Workshop on Lexical Affixes, 57th Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea Helsinki, 21–24 August 2024

### From noun incorporation to lexical affixation in Northwest Caucasian (with focus on Abaza)

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# Roadmap

- What it is about
- Northwest Caucasian languages
- Locative preverbs
- From incorporation to affixation
- Summary

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#### • What it is about

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- The Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghean) languages are not mentioned in the literature on noun incorporation.
- Yet they possess a class of morphemes, the so-called locative preverbs, that are in many cases historically and sometimes even synchronically transparently related to nouns (cf. Arkadiev & Maisak 2018, Arkadiev 2022).

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- (1) a-zə jə-k<sup>w</sup>a-ç-əw-n
   DEF-water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:bosom-pour.liquid-IPF-PST
   'Water was pouring into his bosom.' (Klychev 1995: 138)
- (2) a-sabəj d-gara-l-g<sup>w</sup>a-n
   DEF-child 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:cradle-3SG.F.ERG-put-PST
   'She put the child in the cradle.' (Klychev 1995: 67)

#### • The properties of Northwest Caucasian locative preverbs:

- form closed classes;
- always express spatial relations of various degrees of abstractness;
- often serve as applicatives introducing indirect objects (Arkadiev et al. 2024);
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- From a typological perspective, the Northwest Caucasian locative preverbs
  - fit within the broader class of "preverbs" found in the other languages of the Caucasus and beyond, e.g. in many Indo-European languages (e.g. Rousseau ed. 1995, Arkadiev 2014);
  - are in many ways parallel to the so-called "locative affixes" found e.g. in a number of languages of the Americas, themselves part of the broader domain of "lexical affixes" (Mithun 1997, Mattissen 2006).

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Purepecha (Tarascan, Mexico, Chamoreau 2017: 683)

- Several dozen "locative suffixes" most of which relate to parts of objects (including the body) and work as "locative verbal classifiers".
- Some of the suffixes "indicate a specific physical area":

(3)	a.	waxa- <mark>nu</mark> -x-ti	'He sat on the patio.'
	b.	waxa- <mark>ru</mark> -x-ti	'He sat in the street.'

c. waxa-<mark>k'ara</mark>-x-ti

'He sat inside the house.'

- In this talk, I shall argue on the basis of Abaza data that the locative preverbs
  - actually form a cline from (non-canonical) noun incorporation to genuine (lexical) affixation (cf. Arkadiev 2022);
  - grammaticalisation of locative preverbs manifests itself in a number of phenomena, some of which do not neatly correlate with each other;
  - hence the distinction between incorporated nouns and lexical affixes in gradual rather than binary.

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  - Abkhaz-Abaza: Abkhaz, Abaza
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#### Major typological traits (Hewitt 2005, Arkadiev & Lander 2020):

- rich consonantism and empoverished vocalism;
- weak distinction between major lexical classes;
- head-marking and polysynthesis;
- little (Circassian, Ubykh) or no (Abkhaz-Abaza) core case marking;
- ergativity;
- rich system of valency-increasing derivations, especially applicatives;
- rich system of spatial marking in the verb;
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- *abáza bəzŝá (абаза бызшва),* ISO 639-3 abq
- Ca. 38 000 speakers in Russia (Karachaevo-Cherkessia), ca. 10 000 in Turkey



- The least-described language of the Northwest Caucasian family.
- Descriptive works exist (e.g. Genko 1955, Tabulova 1976, Lomtatidze et al. 1989, O'Herin 2002), but are insufficient.
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The Abaza verbal template:

		"preverbs" (П)									"st	em"	(Σ)		"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

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locative preverbs

### Why Abaza?

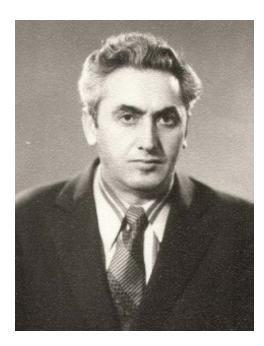
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### Why Abaza?

- Dr. Rauf Klychev (Кълыч Рауф, 1934-1993)
  - *The Locative Preverbial Derivation of Verbs in Abaza* (in Russian, Cherkessk, 1994).
  - A Dictionary of Collocations of Locative Preverbs with Suffixoids and Verbs in Abaza (in Russian, Cherkessk, 1995). = K
  - Ca. 4300 verbs with 150 preverbs.



Р. Н. КЛЫЧЕВ СЛОВАРЬ СОЧЕТАЕМОСТИ ЛОКАЛЬНЫХ ПРЕВЕРБОВ С СУФФИКСОИДАМИ И ГЛАГОЛЬНЫМИ КОРНЯМИ В АБАЗИНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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### Locative preverbs

#### • Are found in all NWC languages:

- ca. 30 in Circassian;
- ca. 50 in Ubykh;
- up to 150 in Abkhaz and Abaza (Avidzba 2017, Spruit 1986: 22-31)
- Express a variety a spatial and metaphorical meanings ranging from very abstract to very concrete.
- Often serve as applicatives introducing the landmark as an indirect object argument that can be cross-referenced in the verb (Arkadiev et al. 2024; cf. Van Linden 2022 on similar phenomenon in Harakmbut).
- Can be simplex or complex.
- Differ in productivity.
- Obligatory in some cases, and often lexicalised.

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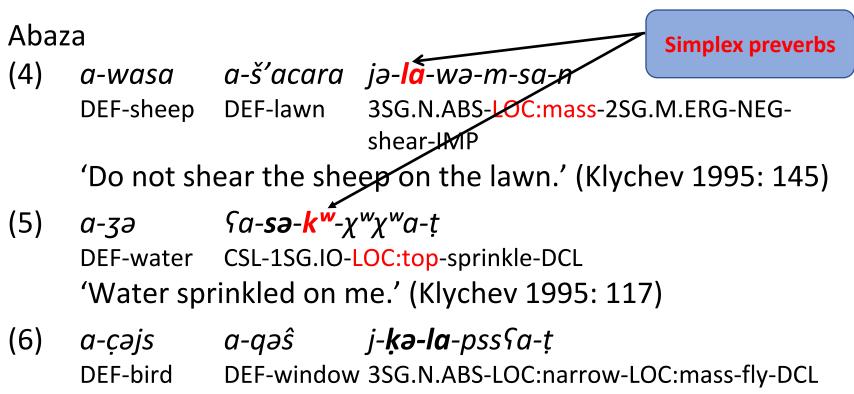
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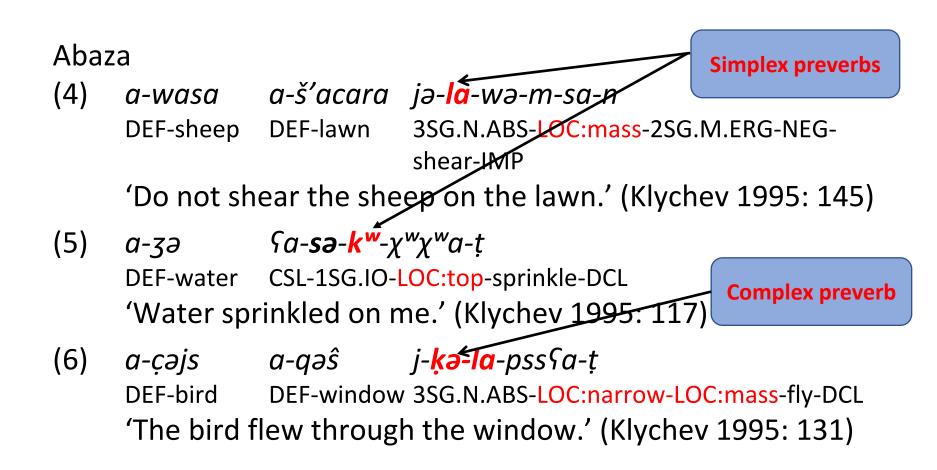
(4) *a-wasa a-š'acara jə-la-wə-m-sa-n* DEF-sheep DEF-lawn 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEGshear-IMP

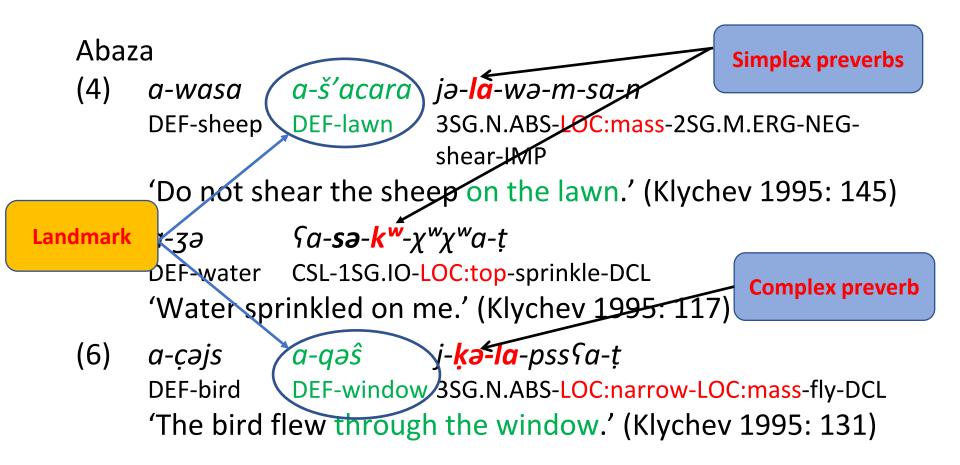
'Do not shear the sheep on the lawn.' (Klychev 1995: 145)

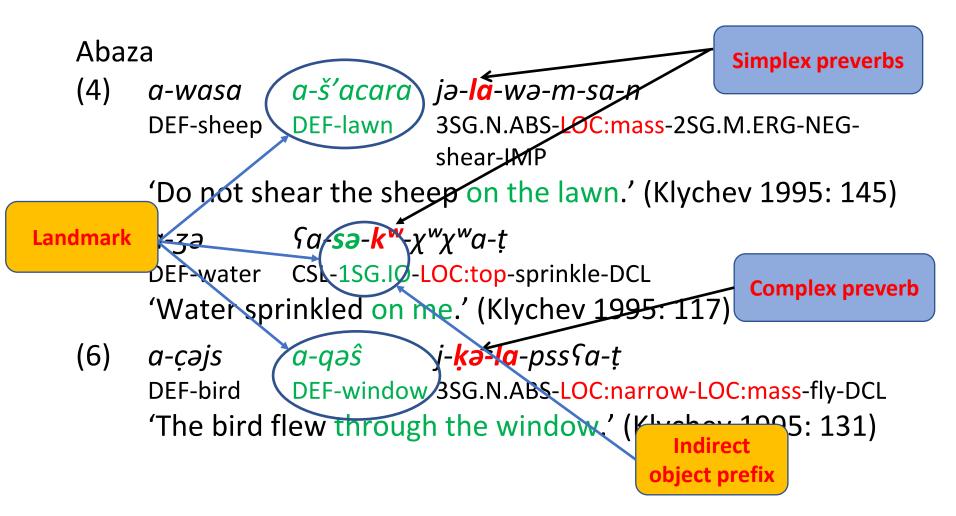
- (5) a-3∂ fa-s∂-k<sup>w</sup>-χ<sup>w</sup>χ<sup>w</sup>a-ț
   DEF-water CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:top-sprinkle-DCL
   'Water sprinkled on me.' (Klychev 1995: 117)
- (6) a-çəjs a-qəŝ j-kə-la-pss fa-t
   DEF-bird DEF-window 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-fly-DCL
   'The bird flew through the window.' (Klychev 1995: 131)



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- Diachronically, most locative preverbs in NWC go back to incorporated nouns, mainly denoting parts of body or other objects (Kumakhov 1964: 164-182, 1989: 200-228; Lomtatidze 1983; Avidzba 2017; Arkadiev & Maisak 2018: 121-125).
- A cross-linguistically common historical path for lexical affixes (Mithun 1984: 885–887; Mithun 1997: 365-366; Kinkade 1998; Mattissen 2006).
- NWC preverbs are in many cases much more transparently related to the corresponding nouns than e.g. the "body-part prefixes" in the Panoan languages (Fleck 2006, Zariquiey & Fleck 2012).

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- However, many locative preverbs are clearly formally as well as semantically related to nouns from two semantic classes:
  - body-part nouns, e.g. *qa* 'above' ~ *qa* 'head' ;
  - salient landmarks or artefacts, e.g. *Υ"na-* 'inside' ~ *Υ"na* 'house'.

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	have related nouns	retain lexical meaning	example
type l	yes	always	<i>lakta</i> - 'face' <i>gara</i> - 'craddle'
type ll	yes	sometimes	<i>ča</i> - 'face, vertical surface' <i>ς<sup>w</sup>na</i> 'house, room'
type III	yes	no	<i>qa</i> - 'head' > 'above' <i>š'ķla</i> 'stirrup' > 'behind'
type IV	no	no	<i>ta-</i> 'inside' <i>, c़a-</i> 'below'

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- always retain the original lexical meaning;
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- always retain the original lexical meaning;
- can arguably express referential landmarks;
- body-part-based preverbs co-occur with an indirect object prefix referring to the possessor of the body-part.

- (7) a-saba Sa-ra-lakta-pl-aw-n
   DEF-dust CSL-3PL.IO-LOC:face-pour.powder-IPF-PST
   'Dust was pouring onto their faces.' (K: 154)
- (8) w-g<sup>w</sup>ara-pš-ta w- *γa.j.χ* 2SG.M.ABS-LOC:fence-look-ADV 2SG.M.ABS-return(IMP)
   'Look in the courtyard (lit. "inside the fence") and come back.' (K: 69)

• Type I preverbs allow for non-incorporated expression:

- (9) a. j-fa-wa-lakta-ŝŝa-p
   3PL.ABS-CSL-2SG.M.IO-LOC:face-spit-NPST.DCL
   'They will spit you in the face.' (K: 153)
  - b. *wə-lakta j-ʕa-ta-ŝŝ-æ-š-ț* 2SG.M.PR-face 'id.' (elicited) *j-ʕa-ta-ŝŝ-əw-š-ț* 3PL.ABS-CSL-LOC:in-spit-IPF-FUT-DCL
- (10) a. d-č<sup>w</sup>a-zaχ-wa-n
   3SG.H.ABS-LOC:hearth-sew-IPF-PST
   'She was sewing beside the hearth.' (K: 211)
  - b. *a-č<sup>w</sup>a a-ʒqa d-ʒaχ-wa-n* DEF-hearth 3SG.N.PR-side 3SG.H.ABS-sew-IPF-PST 'id.' (elicited)

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- Type II preverbs:
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- *3a* 'cheek' > 'lateral surface'
- (11) a. də-j-ʒa-kš-əw-n
   3SG.H.ABS-3SG.M.IO-LOC:cheek-hit-IPF-PST
   'S/he was beating him on the cheek.' (K: 98)
  - b. a-kdə <u>3</u>a-r-bəl-wa-n
     DEF-stump LOC:cheek-3PL.ERG-burn-IPF-PST
     'They were burning the stump on one side.' (K: 99)

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- Type III preverbs:
  - only express abstract spatial meanings;
  - still have clear cognates among nouns.

• Type III preverbs:

bka 'back, waist' > 'down' (bka-pš-ra 'look down', K: 53) waça 'intestines' > 'inside a container' (waça-2-ra 'to boil inside smth', K: 239)

mg<sup>w</sup>a 'belly' > 'wrapped up' (mg<sup>w</sup>a-ŝ-ra 'to freeze being dressed up', K: 161)

- The subdivision of locative preverbs into the classes I–III is actually gradual rather than categorical:
  - can be assessed as the type frequency of verbs listed in Klychev (1995) with which the original meaning of the noun is retained;
  - NB preverbs widely differ in their productivity (according to Klychev 1995, some of them combine with hundreds of verbs, while others occur with just a handful).

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preverb	meaning	total no. verbs	no. verbs with original meaning
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čˤʷa-	'hearth'	126	126 (100%)
naṗə-	'hand'	59	54 (92%)
lakta-	'face'	17	14 (82%)
ĉə-	'skin' > 'surface'	28	21 (75%)
čа-	'mouth, face' > 'vertical surface'	206	50 (24%)
waça-	'intestines' > 'inside'	136	4 (3%)
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- Some (mostly non-relational) preverbs can be used as verbal classifiers lacking independent reference and corresponding to a landmark expressed as a full nominal (cf. Type IV noun incorporation of Mithun 1984).
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Locative preverbs as verbal classifiers:

- (12) rə-č<sup>w</sup>a d-č<sup>w</sup>a-pχa-ț same root
   3PL.IO-oven 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:oven-warm\_up-DCL
   'He warmed himself up near their oven.' (K: 213)
- (13) a-k´adəg<sup>w</sup> wə-čkara-l-p
   DEF-courtyard 2SG.M.ABS-LOC:yard-enter-NPST
   'You will enter the courtyard.' (AbTa: 85)
- (14) a-klub jə-<sup>ζw</sup>na-n.χ-əj-<u>t</u>
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 Many preverbs in Abaza and Abkhaz distinguish introvert (essive-locative, with final -a) and extravert (elative, with apocope, final -a or metathesis) forms (Spruit 1986: 16-17, Klychev 1994: 8-9, Avidzba 2017).

(15) a. a-ġanǯ'a a-ˤʷara j-ta-pssˤa-χ-ț
 DEF-crow 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:in-fly-RE-DCL
 'The crow flew back into its nest.' (K: 197)

b. *a-warba a-?<sup>w</sup>ara j-tə-pss?a-ț* DEF-eagle 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:in.ELAT-fly-DCL 'The eagle flew out of its nest.' (K: 205)

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- The introvert vs. extravert distinction is attested with preverbs of all types, including those always retaining the original lexical meaning.
- No evidence of a similar distinction in the corresponding nouns when used independently.
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- With incorporated body-part nouns:
- (16) a. a-3ə jə-q<sup>w</sup>da-žž-wa-n
   DEF-water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:neck-pour:liquid-IPF-PST
   'Water was pouring on his neck.' (K: 274) introvert
  - b. a-mχ<sup>w</sup>-k<sup>w</sup>a lə-q<sup>w</sup>də-l-źa-ț
     DEF-beads-PL 3SG.F.IO-LOC:neck.ELAT-3SG.F.ERG-tear\_off-DCL
     'She tore the beads off her neck.' (K: 275) extravert

• With incorporated non-relational nouns:

- (17) a. a<sup>c</sup> č<sup>c</sup> a-l-ga-ț
   DEF+trough LOC:hearth-3SG.F.ERG-carry-DCL
   'She brought the trough to the hearth.' introvert
   (K: 211)
  - b. *d-<mark>č</mark>Υw̄ə-r-ga-χ-ț*

3SG.H.ABS-LOC:hearth.ELAT-3PL.ERG-carry-RE-DCL 'They carried him out of the hearth.' extravert (K: 218)

# Roadmap

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- Locative preverbs
- From incorporation to affixation
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- Locative preverbs of the Northwest Caucasian languages are relevant for the study of both noun incorporation and lexical affixes.
  - As an instance of noun incorporation, they present a typologically highly unusual case, where only a limited number of nouns can be incorporated and only as spatial modifiers, never as crosslinguistically more common patients or instruments, and invariably end up in the same distributional class as unequivocal locative prefixes.

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- Locative preverbs of the Northwest Caucasian languages are relevant for the study of both noun incorporation and lexical affixes.
  - As an instance of lexical affixation, they present a synchronically observable case of a grammaticalisation cline from incorporated nouns to spatial modifiers and applicatives with more or less abstract functions (cf. Rose 2019 on Mojeño Trinitario).

- Manifestations of the gradual nature of the transition from incorporated nouns to lexical affixes:
  - cline in the type frequency of verbs attesting the original lexical meaning of the preverbs;
  - "reinforcement" of the preverbs by synonymous/hyponymous external nominals, hence gradual loss of referential autonomy of incorporated nouns and their becoming verbal classifiers;
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#### • More generally, the Northwest Caucasian locative preverbs

- reveal a complex history indicative of successive layers of incorporation and ensuing morphologisation;
- suggest that acquisition of certain affixal properties (e.g. introvert vs. extravert opposition) by incorporated nouns can occur independently of and before semantic bleaching;
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# ŝə-z<sup>w</sup>áda-xa-ț 2PL.ABS-healthy-INC-DCL Thank you for you attention! Kiitos, kun kuuntelitte!

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