

INDEPENDENT PRONOUNS IN LANGUAGES WITH PRONOMINAL AFFIXES: EVIDENCE FROM ABAZA

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We analyze referential choice in Abaza, a polysynthetic Northwest Caucasian language with consistent head-marking, focusing on the use of independent pronouns in a small corpus of recorded narratives. We show that first and second person pronouns are employed in Abaza for introducing the relevant referents into discourse as well as in situations of topic shift. Forms that morphologically look like third person pronouns are rather used as intensifiers, while the true anaphoric function is performed by demonstratives. The latter tend to occur after the relevant referent is introduced into the discourse by a full noun phrase and before it is established as a protagonist subsequently referred to by pronominal affixes alone. Our results show that the patterns of use of independent pronouns in languages with pronominal affixes both conform to cross-linguistic tendencies and display a number of special features possibly related to their non-default status.

Не у меня, не у тебя — у них
Вся сила окончаний родовых
Осип Манделъштам

1. Introduction

In languages where the primary type of reduced referential device is pronominal affixes (bound tenacious pronouns in terms of Kibrik 2011), three options of encoding referents in discourse are typically observed: a pronominal affix alone (1a), a full noun phrase co-occurring with a coreferential pronominal affix (1b), and an independent pronoun co-occurring with a coreferential pronominal affix (1c).

- (1) Bininj Gun-wok (Gunwinyguan, Australia; Evans 1999: 259)
a. *ga-wokdi*
3-speak.NPST
'(S)he/it is speaking.'

- b. *na-mekke bininj ga-wokdi*
M-DEM man 3-speak-NPST
'The/that man is speaking.'
- c. *nungga ga-wokdi*
he 3-speak.NPST
'He is speaking.'

It is generally assumed that the choice between the first pattern (1a) and the second pattern (1b) is regulated by the degree of activation of the referent (Kibrik 2011: 100). If a referent has been activated, e.g., by being mentioned in the preceding clause, only the pronominal affix is used. Under a lower degree of activation, a coreferential NP is employed in addition to the pronominal affix. The functions of independent pronouns (1c) in such systems are less clear and, to our knowledge, have not been much discussed in the literature. According to Givón (1983: 30–31), referents coded by independent pronouns have lower accessibility than those coded by clitic pronouns or agreement markers alone (pronominal affixes are included in this group) but higher accessibility than referents coded by full NPs. Similarly, Ariel (1990: 47–53) lists personal pronouns and demonstratives among “intermediate accessibility referring expressions”. Besides that, Givón (1983: 30) notes that independent pronouns “are used either contrastively or as topic switchers”. In their study of referential choice in Bininj Gun-wok, Kim et al. (2001: 18) conclude that independent personal pronouns “do not have a regular referential function but mark major participants at critical episode boundaries”. They also pay special attention to demonstrative pronouns which, according to their analysis, refer to minor characters or major props of the narrative and are used for local emphasis.

In this paper we investigate the referential strategies in Abaza, a polysynthetic Northwest Caucasian language, with a special focus on the functions of independent personal and demonstrative pronouns. The empirical basis of the study is the Spoken Corpus of Abaza (https://lingconlab.ru/spoken_abaza/) consisting of spontaneous narratives recorded from native speakers in the village Inzhich-Chukun (Karachay-Cherkess Republic, Russia) in 2017–2019, supplemented by elicited data collected in 2017–2021 in Inzhich-Chukun and Krasnyj Vostok (Karachay-Cherkess Republic, Russia). If not stated otherwise, examples given in the paper come from the corpus. The annotation and quantitative analysis of the data was performed by the second author, and both authors have contributed to the theoretical interpretation and writing of the text.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a general description of pronominal affixes, pronouns and noun phrases in Abaza. In Section 3 we analyze the employment of different referential strategies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd person referents. Section 4 presents a discussion of the results. Section 5 summarizes the main findings of the study.

2. Inventory of referential devices in Abaza

Abaza (< Abkhaz-Abaza < Northwest Caucasian; ISO 639–3 abq) is a morphologically ergative and consistently head-marking polysynthetic language spoken by ca. 37 thousand people in the Russian North Caucasus¹ and ca. 10 thousand in Turkey (Chirikba 2012). The basics of Abaza grammar can be found in Genko 1955, Tabulova 1976, Lomtadidze et al. 1989, Lomtadidze 2006, O’Herin 2002, and Arkadiev Ms. This section contains general information on the inventory of devices used for referring to verbal arguments in Abaza: pronominal prefixes, independent pronouns and NPs.²

2.1. Verbal template and pronominal prefixes

Abaza verbs are syntagmatically quite complex and include up to four pronominal prefixes as well as prefixes and suffixes expressing valency change, spatial, temporal, aspectual and modal meanings, negation and clause type. Table 1 schematically represents the Abaza verbal template.

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
absolutive	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

¹ https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/documents/vol4/pub-04-05.pdf, accessed 23 July 2023.

² Although adnominal possessors and complements of postpositions display the same range of referential types as verbal arguments in Abaza, we limit our discussion to the latter due to the small number of relevant examples in the corpus.

Abaza verbal pronominal prefixes fall into two series, the absolutive and the oblique, which are shown in Table 2. The choice of allomorphs is morphophonologically determined.

Table 2. Pronominal prefixes in Abaza

singular			plural		
	absolutive	oblique		absolutive	oblique
1SG	<i>s(ə)-</i>	<i>s(ə)-/z-</i>	1Pl	<i>h(ə)-</i>	<i>h(ə)-/ʃ-</i>
2SG.M	<i>w(ə)-</i>	<i>w(ə)-</i>	2Pl	<i>š(ə)-</i>	<i>š(ə)-/ž-</i>
2SG.F	<i>b(ə)-</i>	<i>b(ə)-/p-</i>			
3SG.M	<i>d(ə)-</i>	<i>j(ə)-</i>	3Pl	<i>j(ə)-</i>	<i>r(ə)-/d(ə)-</i>
3SG.F		<i>l(ə)-</i>			
3SG.N	<i>j(ə)-</i>	<i>na-/a-</i>			

Prefixes from the absolutive series occur in slot -12 and encode the S of intransitive verbs and the P of transitive verbs, cf. (2)–(5). Prefixes from the oblique series encode the ergative A of transitive verbs in slot -4 (3)–(5) and indirect object(s), which are usually introduced by applicative prefixes, in slots -5, -6 and -8, cf. (4)–(5).

- (2) *d-ca-d*
 3SG.H.ABS-go-DCL
 ‘S/he went.’
- (3) *hə-j-zak-t̪*
 1PL.ABS-3SG.M.ERG-beat.up-DCL
 ‘He beat us up.’
- (4) *j-ʃa-wə-r-t̪*
 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-2SG.M.IO-3PL.ERG-give-DCL
 ‘They gave it to you.’
- (5) *j-šə-z-j-a-s-h^wp̪*
 3SG.N.ABS-2PL.IO-BEN-3SG.M.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-NPST.DCL
 ‘I will say it to him about you.’

The absolutive prefix *j(ə)-* (3SG.N or 3PL) is usually omitted when a coreferential nominal expression immediately precedes the verb (6).

- (6) *pïrog-g'aj s-č'p-aj-t*
 pie-ADD [3SG.N.ABS]1SG.ERG-do-PRS-DCL
 'I also make pies.'

In the following, cases like (6) will not be considered, as well as constructions with peripheral participants not indexed in the verb.

2.2. Free pronouns

The paradigm of Abaza independent personal pronouns is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Personal pronouns in Abaza

singular		plural	
1	<i>sa(ra)</i>	1	<i>ha(ra)</i>
2M	<i>wa(ra)</i>	2	<i>ša(ra)</i>
2F	<i>ba(ra)</i>		
3M	<i>jara</i>	3	<i>dara</i>
3F	<i>la(ra)</i>		
3N	<i>jara</i>		

The distribution between full and short (without the suffix *-ra*) variants of personal pronouns is unclear; both variants occur in the corpus, see (7)—(8).

- (7) *sara saratav s-ca-t*
 1SG saratov 1SG.ABS-go-DCL
 'I went to Saratov.'
- (8) *sa s-g'-na-j-χ-wa-šə-m* *h-pnə*
 1SG 1SG.ABS-NEG.EMP-TRL-go-RE-IPF-FUT-NEG 1PL.IO-at
 'I won't return home.'

The third person pronouns *jara*, *la(ra)* and *dara* in the anaphoric function are frequently replaced by demonstratives, primarily the distal ones, see (9). The paradigm of demonstrative pronouns in the variety of Inzhich-Chukun is shown in Table 4 (cf. Genko 1955: 102).

- (9) *awəj də-psə-n*
 DIST 3SG.H.ABS-die-PST
 'S/he died.'

Table 4. Demonstrative pronouns in Abaza

	singular	plural
proximal	<i>arəj</i>	<i>arat</i>
medial	<i>anəj</i>	<i>anat</i>
distal	<i>awəj</i>	<i>awat</i>

In the variety of Krasnyj Vostok the medial and distal series have apparently switched their deictic functions (cf. Tabulova 1976: 94); notably, even there it is still the *aw*-series demonstratives that are used anaphorically.

2.3. Noun phrases

The third major type of referential devices in Abaza is full NPs, see (10).

- (10) a. *j-ca-n zaman*,
 3SG.N.ABS-go-PST time
 b. *a-pajšambar d-ša-j-t*
 DEF-prophet 3SG.H.ABS-CSL-go-DCL
 (a+b) ‘Some time passed, and the prophet came.’

An NP usually contains a noun which together with its non-referential modifiers (e.g., adjectives and numerals) may form a so-called nominal complex behaving as a single unit for morphological marking (see e.g. Lander 2017 for West Circassian). The nominal complex may include markers of (in)definiteness, plurality, oblique cases, possession, and additive particles. For example, the noun phrase in (11) contains a noun stem, an adjective-like modifier and an indefiniteness suffix.

- (11) *kastrjul-ğafa-k ša-s-awa-n*
 pot-enamel-INDF CSL-1SG.ERG-find-PST
 ‘I found an enameled pot.’

The core of the NP constituted by the nominal complex can be expanded by demonstratives, possessor NPs, and relative clauses, cf. (12).

- (12) *awat j-ša-n.χa-z awša-k^wa*
 DIST.PL REL.ABS-CSL-remain-PST.NFIN DEF-people-PL
 ‘those people who remained’

3. Analysis

3.1. Data and methods

Our analysis is based on the corpus of Abaza oral narratives recorded from ten speakers (four men and six women, all but two born before 1960) in Inzhich-Chukun. The whole corpus contains 25 texts (ca. 3600 tokens); we excluded those texts that were not narratives proper, leaving 17 texts (ca. 2700 tokens). Overall, the analyzed material contains 1279 referential expressions of different types: 439 instances of 1st person, 51 of 2nd person and 789 of 3rd person (including full NPs). However, we decided to exclude from our consideration the impersonal uses of personal prefixes, which are quite frequent in discourse but do not denote any specific participant and hence are irrelevant for our study. Such uses are found with 2nd person masculine prefix used for arbitrary reference (13), 3rd person plural used in generic contexts (14), as well as 3rd person singular non-human prefix filling a “dummy” argument slot with meteorological predicates (15).

- (13) a. *mač'k-g'əj* *ʕa-h-awə-t*
 little-ADD CSL-IPL.ERG-find-DCL
 ‘We found a few (berries),’
- b. *awasa wə-nask'a-pχ'aʒa-g'əj* *raha raha*
 but 2SG.M.ABS-move_forward-EACH-ADD more more
 ‘but each time you go further and further,’
- c. *j-žpa-χa-wa-mca* *a-žəwmp-k^wa*
 3PL.ABS-thick-INC-IPF-CVB DEF-berry-PL
 ‘there are more and more berries.’
- (14) *čəɾɐ^wə a-zerno z-la-zə-r-kk-wa* *a-maš*
 shovel DEF-grain REL.IO-INS-BEN-3PL.ERG-gather-IPF DEF-barn
 ‘shovel which is used (lit. they use) to gather grain in the barn’
- (15) *j-q^wla-n*
 3SG.N.ABS-get_dark-PST
 ‘It was getting dark.’

The final number of referential expressions analyzed is 1156 (1st person: 439, 2nd person: 45; 3rd person: 672).

As the quantitative measure of activation of referents, we use referential distance (RD) proposed by Givón (1983). The reason we chose this measure instead of the much more sophisticated activation metric advanced in Kibrik

(2011: Part. 4) is precisely the simplicity of RD as well as its broad applicability which does not require any “deep” grammatical or discourse analysis. Besides that, our goal is to try to determine the different factors potentially affecting referential choice in Abaza, rather than to propose an integrated predictive model aggregating these different factors. RD is counted as the number of discourse units (in our case, clauses) between the previous mention of a referent in the text and its current mention in the given clause. The lowest degree of activation is when $RD = 0$, i.e., the referent is mentioned in the text for the first time. The highest degree of activation is when $RD = 1$, i.e., the referent is mentioned in the immediately preceding clause. Somewhat counterintuitively, the intermediate degrees of activation are higher than 1, i.e., mentions of the referent after a break of one ($RD = 2$) or more ($RD > 2$) clauses.

Each predicate, verbal or non-verbal, finite or non-finite, was considered as the head of its own clause. For example, the following fragment (16), which is taken from the middle of an autobiographical text, contains three mentions of the 1st person plural referent. The 1st person plural referent was not mentioned in the preceding stretch of this text, so the RD of the first mention of the referent (pronoun + pronominal affix) (16a) is 0. The RD of the next mention of the referent (pronominal affix) (16b) is 1, because the previous mention of the referent was in the immediately preceding clause. Similarly, the RD of the third mention of the referent (pronominal affix) (16c) is also 1. Note that the clause in (16c) repeats the one in (16a) but for the full pronoun.

- (16) a. *hara h-n-apχ'-əw-z* *asqan*
 1PL 1PL.ABS-REL.TMP-3SG.N.IO-learn-IPF-PST when
 'When we were studying,'
 b. *h-χ^wəc-k^wa-ta*
 1PL.ABS-little-PL-ADV
 'being children,'
 c. *h-n-a-pχ'-əw-z* *asqan*
 1PL.ABS-REL.TMP-3SG.N.IO-learn-IPF-PST when
 'when we were studying,'
 d. *a-harəf-k^wa l-lə-r-dərə-n* *psajspa-za*
 DEF-letter-PL 3SG.F.IO-3SG.F.ERG-CAUS-know-PST slow-INT
 'she learned letters a little.'

In the case of fragments involving direct speech, the principles of annotation were slightly different. For example, in (17) the first mention of the 1st person singular participant in (17c) refers to the narrator himself, while the

second mention of the 1st person singular participant within the quote in (17h) refers to the character that the narrator is talking about, i.e., to the referent of the 3rd person singular pronominal affixes in (17a,b,d,e,g). In such cases the RD of the participants mentioned within the reported speech was calculated starting from the beginning of the quote as if it were a separate text, so the RD of the pronoun + corresponding pronominal affix in (17h) is 0.

- (17) a. *d-a-pšə-n*
 3SG.H.ABS-3SG.N.IO-look-PST
 ‘He looked’
- b. *j.g’əj d-qəč’č’a-n*
 and 3SG.H.ABS-laugh-PST
 ‘and laughed’
- c. *jə-z-ŋʷə-z*
 REL.ABS-1SG.ERG-write-PST.NFIN
 ‘at what I had written,’
- d. *d-ŋa-gələ-n*
 3SG.H.ABS-CSL-stand_up-PST
 ‘(then) he stood up’
- e. *awəj j-hʷ-əj-d*
 DIST 3SG.N.ABS+3SG.M.ERG-say-PRS-DCL
 ‘and he says thus:’
- f. *arəj a-č’k’wən j-g’ə-j-dəra-m*
 PROX DEF-boy 3SG.N.ABS-NEG.EMP-3SG.M.ERG-know-NEG
 ‘‘This guy doesn’t know,’’
- g. *j-hʷ-əj-d*
 3SG.M.ERG-say-PRS-DCL
 ‘he says,’
- h. *sara abaza-k’wa bəj-ta šə-z-dər-wa*
 1SG abaza-PL good-ADV REL.MNR-1SG.ERG-know-IPF
 ‘‘that I know the Abaza people well’’.

When dialogues are reported, the RD of the mentions of referents were calculated across turns of different speakers. Thus, in (18), the participant is referred to by the 2nd person pronominal affix in the question (18a) and by the 1st person pronominal affix in the answer (18c–e). Since in this dialogue the referent was activated in the question, the RD of its first mention in the reply (18c) was counted as 1.

- (18) a. *awasa wə-nbʒʹaʕʷ-êa-kʷa z-ʕa-wə-m-d-ja*
 but 2SG.M.IO-friend-PLH-PL REL.RSN-CSL-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-bring-QN
 "Why didn't you bring your friends?"
- b. *l-hʷa-t*
 3SG.F.ERG-say-DCL
 'she said.'
- c. *jə-gʹ-sə-m-dər-t məma*
 3SG.N.ABS-NEG.EMP-1SG.ERG-NEG-know-DCL mom
 "I didn't know, mom,"
- d. *awəj apš b-hazər-ta*
 DIST such 2SG.F.ABS-ready-ADV
 'that you were prepared like that,'
- e. *awəj aʕʷ-p jə-z-ʕa-s-m-aʕʷə-z*
 DIST 3SG.N.IO+COP-NPST.DCL 3PL.ABS-REL.RSN-CSL-1SG.ERG-NEG-take-PST.NFIN
 'that is why I didn't bring them.'

3.2. First and second persons

In our corpus, the 1st person singular and 2nd person singular participants can be referred to either by a pronominal prefix alone (19) or by a pronominal prefix accompanied by an independent pronoun (20).

- (19) *šʹta s-hʷa-t*
 yes 1SG.ERG-say-DCL
 "Yes," I said.'
- (20) *sara aʕə-ja jə-s-čʹp-əw-šə-z*
 1SG what-QN REL.ABS-1SG.ERG-do-IPF-FUT-PST.NFIN
 'What could I do?'

The 1st person plural and 2nd person plural participants can be referred to in three ways: by a pronominal affix alone (21), by a pronominal affix together with an independent pronoun (22) or, rarely, by a pronominal affix together with an NP (usually involving coordination) (23).³

- (21) *ʒə.ʕʷ-k h-qə-s-ra a-taq-ʕa-t*
 stream-INDF 1PL.ABS-LOC.ELAT-go-MSD 3SG.N.IO-need-INC-DCL
 'We had to cross a stream.'

³ In the corpus this type of reference is attested only for the 1st person plural referents.

- (22) *baraχlo-k-g'aj g'-hə-ma-mə-z-ɬ* *hara*
junk-INDF-ADD NEG.EMP-1PL.IO-have-NEG-PST.NFIN-DCL 1PL
‘We had no junk.’
- (23) *qʷəmgara=hʷa pjesa-k h-č'pa-ɬ rit-əj sar-əj*
love_spell=QUOT play-INDF 1PL.ERG-do-DCL rita-COORD 1SG-COORD
‘Rita and I staged the play "Love spell".’

Besides that, 2nd person A participants can also be referred to by zero anaphora or an NP alone with the imperative forms of transitive verbs, where the agent pronominal prefix is obligatorily suppressed, see (24). Since this strategy is conditioned by morphological factors and not by discourse, it will not be considered further.

- (24) *j-s-zə-r.ɬʷa* *maχməwt*
3SG.N.ABS-1SG.IO-BEN-[2SG.M.ERG]forgive/IMP Makhmut
‘Forgive me, Makhmut.’

Tables 5–6 show the results of the annotation of RD for 1st person pronouns.

Table 5. RD and the expression of the 1st person singular referent

	pronominal affix alone	pronoun + pronominal affix
RD = 1	164 (97.0%)	5 (3.0%)
RD = 2–4	48 (88.9%)	6 (11.1%)
RD ≥ 5	35 (79.5%)	9 (20.5%)
new participant (RD = 0)	7 (29.2%)	17 (70.8%)
total	254 (87.3%)	37 (12.7%)

Table 6. RD and expression of the 1st person plural referent

	pronominal affix alone	pronoun + pronominal affix	NP + pronominal affix
RD = 1	89 (97.8%)	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1%)
RD = 2–4	28 (93.3%)	2 (6.7%)	0 (0%)
RD ≥ 5	5 (83.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)
new participant (RD = 0)	4 (19.0%)	8 (38.1%)	9 (42.9%)
total	126 (85.1%)	11 (7.4%)	11 (7.4%)

For the highest degree of activation ($RD = 1$), the probability of the referent's being encoded by the pronominal affix alone is very high (96.6% for singular referent and 97.8% for plural referent). With the increase of RD, the probability of the use of a pronominal affix alone decreases: along with pronominal affix, speakers tends to add pronouns or full NPs for referents with a lower activation level. Finally, when a new participant appears in the text, or, more precisely, in an episode, the use of pronouns or NPs becomes more likely than the strategy with mere pronominal affixes. These results are in line with the findings reported in the literature. As Givón (1979: 18) claims, more discontinuous topics tend to require more coding material, i.e., tend to be expressed by full pronouns or NPs rather than pronominal affixes, see also Ariel (1990: Ch. 4), Siewierska (2004: 46) and Kibrik (2011: 378–380).

The results for the 2nd person referents, however, do not show the expected tendencies: the number of cases where pronouns are used turned out to be equally low both for first mentions of new referents and for subsequent mention of referents already activated in the preceding clauses, see Table 7. This is perhaps related to the fact that 2nd person referents mainly occur in dialogues, where referential strategies are different from those of narrative proper (cf. Kibrik 2011: 43). Anyway, the results for the 2nd person cannot be considered reliable due to the small number of examples.

Table 7. RD and expression of the 2nd person (both singular and plural) referent

	pronominal affix alone	pronoun + pronominal affix
RD = 1	18 (81.8%)	4 (18.2%)
RD = 2–4	6 (100%)	0 (0%)
RD ≥ 5	1 (50%)	1 (50.0%)
new participant (RD = 0)	13 (86.7%)	2 (13.3%)
total	38 (84.4%)	7 (15.6%)

Abaza pronouns have multiple functions, and referential distance accounts for only one of them. The first function is the introduction of participants or, more specifically, their first mentions in a text or an episode, reflected in RD equal to 0. Another function of Abaza 1st and 2nd person pronouns is that of marking contrast, whereby a referent is opposed to some other referent mentioned in the preceding or, less frequently, in the following stretch of discourse. For example, in (25) the 1st person participant is contrasted with a 2nd person participant.

- (25) a. *bəjʒaʒ*
 Bilyal
 "Bilyal,"
- b. *s-h^wa-t*
 1SG.ERG-say-DCL
 'I said,'
- c. *sara čə-qa-s-čax-p-ta*
 1SG RFL.ABS-LOC-1SG.ERG-hide-NPST.DCL-ADV
 "I will hide,"
- d. *s-h^wa-n*
 1SG.ERG-say-PST
 'I said,'
- e. *wara ta^kw č-rək^wən wə-na-šəl-χ-ta*
 2SG.M little pass-COND 2SG.M.ABS-TRL-enter/IMP-RE-ADV
 "and you, when some time passes, go back home'
- f. *zawaʒ a-zə č-a-j-rə-q^wara-χ-t* *h^wa-ta*
 Zawal DEF-river RFL.ABS-3SG.N.IO-3SG.M.ERG-CAUS-choke-RE-DCL QUOT-ADV
- g. *j-r-a-h^w*
 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-DAT-say/IMP
 (f+g) 'and tell them that Zawal drowned (*lit.* was strangled by the river)'"
- h. *s-h^wa-t*
 1SG.ERG-say-DCL
 'I said'.

A slightly less obvious type of contrast is shown in (26) from the same narrative. The narrator tells how people once lost him when he was a child, and in this fragment, he describes the actions of two opposite sides of the conflict: first he speaks about the people who were looking for him (26a—c), and then he relates what he was doing himself at the same time (26d—e).

- (26) a. *qa.ča-ta j-ta-z*
 man.PLH-ADV REL.ABS-be_in-PST.NFIN
 'the men who were (in our neighborhood)'
- b. *a-waq j-ša-nzək'a.ra*
 DEF-night 3SG.N.ABS-rise-UNTIL
- c. *j-s-zə-pšča-t*
 3PL.ABS-1SG.IO-BEN-look_for-DCL
 'were looking for me all night until dawn.'

- d. *sar-g'əj sə-čə-n*
 1SG-ADD 1SG.ABS-sleep-PST
 '[As for me,] I slept'
- e. *jə-g'-sə-m-dər-χ-ɬ* *š'ta*
 3SG.N.ABS-NEG.EMP-1SG.ERG-NEG-know-RE-DCL PTCL
 'and forgot everything.'

Examples like (26) show topic shift, i.e., a sudden change of what the speaker is talking about. As can be seen from (26) above and (27) below, such topic shift is often supported by the additive clitic *-g'əj*.

- (27) a. *jə-r-ga-n*
 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-bring-PST
 'They took it (a bullock),
- b. *jə-r-š'ə-n*
 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-cut-PST
 'stabbed it'
- c. *dara jə-r-fa-χ-d*
 3PL 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-eat-RE-DCL
 'and ate it themselves.'
- d. *har-g'əj za-ḱ-g'əj g'-ša-hə-rə-m-t-χ-d*
 1PL-ADD one-INDF-ADD NEG.EMP-CSL-1PL.IO-3PL.ERG-NEG-give-RE-DCL
 'As for us, they didn't give us anything.'

Some of the examples of contrast, including topic shift, were simultaneously the first mentions of the referent and as such did not disrupt the patterns seen in Tables 5–6 above. But the rest of such examples actually constitute the majority of the cases where pronouns were employed despite the low RD. Table 8 shows the number of pronouns used in different functions: 26 out of 55 examples of pronouns include contrast, and 19 out of these 26 cannot be explained by RD = 0.

Table 8. 1st and 2nd person pronouns in different functions

	the first mention of the referent		not the first mention of the referent	total
	in the beginning of the text	in the beginning of direct speech		
contrast	2	5	19	26
no contrast	6	7	16	29

There are 16 examples left that cannot be explained either by RD = \circ or by topic shift, e.g. (28). As for now, there is no satisfactory explanation for such examples.

- (28) a. *awə-g'əj ta-s-ça-χə-n*
 DIST-ADD LOC-1SG.ERG-put-RE-PST
 'I put it (the money I found if my pocket) back'
- b. *wʒə awəj šamiʒ d-ʒa-jə-nʒək'*
 now DIST shamil 3SG.H.ABS-CSL-come-UNTIL
- c. *s-a-z-pš-əj-t sa š'ta*
 1SG.ABS-3SG.N.IO-BEN-wait-PRS-DCL 1SG PTCL
 (b+c) 'and wait till Shamil comes.'

3.3. Third person

The inventory of reference expressions we consider for the 3rd person consists of four types, i.e., a personal prefix alone (29), a personal prefix together with a personal pronoun (30), a personal prefix together with a demonstrative pronoun (31) and a personal prefix with a full NP (32).

- (29) *wadərʃʷana a-kaʎoz-la d-ca-χ-wa-šə-n*
 then DEF-kolkhoz-INS 3SG.H.ABS-go-RE-IPF-FUT-PST
 'Then she was going to return to the kolkhoz (field).'
- (30) *jara awaʔa də-ça-r-ça-χ-t*
 3SG.M DIST.LOC 3SG.H.ABS-LOC-3PL.ERG-put-RE-DCL
 'They buried him there.'
- (31) *awat-g'əj j-gʷərβ'a-wa jə-r-fa-n*
 DIST.PL-ADD 3PL.ABS-rejoice-IPF 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-eat-PST
 'They ate it gladly.'
- (32) *pa zaʒə-k d-sə-ma-n*
 son one-UNIT 3SG.H.ABS-1SG.IO-have-PST
 'I had an only son.'

Table 9 shows how the choice between the options presented above corresponds to RD. We can see that the two major referential devices employed for 3rd person participants in Abaza are personal prefixes alone and personal prefixes accompanied by full NPs. The choice between these two devices clearly depends on RD: the greater RD, the higher the probability of employing a full NP in addition to the personal prefix. By contrast, the use of demon-

Table 9. RD and expression of the 3rd person referents

	pronominal affix alone	demonstrative + pronominal affix	personal pronoun + pronominal affix	NP + pro- nominal affix
RD = 1	222 (81.9%)	24 (8.9%)	7 (2.6%)	18 (6.6%)
RD = 2–4	135 (88.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.7%)	17 (11.1%)
RD ≥ 5	35 (43.2%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.2%)	43 (53.1%)
new partici- pant (RD = 0)	11 (6.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	156 (93.4%)
total	403 (60.0%)	26 (3.9%)	9 (1.3%)	234 (34.8%)

stratives and personal pronouns is rare and tends to be restricted to cases where RD is small. Hence, from the perspective of RD, the strategy with pronouns co-occurring with pronominal prefixes is similar to the one with pronominal prefixes alone. Nevertheless, we are not dealing with free variation here, because other factors contribute to the choice between these referential strategies.

A further parameter usually considered in studies on referential tracking is whether the referent is a protagonist or a non-protagonist of the discourse (see, e.g., Clancy 1980: 178–184; Downing 1996: 113–115; Kibrik 2011: 406–413). Apparently, demonstrative pronouns are used in Abaza for mentioning the participants which are not or not yet protagonists. Specifically, this mechanism seems to work in the following way: once a new participant appears in the discourse, s/he is referred to by a demonstrative pronoun for the next few times because s/he is regarded as a non-protagonist by default. Then, if the speaker continues to talk about this participant and, consequently, s/he becomes a protagonist of the narrative, the pronoun is not used anymore and the new protagonist is referred to by pronominal prefixes only (cf. a similar observation, albeit for a different set of referential strategies, in Clancy 1980: 155). This scheme is illustrated in (33)—(34).

Example (33) is a text fragment where a new character appears — a woman who helped the narrator (the protagonist) with cooking. This fragment contains all mentions of this character in the text, hence she can be considered a non-protagonist. For the first mention of this character (33a) a full NP is employed, as expected, while for the three subsequent mentions (33b—d) the speaker chose to employ demonstrative pronouns.

- (33) a. *až'aj fatajma a-bibliateka da-n-χ-əw-n*
 Adzhieva Fatima DEF-library 3SG.H.ABS-LOC-work-IPF-PST
 'Fatima Adzhieva worked in the library,'
- b. *sa d-sə-cə-n-χ-əw-n awəj*
 1SG 3SG.H.ABS-1SG.IO-COM-LOC-work-IPF-PST DIST
 'she worked with me.'
- c. *awəj a-ζaq'əm-aj š't-aj*
 DIST DEF-lyakum-COORD PTCL-COORD
č'aj šk'awk'w-aj j-ŋa-lə-r-šə-ŋ.
 tea white-COORD 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-3SG.F.ERG-CAUS-boil-DCL
 'She made lyakums (a local kind of cakes) and white tea.'
- d. *a-č'aj šk'awk'w-aj a-ζaq'əm-aj*
 DEF-tea white-COORD DEF-lyakum-COORD
i χərçə awəj j-ŋa-l-č'pa-ŋ
 and ayran DIST 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-3SG.F.ERG-make-DCL
 'And she made white tea, and lyakums, and ayran (a type of yo-
 ghurt).'

Example (34) is different. The new character — the speaker's mother — introduced in (34a) remains a topic of the narrative for approximately 20 rather long sentences, so she can be considered a protagonist of the discourse. Nevertheless, for the second mention of this character (34b) the narrator chose to use a demonstrative pronoun — presumably because at this moment his mother has not attained the protagonist status yet.

- (34) a. *sara s-an d-adəg'a-b*
 1SG 1SG.IO-mother 3SG.H.ABS-Circassian-NPST.DCL
 'My mother is Circassian.'
- b. *awəj a-sk'wšə zk'-aj ž-š-aj ŋ'wazə ž-ba*
 DIST DEF-year thousand-COORD nine-hundred-COORD twenty nine-CL
asqan d-ŋa-d-rə-j-d
 time 3SG.H.ABS-CSL-3PL.ERG-CAUS-be.born-DCL
 'She was born in 1929.' [Her father was killed in 1933. Her mother died
 of typhus in 1945. Because of these events, she did not study.]

Table 10 shows that demonstrative pronouns in most of the examples are indeed used for the first few mentions of the participant.

Table 10. The functions of pronominal prefixes co-occurring with demonstratives

	2 nd mention	3 rd mention	4 th mention	5 th mention+
no. of examples	12	5	3	6

By contrast, the 3rd person pronouns are mainly used for intensification. In almost all cases the Abaza 3rd person pronouns can be translated into English by means of *self*-intensifiers, cf. (35).

(35) a. *jara d-g'ə-z-ʕa-mə-j-t*

3SG.M 3SG.H.ABS-NEG.EMP-POT-CSL-NEG-go-DCL

b. *wəs j-š'arda-ta ʕa-çç-wa-šə-n*

business 3SG.N.ABS-many-ADV CSL-come_out-IPF-FUT-PST

(a+b) '[When I arrived in Makhachkala, I sent a telegram to Abdulgamid, so that he would meet me.] **He himself** could not come; he had a lot of things to do. [But he had a good friend named Shamil, and he sent him to meet me.]'

Thus, even if morphologically forms like *jara* 3SG.M, *la(ra)* 3SG.F and *dara* 3PL belong to the same paradigm as 1st and 2nd person pronouns, functionally they belong to a different category.

4. Discussion

Our analysis of referential choice in Abaza has shown that, quite expectedly, the most frequently employed strategy for referring to participants in narratives is pronominal prefixes alone. This strategy is employed as long as the hearer can unambiguously determine whom (or what) the narrator is talking about. In those cases where reference cannot be established unambiguously, an NP is added. Unsurprisingly, most often this occurs in case of 3rd person referents, where the range of possible candidates can be large, and sometimes in case of 1st person plural referents as well. Within this basically two-way mechanism of referential choice, free pronouns and demonstratives appear to be redundant, since they do not add any new information to that already provided by pronominal prefixes. Instead, pronouns contribute to the system of referential tracking on other levels: they mark local contrasts and emphasis, interact with information structure and help to establish the general structure of the narrative. In the following, we discuss these functions of Abaza pronouns from a theoretical and typological perspective.

4.1. Demonstratives for second mention /
non-protagonist characters

In general, as noted in Diessel (1999: 96), “anaphoric demonstratives are used to indicate a referent that is somewhat unexpected and not currently in the focus of attention”. However, two types of demonstratives which are both covered by Diessel’s formulation can be distinguished.

The first type of anaphoric demonstratives can be illustrated, for instance, by the Russian distal demonstrative *tot*. According to Kibrik (2011: 420), it is used to mention a referent second in activation, cf. (36), where the demonstrative *tot* is coreferential with a non-subject argument of the preceding clause.

(36) Russian (Kibrik 2011: 420)

- a. *Čerez minutu pilot_p zlobno vzgljanul na mexanika_m.*
In a minute the pilot viciously glanced at the mechanic.
- b. *Tot_m blednyj, vsë eščë perebiral instrumenty v jaščike.*
That one, pale, was still pawing through the instruments in the box.

Thus, demonstratives like Russian *tot* (or German *der*, or Dutch *die/deze*, see Comrie 1997) are needed when other referential devices fail: a personal pronoun would imply co-reference with the subject of the preceding clause, an NP would imply no co-reference with anything from the preceding clause, and only a demonstrative can resolve this conflict because it is designed exactly for pointing at the referent second in activation (cf. Himmelmann 1996: 227).

However, the Abaza anaphoric demonstratives differ functionally from anaphoric demonstratives of the “Russian/German/Dutch” type shown above. For example, in (37), where the distal demonstrative *awat* in (37d) refers to the “people” introduced in (37a), there is no referential conflict whose resolution would require the use of a special device. All verbal forms in this fragment are intransitive and their arguments are the same (“people”), so the demonstrative *awat* is not used for disambiguation and must have some other function.

- (37) a. *apqa a-zaman waša.qa-ta a-dəwnaj jə-kʷə-z*
earlier DEF-time people-ADV DEF-world REL.ABS-be_on-PST.NFIN
‘At that time, people that there were in the world,’
- b. *š-abga-z j-azkəkə-ta*
REL.MNR-whole-PST.NFIN 3PL.ABS-gather-ADV
‘gathered all together,’

- c. *zʒ'ara j-bzaz-əw-n*
 somewhere 3PL.ABS-live-IPF-PST
 'and lived somewhere.'
- d. *awat zəmʕwa j-š'arda-ĉa-χa-ṭ*
 DIST.PL all 3PL.ABS-many-EXC-INC-DCL
 'They all became too numerous'
- e. *j-ʔa-ta-z*
 3PL.ABS-REL.LOC-be_in-PST
 'where they lived.'

It seems that the Abaza demonstratives are closer to demonstratives of a different type, i.e., those which are used “to establish major discourse participants in the universe of discourse” (Diessel 1999: 98). A typical context for the appearance of such demonstratives is after the first mention. Diessel proposes the scheme shown in Table 11 specifying the place of demonstrative pronouns in the system of referential tracking.

Table 11. The use of anaphoric demonstratives after first mention (Diessel 1999: 98)

1 st mention	2 nd mention	subsequent mention
(indefinite) NP	anaphoric DEM	3.PRO, definite ART etc.
new referent	referent established as topic	(topical) referent continued

Demonstratives that typically appear after the first mention of a new participant are attested in To'aba'ita (< Austronesian; Lichtenberk 1996), Tagalog (< Austronesian; Himmelmann 1996: 229) and Montagnais (Innu) (< Algonquian; Cyr 1993). Note, however, that in these languages demonstratives appear after the first mention as adnominal determiners, i.e., not independently. A similar pattern is observed in English: *Once upon a time there was a king. This king had ...* (Himmelman 1996: 229). Possible examples of independent anaphoric demonstratives used for the second mention are found in Nivkh: Gruzdeva (2020: 14) describes the function of the Nivkh independent demonstrative *həʃ* 'close one' using Lichtenberk's (1996) wording “immediate anaphora after first mention”. However, from the examples provided in her paper it is not clear whether the Nivkh demonstrative *həʃ* is indeed employed to establish new discourse topics or just to resolve a referential conflict like in (36).

Thus, from a typological perspective the Abaza demonstratives are functionally similar to those demonstratives which are used to establish new participants in discourse. Their behaviour, however, differs from Diessel's scheme

in Table 11 in that they are used not just for the second mention of the referent but for a whole series of its mentions after it was introduced by a full NP, cf. (33) above and (38) below.

- (38) a. *abaza-kʷa a-mgʻal-gʻaj rə-s-ta-ʔ*
 Abaza-PL DEF-millet_bread-ADD 3PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give-DCL
 ‘I gave the Abaza people millet bread,’
- b. *ʃʒag-k azna-gʻaj baʒsəma rə-s-ta-ʔ*
 bottle-INDF full-ADD booze 3PL.IO-1SG.ERG-give-DCL
 ‘I gave them a full bottle of booze,’
- c. [*ʃtobə na sledujušʻij god*]
 ‘(in Russian) so that next year’
- d. *awat nəp r-čʻpa-rnəs a-qazla*
 DIST.PL harvest_festival 3PL.ERG-do-PURP 3SG.N.IO-for
 ‘they would make celebration of harvesting,’
- e. *awat j-gʻ-rə-m-čʻpa-ʔ*
 DIST.PL 3SG.N.ABS-NEG.EMP-3PL.ERG-NEG-do-DCL
 ‘(but) they did not.’

This fact indicates that we are dealing here with a more complex phenomenon than just automatic second mention marking. As was noted in Section 3.3, establishing a new participant of the discourse can be viewed as treating him or her first as a non-protagonist, and later, if this participant remains to be a topic for a sufficient number of clauses (cf. the notion of topic persistence, Givón 1983: 9, 14–15), as a protagonist. If the choice of referential strategy indeed depends on protagonist-hood, then a typological parallel to the Abaza pattern would be the system of referential choice in Bininj Gun-wok, cf. the analysis of the functions of personal vs. demonstrative pronouns in Kim et al. (2001).

4.2. Personal pronouns for local intensification

In contrast to demonstratives, the Abaza 3rd personal pronouns used as intensifiers are not sensitive to the general structure of the discourse — instead, they operate more locally (cf. the opposite results in Kim et al. 2001 for Bininj Gun-wok). The intensifying function of personal pronouns can be more precisely described as follows: they relate a referent to a set of alternatives (cf. König & Gast 2006: 226).⁴ The elicited examples (39)—(40) illustrate the

⁴ Abaza also possesses a set of intensifiers with the root *-qata-*, see Tabulova (1976: 99). In particular, König & Gast (2006) consider an Abkhaz counterpart of this set of intensifiers.

so-called adnominal and adverbial-exclusive uses of intensifier pronouns. In addition, example (40) shows that, even though in our corpus all examples of personal pronouns in the intensifying function contained 3rd person pronouns, the same semantic effect is available with locutor pronouns as well.

- (39) a. *jə-w-ʕa-ma*
 3SG.N.ABS-2SG.M.ERG-hear-Q
 ‘Have you heard?’
- b. *zaləjna taha d-š-ca-wa?*
 Zalina marriage 3SG.H.ABS-REL.MNR-go-IPF
 ‘that Zalina is getting married?’
- c. *š’ta lara j-ʕa-s-a-l-h^w-d*
 yes 3SG.F 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-1SG.IO-DAT-3SG.F.ERG-say-DCL
 ‘Yes, she told me herself.’ (elicited)

- (40) a. *w-s-ǰ^wə-ç*,
 2SG.M.ABS-1SG.IO-LOC-pass/IMP
 ‘Leave me alone,’
- b. *sara jə-s-č’p-əw-š-d*
 1SG 3SG.N.ABS-1SG.ERG-do-IPF-FUT-DCL
 ‘I’ll do it myself.’ (elicited)

Further, examples (41)–(43) show that pronouns in the intensifying function syntactically combine with nouns, demonstratives, and even personal pronouns (cf. Tabulova 1976: 100) in a kind of an appositional construction.

- (41) a. *w-a-pšə-sd*
 2SG.M.ABS-3SG.N.IO-look/IMP-EMP
 ‘Look,’
- b. *a-k’adəg^w a-çla-k^wa a-la-jə-d*
 DEF-courtyard DEF-tree-PL 3SG.N.IO-LOC-grow-DCL
 ‘the courtyard is overgrown with trees’
- c. *awasa a-tzə jara šabəž-ta j-pšza-b*
 but DEF-house 3SG.N strong-ADV 3SG.N.ABS-beautiful-NPST.DCL
 ‘but the house itself is very beautiful.’ (elicited)

- (42) *awəj jara j-ʕa-j-g-d* *a-ča*
 DIST 3SG.M 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-3SG.M.ERG-carry-DCL DEF-hay
 ‘He himself brought the hay.’ / ‘It was him who brought the hay.’ (elicited)

(43) *šara šara š-sə-z-ʃa-j-t-əj!*

2PL 2PL 2PL.ABS-1SG.IO-BEN-CSL-go-DCL-ADD

'You yourselves came to me, didn't you?!' (Tabulova 1976: 100)

As noted by König & Gast (2006: 253), in head-marking languages such intensifier constructions often allow omission of the nominal and, as a result, an intensifier turns out to be the only free expression of the relevant participant. This is exactly what we observe in Abaza in examples like (39)–(40) above or (44) below.

(44) a. *jə-r-ga-n*

3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-bring-PST.DCL

'They took it (a bullock that our cow had given birth to),

b. *jə-r-š'ə-n*

3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-cut-PST.DCL

'stabbed it'

c. *dara jə-r-fa-χ-d*

3PL 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-eat-RE-DCL

'and ate it themselves.'

The use of personal pronouns for intensification seems to be a common pattern in languages with pronominal affixes. For example, in Montagnais (Innu), an Algonquian language of Canada, pronominal affixes express the same grammatical information as personal pronouns (Oxford 2007: 53), exactly like in Abaza. And indeed, judging from textual examples provided in Oxford (2007), we can assume that Montagnais personal pronouns occur in the intensifying function as well, see (45).

(45) Montagnais (Innu) (Oxford 2007: 53)

Tân, nûn nimâtenimâtî, iteu.

how 1SG I.be.aware.of.PRET.1>3 say.3>3'

'How so, I myself was aware of him, he said.'

Other languages for which the emphatic function of personal pronouns was described include, for example, Inuit (< Eskimo-Aleut; Fortescue 2017: 220) and Baniwa (< Arawak; Aikhenvald 1995: 192).

Further development of the intensifying function of the personal pronouns is the general expression of identity ('same', 'exactly'), as shown in the elicited examples (46)–(47) as well as example (48) from Tabulova (1976), where the intensifying pronoun precedes the demonstrative rather than follows it. Note that in these examples the personal pronoun *jara* is used regard-

less of the gender or number of the referents. See the discussion of expressions of “precision of reference” by König & Gast (2006: 265) and of “token identity” by König & Siemund (1999: 254) and Gast (2006: 45–46).

- (46) *war-g'əj sar-g'əj jara apχ'aga-k^wa-k h-rə-pχ'-əj-d*
 2SG.M-ADD 1SG-ADD 3SG.N book-PL-INDF 1PL.ABS-3PL.IO-read-PRS-DCL
 ‘You and I read the same books.’ (elicited)
- (47) *zalajna jara wžə~wžə ak^w-b d-an-ſa-j-χ*
 Zalina 3SG.N now~INT 3SG.N.IO+COP-NPST.DCL 3SG.H.ABS-REL.TMP-CSL-go-RE
 ‘Zalina has just arrived (lit. it is exactly now when Zalina arrived).’ (elicited)
- (48) *sara jara arəj a-stanica s-awa-p*
 1SG 3SG.N PROX DEF-village 1SG.ABS-be_part_of-NPST.DCL
 ‘I am from the same village.’ (Tabulova 1976: 96)

4.3. Personal pronouns and topic shift

As has been shown in Section 3.2, 1st and 2nd person pronouns in Abaza often mark a change of topic: new topics tend to be expressed twice — by a pronominal prefix and by a personal pronoun occurring in the beginning of the clause, cf. (49), where the topic is first the narrator (49a), then shifts to a different participant (49b–c), and then back to the narrator in (49d). Note that although the narrator is mentioned in (49c) as an addressee of the invitation, the syntactic position of an indirect object is obviously not topic-worthy enough to warrant a shift to the original topic by itself.

- (49) a. *awaʔa s-š-aʔa-z*
 DIST.LOC 1SG.ABS-REL.MNR-be-PST.NFIN
 ‘When I was there (in Saratov),’
- b. *abdulgamid j-aš'a-hba ph^wəs d-ſa-j-gə-n*
 Abdulgamid 3SG.M.IO-brother-elder wife 3SG.H.ABS-CSL-3SG.M.ERG-bring-PST
 ‘Abdulgamid’s elder brother got engaged’
- c. *jə-sə-z-čə-j-t-ʔ a-tacanadəlna*
 3SG.N.ABS-1SG.IO-BEN-LOC-3SG.ERG-call-DCL DEF-wedding
 ‘and invited me to the wedding.’
- d. *sar-g'əj sə-m-q^wa-χ-wa-ta*
 1SG-ADD 1SG.ABS-NEG-be_late-RE-IPF-ADV
 ‘As for me, without spending time’

- e. *saratav s-tə-çə-n*
 Saratov 1SG.ABS-LOC.ELAT-pass-PST
 'I left Saratov'
- f. *maxač'kala s-ca-t*
 Makhachkala 1SG.ABS-go-DCL
 'and went to Makhachkala.'

For 3rd person participants, topic shift is frequently expressed by apparently left-dislocated full NPs set off from the rest of the clause by an intonation break (indicated by commas), cf. (50).

- (50) a. *a-ḡamč'ə j-č'pá-t*
 DEF-sword 3SG.M.ERG-make-DCL
 [Describing preparations for a folk festival] 'He [my husband] made the sword.'
- b. *a-ḡəlpə, a-ž'aŋafa ḡəlpə, s-jə jə-z-zaχə-d*
 DEF-hat DEF-Dzhagafa hat 1SG-ADD 3SG.N.ABS-1SG.ERG-sew-DCL
 'As to the hat, Dzhagafa's hat, I sewed it.'

We suggest that (49) and (50) ultimately illustrate the same phenomenon, i. e. a topic shift construction with a left-dislocated full NP or pronoun co-referential with a pronominal prefix in the verb, cf. a similar topic shift construction in spoken French described by Lambrecht (1981: 53–74) and Detges (2018: 1067–1069), see (51).

- (51) Spoken French (Detges 2018: 1067)
- a. *Ma mère ne veut pas*
 My mother does not want to
- b. *mais moi j'aimerais bien hein*
 by I would love it, you know.'

Thus, the left dislocation pattern in Abaza manifests itself in a number of slightly different constructions. For the 1st and 2nd person, the pronominal prefix is doubled by a personal pronoun like in (49). For the 3rd person, the pronominal prefix is doubled by an NP like in (50). By contrast, demonstratives are involved in topic shift only rarely, since they are predominantly used for referents that have been already introduced as topics but have not yet attained protagonist hood. Example (52) illustrates one of the rare cases where a demonstrative is apparently used in topic shift.

- (52) a. *maβ^wraj-k^wa-g'əj* *ʃa-h-q^wʂa-t*
 blackberry-PL-ADD CSL-1PL.ERG-gather-DCL
 'We gathered blackberry.'
- b. *qawm-k-g'əj* *j-ʃa-h-aχ^wə-n*
 some-INDF-ADD 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-1PL.ERG-take-PST
 'We took some of it'
- c. *hə-nbʒ'əʃ^w-ča-k^wa* *j-na-mə-j-k^wa-z* *rə-qaz*
 1PL.PR-friend-PLH-PL REL.ABS-CSL-NEG-go-PL-PST.NFIN 3PL.IO-for
j-rə-z-ʃa-ʃ-ga-t
 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.IO-BEN-CSL-1PL.ERG-bring-DCL
 'and brought it to our friends who had not gone there with us.'
- d. *awat-g'əj* *j-g^wərβ'a-wa*
 DIST.PL-ADD 3PL.ABS-rejoice-IPF
 'They were happy'
- e. *jə-r-fā-n*
 3SG.N.ABS-3PL.ERG-eat-PST
 'and ate it.'

5. Conclusion

As we have shown, independent pronouns in Abaza, a polysynthetic language with highly developed head-marking, play an important and non-redundant role in establishing and maintaining reference in narratives vis-à-vis the obligatory verbal pronominal prefixes. Independent 1st and 2nd person pronouns serve to (re)introduce the locutors as discourse participants and contrast them to other referents, also in situations of topic shift. Distal demonstratives, which in their independent uses perform the anaphoric functions of 3rd person pronouns, also play a particular role in narratives, being a specialized means of reference to newly introduced participants that do not (yet) attain protagonisthood. Finally, the “formal” 3rd person pronouns have ultimately lost their anaphoric function and are used as intensifiers and develop into markers of emphatic identity. This set of functions resembles the behaviour of focus-sensitive particles (König 1991; Forker 2016), which might indicate that independent pronouns in languages with pronominal affixes, due to their “marked” status in grammar and discourse, tend to develop into this semantic field. We hope that our contribution will give further impetus to the study of the functions of independent pronouns in head-marking languages, both within the Northwest Caucasian family and cross-linguistically.

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Abbreviations

1 — 1st person; 2 — 2nd person; 3 — 3rd person; ABS — absolutive; ADD — additive; ADV — adverbial; BEN — benefactive; CAUS — causative; CL — classifier; COM — comitative; COND — conditional; COORD — coordinator; COP — copula; CSL — cislocative; CVB — converb; DAT — dative applicative; DCL — declarative; DEF — definiteness; DEM — demonstrative; DIST — distal demonstrative; EACH — converb ('every time [when]'); ELAT — elative; EMP — emphatic; ERG — ergative; EXC — excessive; F — feminine; FUT — future; H — human; IMP — imperative; INC — inceptive; INDF — indefiniteness; INS — instrumental applicative / case marker; INT — intensive; IO — indirect object; IPF — imperfective; LOC — locative preverb / case marker; M — masculine; MNR — manner; MSD — masdar; N — non-human; NEG — negation; NFIN — non-finite; NPST — non-past; PL — plural; PLH — human plural; POT — potential; PRET — preterit; PROX — proximate demonstrative; PRS — present; PST — past; PTCL — particle; PURP — purposive converb; Q — interrogative; QN — non-human interrogative; QUOT — quotative; RE — refactive; REL — relativization; RFL — reflexive; RSN — reason; SG — singular; TMP — temporal; TRL — translocative; UNIT — unit counting suffix; UNTIL — 'until'-converb.

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