

# Perfectoids and Evidentiality in East Caucasian

## Plotting areal distribution

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LOT Winter School 2018

### Abstract

Resultative constructions in East Caucasian (or Nakh-Daghestanian) languages may develop into regular perfects (expressing current relevance) or indirect evidential past tenses. The latter development is frequent in a large area within Eurasia that includes the Caucasus. Turkic languages are often thought to be the source of dispersion for this feature. This poster summarizes some problems and perspectives for researching this Turkic areal hypothesis in relation to the East Caucasian language family. High language density, intricate patterns of multilingualism and grammatical polysemy are some key issues. I propose to focus on one stable feature and establish its presence or absence in the dialects of individual villages, in order to map the distribution of this feature across EC languages more accurately.

### Perfectoids in East Caucasian

- FORMAL | perfective or past non-finite form + present tense auxiliary ‘to be’
- FUNCTIONAL | resultative *and* current relevance (CR) *or* indirect evidentiality (IE) *or* both CR *and* IE

NB. The term ‘perfectoids’ was coined by V.A. Plungian in reference to verb forms that resemble perfects formally and functionally but do not feature prototypical current relevance semantics prominently. [Plungian 2016]

#### Resultative source construction

- (1) *hege -w tʔiʁon -nij*  
DEM -M fall\_asleep -ANT.CVB(PF)  
‘He is sleeping.’ (lit. is fallen asleep)
- (2) *ingur arʁon -nij*  
window open -ANT.CVB(PF)  
‘The window is open(ed).’

Zilo dialect of Andi (<Andic) Fieldwork 2017

#### Current relevance

- (3) *ifi -r hab -saʔatʔi -r qʔani -r qʔani -b -o ekʔa*  
we -ERG this -hour -ERG eat -MSD eat -N -PFV.CVB AUX.PRS  
‘We have [just] dined.’

Bagvalal (<Andic) [Tatevosov 2001: 452]

#### Indirect evidentiality

- (4) *ʔali -r sʔi kʔa -b -o ekʔa*  
Ali -ERG bear kill -N -PFV.CVB AUX.PRS  
1. ‘(Apparently) Ali killed a bear.’ - INFERENCE  
2. ‘(They say) Ali killed a bear.’ - HEARSAY

Bagvalal (<Andic) via [Tatevosov 2001: 448]

### Glosses

ANT.CVB = anterior converb, AUX = auxiliary, CVB = converb, DEM = demonstrative, ERG = ergative, M = masculine, MSD = masdar, N = neuter, PF = perfect, PFV = perfective, PRS = present.

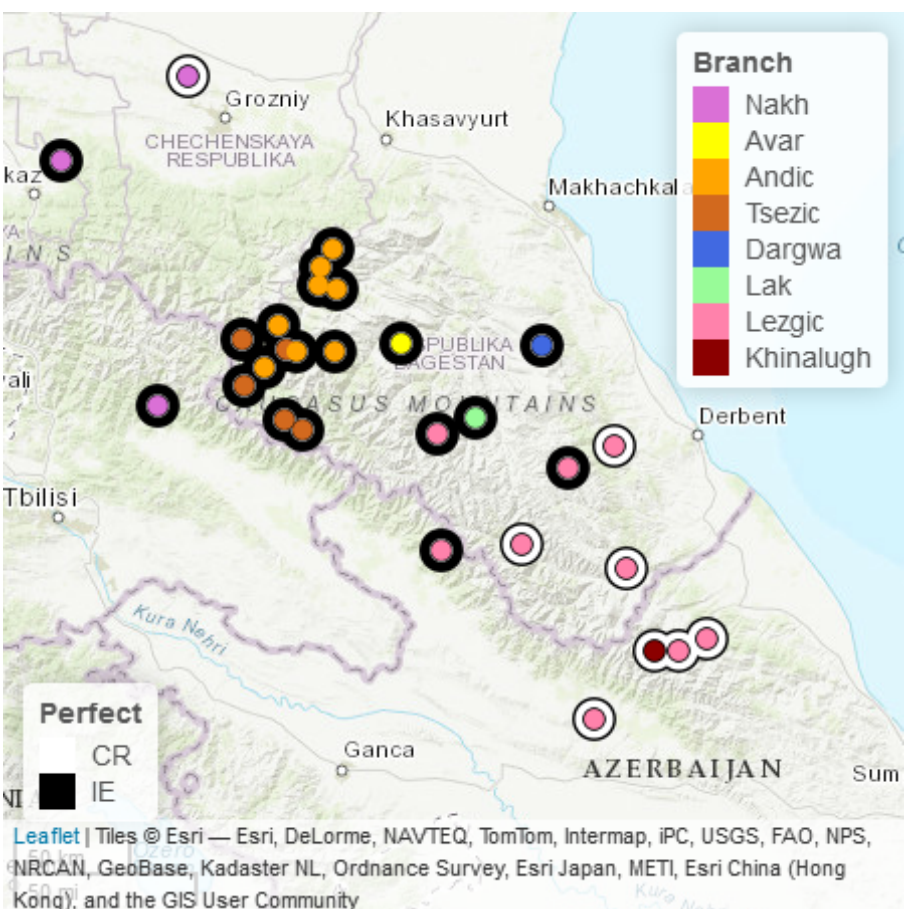
### Areal distribution

IE perfectoids are presumably an areal feature in Eurasia induced by Turkic [Aikhenvald 2004: 288-290].

Figure 1 - forms described in the available literature (see criteria above) vs. coordinates for each language via Glottolog [Hammarström et al. 2017]. (This and other maps were created with Lingtypology for R [Moroz 2017].)

- Absence of IE among Lezgian in the south [Verhees 2018]
- Influence of Azerbaijani (< West Oghuz < Turkic) in the south
- IE in Azerbaijani is weak [Johanson 2018]
- Further north: Kumyk, Nogai (< Kipchak < Turkic)

Figure 1: Types of perfectoid in East Caucasian

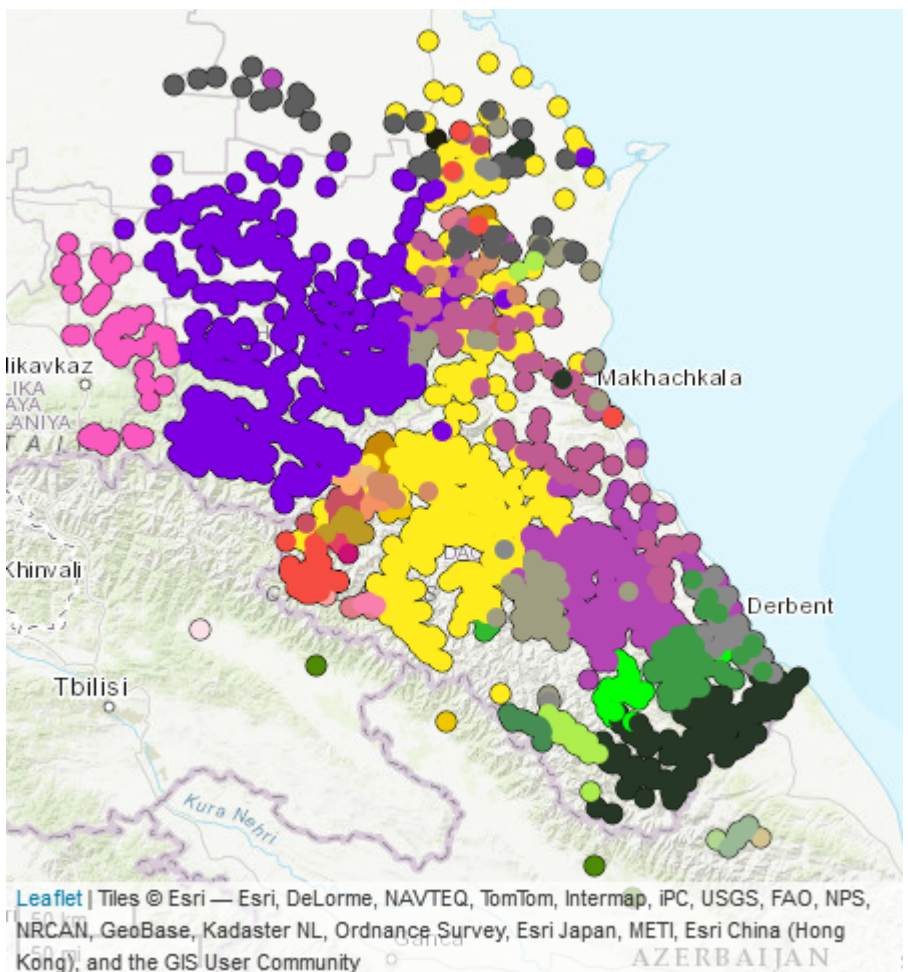


### Research question

- Are evidential perfectoids in East Caucasian an areal phenomenon?
- + If so, can this be related to the general hypothesis that Turkic languages are the source of this feature and its spread throughout Eurasia?

### Problems

Figure 2: All villages in the EC area and their respective languages



### High language density

- North Caucasian republics: Ingushetia, Chechnya, Daghestan (Russian Federation)
- Home to *at least* 24 East Caucasian languages
- 3 Turkic languages: Azerbaijani, Kumyk, Nogai; 1 Indo-Iranian language: Tat
- 4 EC languages spoken only in Azerbaijan, 1 spoken in Georgia
- no single lingua franca before Russian
- multiple regional lingua francas and traditional neighbour multilingualism [Chirikba 2008]

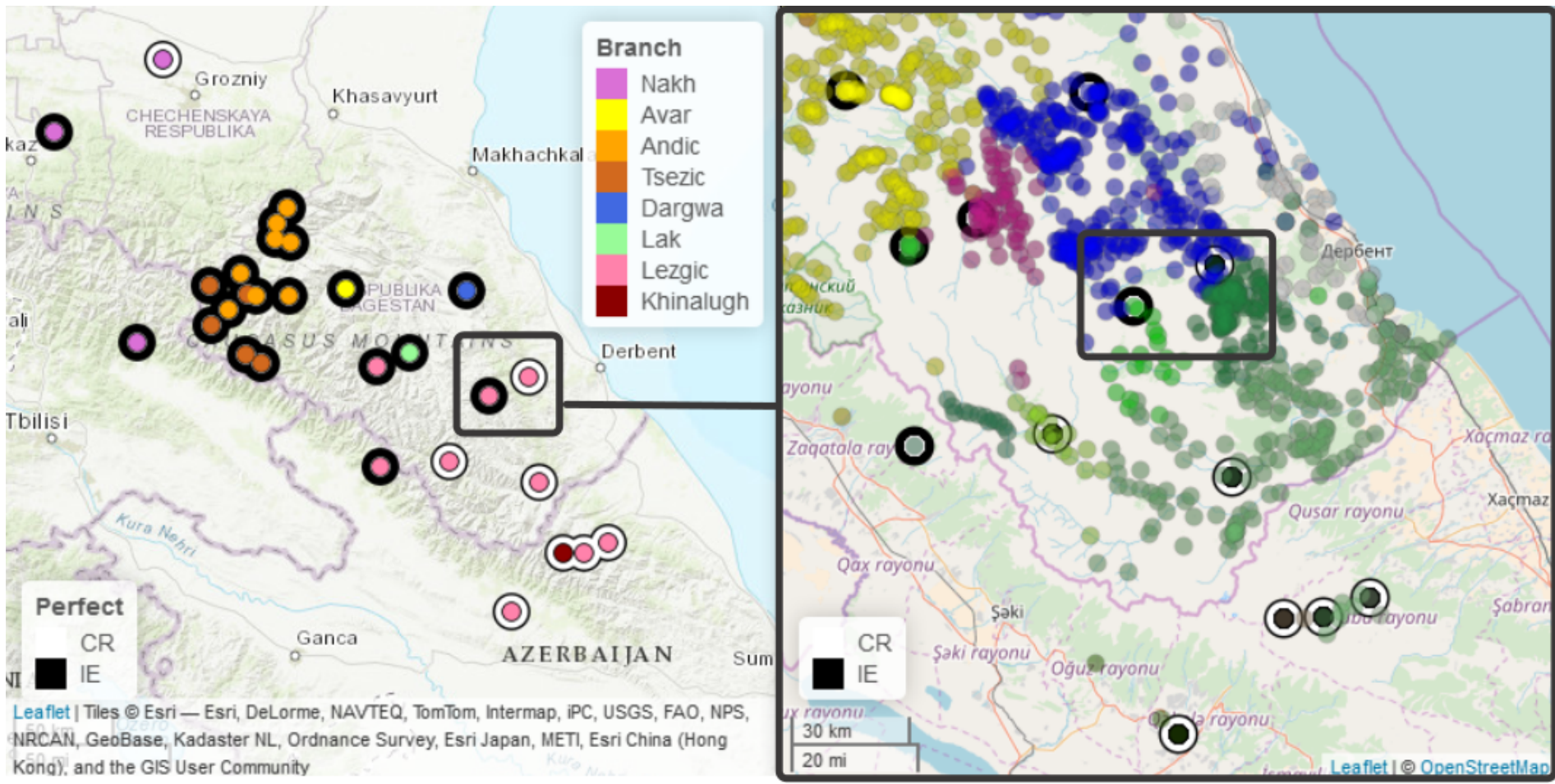
### Problems (2)

- Exact semantics are hard to capture and compare across languages.
  - CR unites different meanings (e.g. resultative perfect, continuative, immediative)
  - IE may have mirative or epistemic modal extensions
  - The configuration of polysemy can be established only through in-depth research in a particular language.
- Dialectal variation is virtually unresearched.

### Towards solving the puzzle

- Compare one stable feature - the use of the perfect as the *main line of an unwitnessed narrative*.
- Zoom in on one transitional area and gather data for particular villages
- Connect this to data on multilingualism [Dobrushina et al. 2017]

Figure 3: Detail of Aghul (left) and Tabasaran (right)



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