book is not a grammar in that the author does not present rules but only reports observations. The author deliberately makes no attempt to distinguish between the results of the inherent inaccuracy of normal speech and those of grammatical processes and just recorded what he heard. Often the recorded material fluctuates so much that precise rules are difficult to find.

   Part 2 contains recorded and translated stories, part 3 is a dictionary.

5. John McCarry, Jonathan Blair, High road to Hunza, National Geographic, 185, 3, March 1994, pp. 115-134.

   Although the article concerns the Hunza valley rather than the Yasin valley, it is still very informative.

6. John Mook, Kimberley O'Neil, Trekking in the Karakoram and Hindukush, Lonely Planet, Hawthorn, Australia, 1996, pp. 322.

   Contains short (about 50 words, 30 phrases and 20 numerals) vocabularies of Urdu, Balti, Burushaski, Kalasha, Khowar, Shina, and Wakhi (Xikwor). And of course descriptions of dozens of foot trips and tons of advice.

7. Merritt Ruhlen, A Guide to the World's Languages: Volume 1: Classification; with a postscript on recent developments, Edward Arnold, London, 1987; 1991, 463,

8. Václav Blažek, D. Bengtson, Lexica Dene-Caucasica, Central Asiatic J., 39, 1995, 11-50,161-164.

   A set of 219 etymologies linking Basque, Caucasian, Burushaski, Yeniseian, Sino-Tibetan and Na-Dené (Athabaskan + Tlingit + Haida). The etymologies generally involve 3 to 4 members of the groups mentioned. A table of sounds correspondences is given. The literature references are copious.