

# Towards a tentative origin of animacy markers in Botlikh

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# Botlikh

- ▶ Botlikh > Andic group > East Caucasian language family
- ▶ Unwritten, 3 villages in Daghestan, ~5000-8000 speakers
- ▶ One full reference grammar in Georgian ([Gudava 1962](#))
- ▶ Two dictionaries: ([Saidova & Abusov 2012](#)) and ([Alekseev & Azaev 2019](#))

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## Two gender systems

1. Noun class (inherited)
2. Animacy markers (innovation)

# Gender systems

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“ [...] it appears that the half-life of a well-established gender distinction must be **several millennia**.” ([Dahl 2004](#): 200)

# Gender systems and their origins

In case a source is known, it is nominal, cf. ([Corbett 1991, Audring 2016](#)).

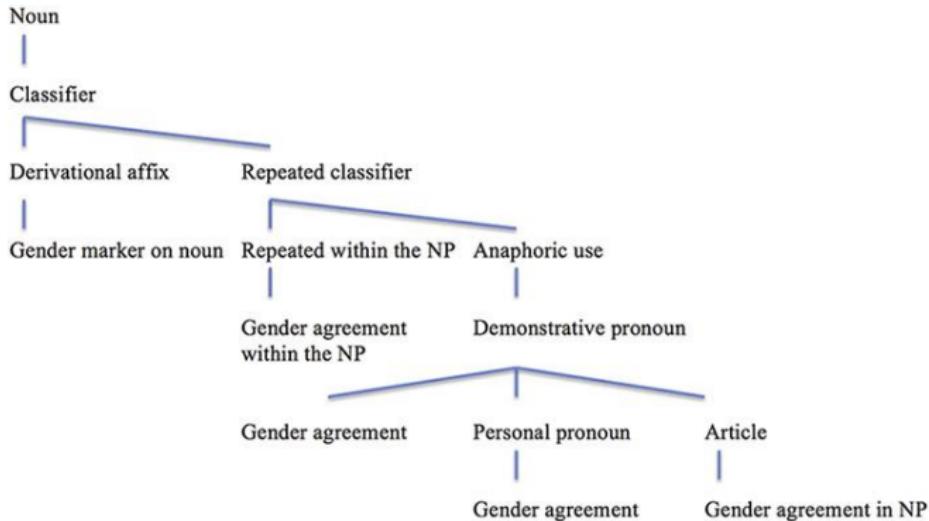


Image from ([Audring 2016](#))

# Aim

## **Aim of this talk**

Discuss a gender agreement system that seems to be a unique innovation of Botlikh, and argue that the markers involved are plausibly of verbal origin.

# Animacy markers

Pairwise distribution of  $\ell$  and  $\chi$ .

Suggests a distinct lexical source for each “series”.

**Table 1:** Animacy markers in Botlikh

Target	Animate	Inanimate
Negative copula	= $\ell$ -č'i	= $\chi$ u-č'i
Interrogative particle		
Polar	= $\ell$ i.ma	= $\chi$ u.ma
Content	= $\ell$ i.la	= $\chi$ u.la
Attributive clitic	- $\ell$ a-cm*	- $\chi$ o-cm
Participle		
Present	- $\ell$ a-cm*	- $\chi$ a-cm
Future	- $\ell$ a-cm*	- $\chi$ a-cm
Ordinal numeral	- $\ell$ a-cm*	- $\chi$ a-cm

\*a variant  $\ell$ o- appears in the environment of the masculine noun class suffix -w.

# Animacy agreement

- (1) k'eki-**la**-j ješi  
two-AN.ORD-F girl  
'the second girl (= daughter)'
- (2) k'eki-**la**-b zini  
two-AN.ORD-N cow  
'the second cow'
- (3) k'eki-**χo**-b ziw  
two-INAN.ORD-N day  
'the second day'

# Animacy agreement

Table 2: Agreement patterns

Target	Controller	Obligatoriness
Negative copula	? Abs	<i>gu-č'i</i>
Interrogative particle		
Polar	? Abs	=ma
Content	? Abs	=la
Attributive clitic	Head / ? Abs	?
Participle		
Present	Head / ? Abs	?
Future	Head / ? Abs	?
Ordinal numeral	Head / ? Abs	yes

## Verbal origin?

- + The negative copulas look like a negated verb form, consisting of a root morpheme and a regular negation (though without a derivational base). It seems the animacy markers occupy the position of the lexical root:
  - ▶ Cf.  $\chi\text{-}e\text{-}wč'i$  [take-HAB-NEG] 'does not take' and  
 $\chi u\text{-}č'i$  [INAN.COP-NEG] 'is not'

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- The negative copulas look similar to the interrogative particles (they use the same allomorphs for animacy agreement ( $\text{č'i}$  and  $\chi u$ , which are followed by a suffix), yet the latter cannot form predicates, and co-occur with the copula:

(4)    hu-č'i    ila-imá č'ago **ida=č'i.ma?**  
DEM-GEN parents alive COP=AN.Q  
'Are her parents alive?'

# Verbal origin?

- + The negative forms of the non-past participles look similar to the negative past participle forms of full verbs:

Table 3: Affirmative and negative participles

Affirmative						
Past	<i>ih</i>			-a	-b	
	make			-PST.PTCP	-N	
Present	<i>ih</i>	-i	-χ	-a	-b	
	make	-IS	-INAN.PRS	-PTCP	-N	
Negative						
Past	<i>ih</i>		-i	-č'	-a	-b
	make		-IS	-NEG	-PST.PTCP	-N
Present	<i>ih</i>	-i	-χ	-i	-č'	-a
	make	-IS	-INAN.PRS	-IS?	-NEG	-PTCP
						-N

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- + The markers show up on verbal forms (negative auxiliaries, participles) or forms that seem to derive from verbal forms diachronically (attributives, ordinals < participles) (A possible exception are the interrogative particles.)

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- No straightforward eligible candidates for lexical sources

## Other Andic languages

Look for possible cognates *and* a similar pairwise distribution of morphemes in other Andic languages and Avar.

# Ordinals

Table 4: Ordinal numerals in Avar-Andic

	$*-\chi\text{-V-CM}$	$*-\lambda\text{/}\tilde{\lambda}\text{-V-CM}$	$*-\text{d-V-CM}$	'say'
Botlikh	<b>-χo-CM</b>	<b>-la-CM</b>		
Godoberi		<b>-li</b>		
Bagvalal		<b>-(la)-lo-CM</b>		
Karata		<b>-λo-CM</b>		
Tindi		<b>-li-λa-CM</b>		
Chamalal		<b>-λab</b>		
Andi			<b>-(l)d:ob</b>	
Tukita			<b>-du-CM</b>	
Akhvakh				<b>-l-eλ':-ida-CM</b>
Avar				<b>-ab-ile-CM</b>

Bold = future (or non-past) participle suffixes.

# Cardinals and ordinals

Table 5: Cardinal and ordinal numerals in Avar-Andic

	Cardinals	Ordinals
Botlikh	k'e-da	k'e-ij-ɬa-CM
Godoberi	k'e-da	k'e:-ɬi
Bagvalal	č'e-ra-(la)	č'e-ra-(la)-ɬo-CM
Karata	k'e-da	k'e-da-ɬo-CM
Tindi	k <sup>j</sup> e-ja	k <sup>j</sup> 'ek <sup>j</sup> 'a-liɬa-CM
Chamalal	eč'-i-da	eč'-ɬa-b
Andi	č'e-gu	č'e-ld:ob
Tukita	k'ek'i	k'ek'e-du-CM
Akhvakh	k'e-da-CM	k'ebi-l-eɬ':-ida-CM
Avar	k'i-go	k'i-abile-CM

# Ordinals

Table 6: Ordinals and their (possible) lexical sources

	Ordinal	'say'	'go, walk'
Botlikh	-χo-СМ / -ɬa-СМ	(hi)χ'-i	СМ-eɬ-i
Godoberi	-i	hiɬ'-i	СМ-eɬ-i
Bagvalal	-(la)-χo-СМ	heɬ'i-la	СМ-eɬi-la
Karata	-χo-СМ	keɬ'-anla	СМ-oɬa-ɬa
Tindi	-liɬa-СМ	hiɬ'i-ɬa,	СМ-eɬi-ɬa
Chamalal	-χab	iɬ'-la	СМ-eɬ(i)-la
Andi	-(l)d:ob	ruɬi-du	СМ-eɬi-du
Tukita	-du-СМ	keɬ'e-du	СМ-eɬi-du
Akhvakh	-l-eɬ':-ida-СМ	eɬ'u-ruɬa	СМ-oɬu-ruɬa
Avar	-ab-ile-СМ	ab-ize	СМ-iɬ:-ize

# Ordinals and participles

## Bagvalal

- ▶ (Kibrik et al. 2001: 157) on Bagvalal ordinal suffix *-t-o-CM* as originating from the present participle of the verb CM-*ełi* ‘go, walk’: CM-*eł*-o-CM
- ▶ The combination *-t-o-CM* then appears as the suffix of the continuous present participle of other verbs (Kibrik et al. 2001: 102)
- ▶ The same suffix *-t-o-CM* is also found for the future participle, but according to (Kibrik et al. 2001: 86) this is the result of the combination of the future suffix *-t(i)* and the participle formant *-o-CM*

# Ordinals and participles

## Karata, Chamalal and Tindi

- ▶ Similar correspondences between the present and future participles of the verb 'go, walk' in Karata, Tindi and Chamalal
  - ▶ **Karata:** CM-oλa(-t̪a.INF) < PRS.PTCP CM-oλ-o-CM < FUT.PTCP CM-oλa-t̪a-λ-o-CM (N.B. the future suffix in Karata is not -λ)

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  - ▶ **Chamalal:** PRS.PTCP formed based on the FUT.IND + *-b*, so for 'go, walk': CM-*eλ-i-da-b*. But two verbs meaning 'go' and 'come' show a PRS.PTCP form in *-λab*: *muna-λab* 'going' and *biʔa-λab* 'coming'. The FUT.PTCP suffix is also *-λab*

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  - ▶ Tindi: CM-*eλi*(-*ψa*.INF) < PRS.PTCP and FUT.PTCP CM-*eλ-o*-CM. But at least two verbs take the suffix -*λa*-CM: CM-*ič'a-λa*-CM 'barely alive, lit. dying', CM-*eλa-λa*-CM 'going' (apparently a variant of CM-*eλ-o*-CM)

# Ordinals and participles

## Karata, Chamalal and Tindi

- ▶ Possible grammaticalization of the present participle form of the verb 'go, walk' into the future participle suffix of all verbs (Karata and Chamalal)?
- ▶ And subsequent extension of this suffix as the formant of ordinal numerals, similarly to what happened in Avar and Akhvakh with the verb 'say'?

# Ordinals and participles

## Botlikh?

- ▶ Present/future participle and ordinal coincide, but they do not seem to derive from the verb 'go, walk'
- ▶ Their origins remain unclear
- ▶ However, overall, a verbal origin seems plausible, since 6 out of 10 idioms feature an ordinal strategy with a likely verbal origin

# Negative copulas

Table 7: Negative copulas in Avar-Andic

Language	Stem			Neg
Botlikh	χ <u>u</u>	hi	gu	-č'i
Godoberi	(i)χ <u>u</u>	(i)wu	igu / hu	-č'i
Bagvalal		we / wa		-č'i
Karata		ha		-č'e
Tukita		ha		-č'i
Avar		he		-č'o
Tindi		hi		-k <sup>j</sup> i
Chamalal	ix <sup>w</sup> / ik <sup>w</sup>			-χ <sup>w</sup> / -k <sup>w</sup> ?
Akhvakh			go	-λa
Andi			s:u	Ø

## Negative copulas

- ▶ Basic structure is stem + discernable negative suffix, so it seems that  $\chi u$  and  $\ell i$  are indeed verb stems originally
- ▶  $\chi$  is also found in Godoberi and Chamalal, though its origins remain a mystery
- ▶ No pairwise distribution: in case a language has more than one copula, they seem to be variants
- ▶  $\ell i$  is unattested outside of Botlikh

# Interrogative forms

- ▶ Interrogative forms look rather different across the Avar-Andic branch, and the inventory of possible forms greatly varies — polar questions in Avar are formed with one particular suffix (*-iš:*), while Chamalal dialects feature at least six distinct forms

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- ▶ Interrogative particles and suffixes attach to the verb by default
- ▶ In Chamalal they are verb suffixes, with different allomorphs for different tenses (Bokarëv 1949)
- ▶ Other languages feature less bound morphemes, with allomorphs correlating with a specific tense, e.g. *de* for aorist and *le* for all other tenses in (Rikvani) Andi (Maisak 2017)

## Interrogative forms

A predicativizing interrogative particle is found in Zilo Andi (alongside regular interrogative particles like *dile* (aorist), *k'ole* (habitual) and *le* (all other tenses)):

- (5) men keč'oqan=**biro**  
2SG singer[F]=Q  
'Were you a singer?'

The affirmative equivalent would have the affirmative past auxiliary *j-iši* or its equivalent *j-ik'o*. / Present tense would have an affirmative present copula (*dži*) and a general question particle (*le*).

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- ▶ Again, this suggests a possible verbal origin for these types of markers

## Interrogative forms

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- ▶ Cf. examples (6) and (7) from Godoberi: ([Kibrik, Tatevosov & Eulenberg 1996](#))

(6)      **‘ali-di hanq’u b-iłi-da**  
Ali-ERG house n-build.PST-Q  
'Did Ali build the house?'

(7)      **łe-da hanq’u b-iłi**  
who.ERG-Q house n-build.PST  
'Who built the house?'

## Interrogative forms

- ▶ Because of the multitude of formally diverse morphemes involved, comparison and reconstruction requires more research
- ▶ As does the formation of interrogative sentences in Andic in general
- ▶ (In the 10 languages surveyed, we found a total of 30 morphemes for content questions, and 47 polar question markers)

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- ▶ (In the 10 languages surveyed, we found a total of 30 morphemes for content questions, and 47 polar question markers)
- ▶ We also left out attributive clitics in the present analysis, for similar reasons (a total of 56 attributivizing suffixes and clitics were found, with a variety of different functions)

# Summary

- ▶ The animacy system of Botlikh is unique within the Avar-Andic branch of East Caucasian languages
- ▶ Cognates of the  $\ell$  and  $\chi$  markers were found in ordinals, participles and negative copulas, but most languages feature only one of them
- ▶ No pairwise distribution as in Botlikh

## Summary

- ▶ In Botlikh animacy markers occur mostly on verbal forms (negative auxiliaries, participles) or forms that seem to derive from verbal forms diachronically (attributives, ordinals < participles)
- ▶ And sometimes behave similarly to verbal stems (cf. the negative present participle)
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- ▶ Interrogative particles also need further investigation: their origin and distribution in Avar-Andic languages are not entirely clear-cut
- ▶ So far, we have not investigated the likelihood of alternative hypotheses, such as the possible origin of these markers in (demonstrative) pronouns

# Barkala



# Notes

**Unless indicated otherwise, data presented comes from the following dialects (between brackets):** Botlikh (Botlikh), Godoberi (Godoberi) Andi (Gagatli), Chamalal (Upper and Lower Gakvari), Tindi (Unclear, Tindi), Bagvalal (Kvanada), Karata (Karata), Tukita (Tukita), Akhvakh (Northern - Akhvakh), Avar (Standard).

# Abbreviations

2	second person	30, 31
AN	animate	9, 11, 12
COP	copula	11, 12
DEM	demonstrative	11, 12
ERG	ergative	32, 33
F	feminine	9, 30, 31
GEN	genitive	11, 12
INAN	inanimate	9
N	neuter	9, 32, 33
ORD	ordinal numeral	9
PST	past	32, 33
Q	question particle	11, 12, 30–33
SG	singular	30, 31

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