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Between noun incorporation and lexical affixation in Abaza

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What is “noun incorporation”?

Mithun (1984: 847-848):

- “In [Noun Incorporation], a N stem is compounded with a V stem to yield a larger, derived V stem.”
- “Interestingly, all languages which exhibit such morphological structures also have syntactic paraphrases.”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Chukchi (Chukotkan, Russia; Muravjeva 2004: 115):

(1) a. *gəm-nan* *tekicgə-n* *tə-pela-gʔan*
1SG-ERG meat-ABS.SG 1SG.S-leave-PST.3SG.O

b. *gəm* *tə-takecgə–pela-gʔak*
1SG.ABS 1SG.S-meat–leave-PST.1SG.S
‘a=b. I left the / some meat.’

Southern Tiwa (Kiowa-Tanoan, USA; Allen et al. 1984: 295):

(2) a. *yede* *seuan-ide* *a-mũ-ban*
that man-SUF 2SG-see-PST

b. *yede* *a-seuan–mũ-ban*
that 2SG-man–see-PST
‘a=b. You saw that man.’

What is “noun incorporation”?

Baker (1988: 80) and later generative work (see an overview in Johns 2017):

- “The productivity and the referential transparency of NI suggest that it is a syntactic process, rather than a lexical one <…> the verb <…> and the noun root <…> combine into a single word <…> by Move-Alpha, which moves the structurally lower lexical item (the noun) to adjoin to the higher lexical item [the verb] in the syntax”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Not only generative linguists, cf. Olthof (2020: 16) in the framework of Functional Discourse Grammar:

- “In this study, we restrict the term noun incorporation to productive, semantically transparent processes in which a nominal and a verbal unit at R[eferential]L[evel] together form a single verbal Word at M[orphosyntactic]L[evel]. <…> More specifically, we define noun incorporation constructions as cases in which a nominal and a verbal unit that are in a dependency relation of the form head-modifier or predicate-argument at RL form a single verbal Morphosyntactic Word.”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Not all definitions are so restrictive, though.

De Reuse (1994: 2842):

- “Noun incorporation refers to the morphological construction where a nominal lexical element is added to a verbal lexical element; the resulting construction being a verb and a single word. The definition cannot be made more precise than that, because there is widespread disagreement <…>”

What is “noun incorporation”?

Not all definitions are so restrictive, though.

Massam (2009: 1078):

- “[W]e adopt the broad working definition of NI as a grammatical construction where a nominal that would canonically (either in the given language, or in languages in general) be expressed as an independent argument or adjunct is instead in some way incorporated into the verbal element of the sentence, forming part of the predicate.”

What is “noun incorporation”?

“Non-prototypical” (or “non-canonical”?) noun incorporation (cf. Mithun 2000):

- not necessarily highly productive:
  - only a subset of verbs are incorporating (Olthof et al. 2021);
  - only a subset of nouns can be incorporated
- the semantic role of the nominal root is not necessarily patient/theme:
  - incorporation of instruments;
  - incorporation of spatial modifiers.

In this talk

- The Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghean) languages are not mentioned in the literature on noun incorporation.
- This is not accidenal: indeed, examples like (1) and (2) do not occur in NWC.
- Nevertheless, focusing on Abaza, I shall argue that NWV languages not only show clear traces of historical noun incorporation, but also possess phenomena that can be analysed as incorporation even synchronically.
- These phenomena, which form a cline from noun-incorporation to lexical affixation (Mithun 1997), are fairly non-trivial from a typological perspective.

Abaza

- *abáza bəzŝá (абаза бызшва)*, ISO 639-3 abq
- Ca. 38 000 speakers in Russia (Karachay-Cherkess Republic), ca. 10 000 in Turkey

Abaza

- Northwest Caucasian (Abkhaz-Adyghe)
  - Circassian: West Circassian (Adyghe), Kabardian (East Circassian)
  - † Ubykh
  - Abkhaz-Abaza: Abaza, Abkhaz

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Abaza

- 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

Abaza

- rich consonantism and empoverished vocalism
- polysynthesis and consistent head-marking
- ergativity
- no core case marking
- weak distinction between parts of speech
- rich system of valency-increasing derivations, especially applicatives
- a complex system of marking spatial information in the verb

Hewitt 2005; Arkadiev & Lander 2021 on NWC in general

Abaza

The Abaza verbal template:

		"preverbs" (Π)								"stem" (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

Locative preverbs

- Are found in all NWC languages:
  - ca. 30 in Circassian;
  - ca. 50 in Ubykh;
  - more than 100 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.
- Can be simplex or complex.
- Differ in productivity.
- Obligatory in some cases, and often lexicalised.

Locative preverbs

(3) *a-wasa* *a-šʼacara* *jə-**la**-wə-m-sa-n*
DEF-sheep DEF-lawn 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:mass-2SG.M.ERG-NEG-shear-IMP
‘Do not shear the sheep on the lawn.’ (Klychev 1995: 145)

(4) *a-ʒə* *ʕa-**sə**-**kʷ**-χʷχʷa-ṭ*
DEF-water CISL-1SG.IO-LOC:top-sprinkle(AOR)-DCL
‘Water sprinkled on me.’ (Klychev 1995: 117)

(5) *a-ɕəjs* *a-qəŝ* *j-**ḳə-la**-pssʕa-ṭ*
DEF-bird DEF-window 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:narrow-LOC:mass-fly(AOR)-DCL
‘The bird flew through the window.’ (Klychev 1995: 131)

Locative preverbs

Simplex preverbs

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

Landmark

-ʒə *ʕa-**sə**-**k^{w}**-χ^{w}χ^{w}a-ṭ*
DEF-water CISL-1SG.IO-LOC:top-sprinkle(AOR)-DCL
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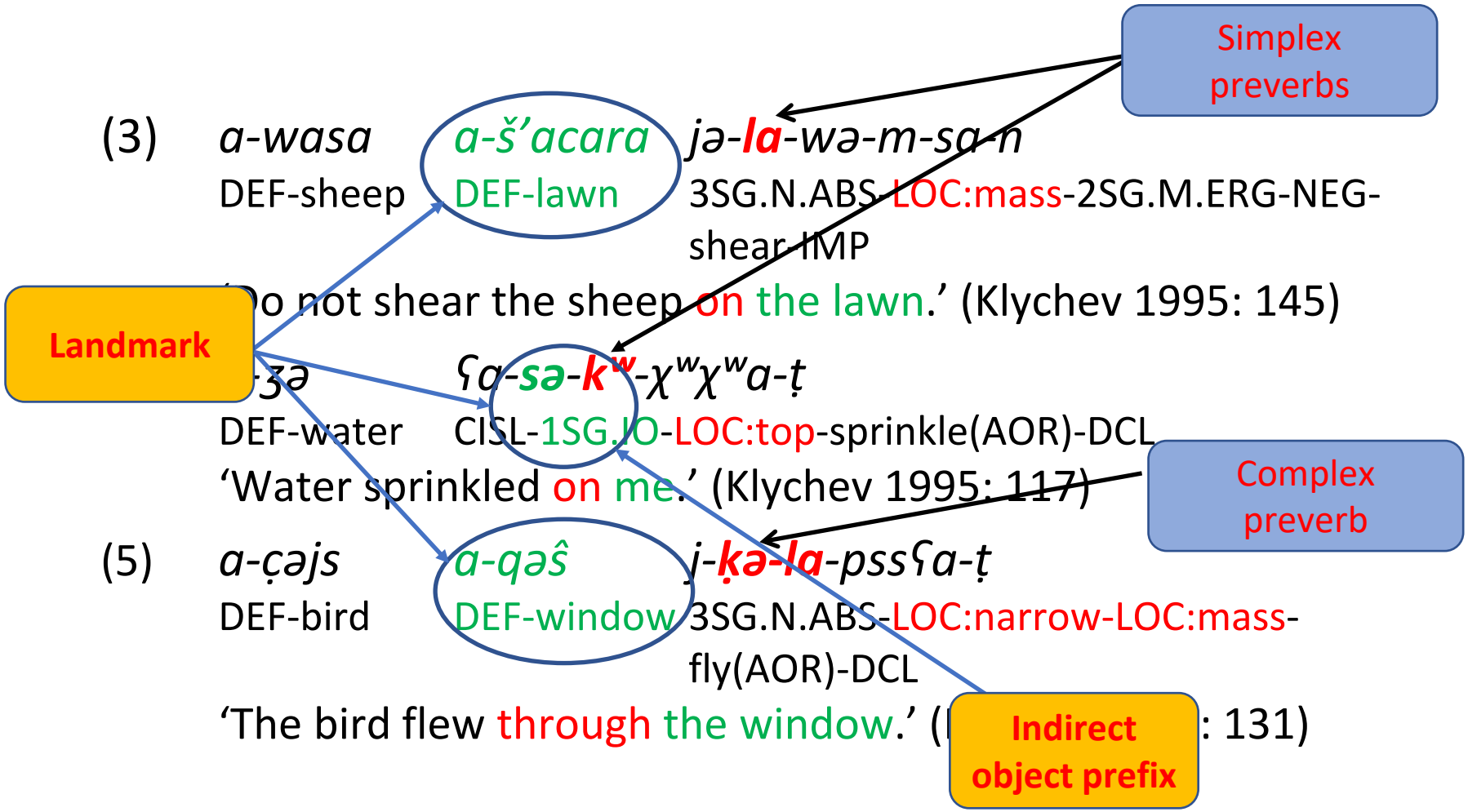
Locative preverbs



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Locative preverbs

- NWC locative preverbs fall into the broad class of so-called "lexical affixes", i.e. morphologically bound elements that modify roots but themselves have very concrete semantics resembling that of roots.
- Cross-linguistically, lexical affixes express
  - body-parts (e.g. as instruments);
  - salient artifcats or natural objects;
  - locations;
  - various other adverbial notions.

Mithun 1997; Mattissen 2004: 190-194; 2006: 297-333

Locative preverbs

- 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 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).

Locative preverbs

- Locative preverbs related to nouns:

West Circassian (Kumakhov 1964: 177-179):

(6) *ḳʷeçə* ‘intestines’: *ḳʷeçə-λhe-n* ‘put inside smth’
ḳʷeçə-rə-čə-n ‘run through smth’

(7) *ʔʷə* ‘mouth’: *ʔʷə-cʷe-n* ‘stand near smth’
ʔʷə-šʼə-n ‘lead away from smth’

Locative preverbs

- Some preverbs can be treated as incorporated nouns even synchronically.

Kabardian (Kumakhov 1964: 181-182)

(8) *ŝhe* 'head': *ŝhe-rə-xə-n* 'take from one's head'

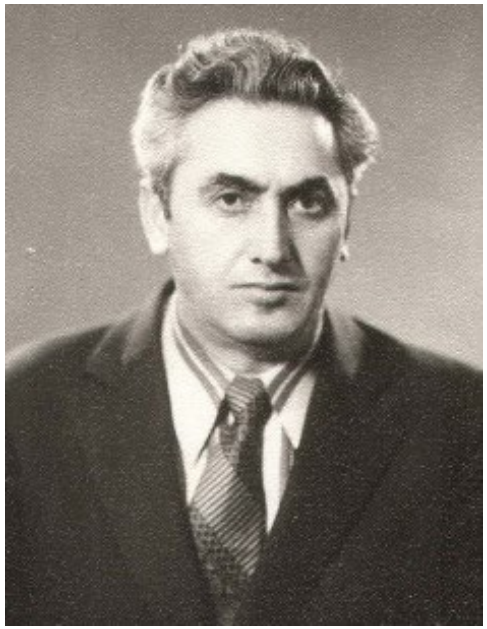
(9) *ʔe* 'hand': *ʔe-ṣ̂e-xə-n* 'take from one's hands'

Why Abaza?

- Abaza (and, mutatis mutandis, Abkhaz) offers much richer and varied material on noun incorporation that the rest of the family.
- Abaza locative preverbs happen to be amply documented.

Why Abaza?

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



Р. Н. КЛЫЧЕВ

СЛОВАРЬ СОЧЕТАЕМОСТИ
ЛОКАЛЬНЫХ ПРЕВЕРБОВ
С СУФФИКСОИДАМИ
И ГЛАГОЛЬНЫМИ КОРНЯМИ
В АБАЗИНСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Утверждено Министерством образования Карачаево-Черкесской республики

КАРАЧАЕВО-ЧЕРКЕССКОЕ
КНИЖНОЕ ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО
ЧЕРКЕССК 1995

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- More than a dozen preverbs are related to body-part nouns.
- Some of them are clearly highly grammaticalised and desemanticised.

bʁa ‘back, waist’ > ‘down’ (*bʁa-pš-ra* ‘look down’, K: 53)

waça ‘intestines’ > ‘inside a container’ (*waça-ẑ-ra* ‘to boil inside smth’, K: 239)

mg^{w}a ‘belly’ > ‘wrapped up’ (*mg^{w}a-ŝ-ra* ‘to freeze being dressed up’, K: 161)

qa ‘head’ > ‘above’, see (10) below

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Body-part preverbs widely differ in their productivity (data from Klychev 1995, including complex preverbs):

qa- ‘head, above’	> 200 verbs
čʼa- ‘face, vertical surface’	> 200 verbs
šʼta- ‘trace, after’	175 verbs
waça- ‘intestines, container’	137 verbs
naṗə-ça- ‘in the hand’	59 verbs
gʷə- ‘heart’	53 verbs
ĉə- ‘skin, surface’	48 verbs
lakta- ‘face’	17 verbs
qʷda- ‘neck’	15 verbs
ḳʷa- ‘bosom’	6 verbs
šʼqʷa- ‘heel’	2 verbs

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Body-part preverbs function as applicatives and introduce the landmark as an indirect object cross-referenced by a personal prefix immediately preceding the preverb:
- *qa* 'head' > 'above':

(10) a. *a-č'ḳʷən* *a-ʒəχ'* *d-a-qa-ĉ-ṭ*
DEF-youth DEF-spring 3SG.H.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC:above-sleep(AOR)-DCL
'The guy fell asleep over the spring of water.' (K: 258)

b. *anəj* *a-mašakʷ* *wə-qa-sə-r.pa-ṗ*
MED DEF-sack 2SG.M.IO-LOC:above-1SG.ERG-pull-NPST.DCL
'I'll pull this sack on you.' (K: 255)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- In some cases the same preverb retains its body-part meaning.
- Then the personal prefix refers to the possessor of the body-part.
- *qa* 'head' > 'above':

(11) *j-qəlpa* *j-qa-ŝ-əw-n*
3SG.M.IO-hat 3SG.M.IO-LOC:head-fall-IPF-PST
'The hat fit his head well (lit. fell on his head).' (K: 260)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Some body-part preverbs retain their lexical meaning, reference and anchoring to a possessor in almost all cases:

(12) *a-saba* *ʕa-rə-lakta-ṗl-əw-n*
DEF-dust CSL-3PL.IO-LOC:face-pour.powder-IPF-PST
'Dust was pouring onto their faces.' (K: 154)

(13) *arq̇an-g'əj* *ʕ-a-qʷdə-j-χ-χə-n*
rope-ADD CSL-3SG.N.IO-LOC:neck-3SG.M.ERG-take-RE-PST
'He took the rope off its (the stallion's) neck' (AbTa: 142)

(14) *a-ʒə* *jə-ḳʷa-ç̂-əw-n*
DEF-water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:bosom-pour.liquid-IPF-PST
'Water was pouring into his bosom.' (K: 138)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Other body part preverbs are used both in the original and in the spatial meaning:
- *ҫ̌a-* ‘mouth, face’ > ‘vertical surface’

(15) a. *a-č’ḳʷən* *a-narzan* *j-ҫ̌a-žž-wa-n*
DEF-youth DEF-mineral.water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:mouth-flow-IPF-PST
‘Mineral water was flowing into the guy’s mouth.’ (K: 313)

b. *a-wasa-kʷa* *a-ḳaʒa*
DEF-sheep-PL DEF-slope
j-a-ҫ̌a-r-pχ’aʒ-əw-n
3PL.ABS-3SG.N.IO-LOC:mouth-3PL.ERG-считать-IPF-PST
‘They were counting sheep on the mountain slope.’ (K: 316)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Other body part preverbs are used both in the original and in the spatial meaning:
- *ʒa-* ‘cheek’ > ‘lateral surface’

(16) 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* *ʒa-r-bəl-wa-n*
DEF-stump LOC:cheek-3PL.ERG-burn-IPF-PST
‘They were burning the stump on one side.’ (K: 99)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Some of the body-part preverbs are lexicalised rather than grammaticalised and are used in metaphorical meanings:

(17) *j-r-a-s-hʷ-wa-š*
REL.ABS-3PL.IO-DAT-1SG.ERG-say-IPF-FUT
ʕa-s-gʷa-qʷəc-ṭ
CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:heart-think(AOR)-DCL
'I decided what I shall tell them (lit. it thought in my heart).' (K: 72)

(18) *j-ʕa-s-gʷa-la-ŝa-χ-ṭ*
3PL.ABS-CSL-1SG.IO-LOC:heart-LOC:mass-fall-RE(AOR)-DCL
'I recalled them (lit. they fell back into my heart).' (K: 76)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- A special case: *naṗə* ‘hand’
  - is only used in combination with the preverb *ça-* ‘under’
  - has both the literal and metaphorical meanings

(19) a. *a-kʷṭaʁ’* *s-naṗə-ça-p.č-ṭ*
DEF-egg 1SG.IO-LOC:hand-LOC:under-break(AOR)-DCL
‘The egg broke in my hands.’ (K: 170)

b. *də-r-naṗə-ça-ŝa-ṭ*
3SG.H.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC:hand-LOC:under-fall(AOR)-DCL
a-haǯ’rat-kʷa
DEF-robber-PL
‘[A man] was attacked by (lit. fell under the hands of) robbers’ (AbLu 10:30)

Incorporation in Abaza (I): body-part nouns

- Other body-part preverbs can also serve as the first part of a complex preverb:

(20) a. *a-č'ḳʷən* *ajnəẑ*
DEF-youth DEF+giant
də-j-ča-ta-kša-ṭ
3SG.H.ABS-3SG.M.IO-LOC:mouth-LOC:in-hit(AOR)-DCL
'The guy hit the giant in the face.' (K: 328)

b. *a-qaça* *j-ʕa-j-qa-ta-ĉa-ṭ*
DEF-man 3SG.N.ABS-CSL-3SG.M.IO-LOC:head-LOC:in-sit(AOR)-DCL
'The man got angry (lit. it sat down into his head).' (K: 269-270)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Ca. dozen preverbs correspond to non-relational nouns denoting salient artefacts or locations.
- Most of them retain their lexical meaning.

čḳara ‘courtyard’	180 verbs
ʕʷna ‘house, room’	150 verbs
čʕʷa ‘oven’	125 verbs
gʷara ‘fence, enclosure’	55 verbs
pšḍa ‘courtyard’	40 verbs
qʷa ‘ashes’	11 verbs
gara ‘craddle’	8 verbs
čə ‘horse’	6 verbs

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Such incorporated nouns can express a referential spatial landmark involved in the event.

(21) *a-sabəj* *d-gara-l-gʷa-n*
DEF-child 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:craddle-3SG.ERG-lay-PST
'She laid the child into the craddle.' (K: 67)

(22) *w-gʷara-pš-ta* *w-ʕa.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)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Being referentially autonomous, most such preverbs occur without a pronominal prefix.
- Still, some can take prefixes cross-referencing the possessor and develop more abstract spatial meanings.
- *šʼḳla* ‘stirrup’ > ‘following’

(23) *d-rə-šʼḳla-ŝŝ-ṭ*
3SG.H.ABS-3PL.IO-LOC:stirrup-whistle (AOR)-DCL
‘He whistled after them.’ (K: 332)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Some occur only as part of complex preverbs:

(24) *d-qʷa-la-j-gʷa-ṭ*
3SG.H.ABS-LOC:ashes-LOC:mass-3SG.M.ERG-lay(AOR)-DCL
'He knocked him (the giant) down into ashes.' (K: 273)

(25) *sawsrəq̇ʷa d-čə-ẑ-pa-ṭ*
Sosruko 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:horse-LOC-jump(AOR)-DCL
'Sosruko jumped off his horse.' (K: 237)

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

- Non-relational preverbs can be used as verbal classifiers lacking independent reference and corresponding to a landmark expressed as a full nominal.
- Such a landmark can have the same root as the preverb, or be synonymous or hyponymous to it.

Incorporation in Abaza (II): non-relational nouns

(26) *rə-čʕʷa* *d-čʕʷa-pχa-ṭ*
3PL.IO-oven 3SG.H.ABS-LOC:oven-warm_up(AOR)-DCL
'He warmed himself up near their oven.' (K: 213)

(27) *a-ḳ'adəgʷ* *wə-čḳara-l-ṗ*
DEF-courtyard 2SG.M.ABS-LOC:yard-enter-NPST
'You will enter the courtyard.' (AbTa: 85)

(28) *a-klub* *jə-ʕʷna-n.χ-əj-ṭ*
DEF-club 3PL.ABS-LOC:house-work-PRS-DCL
'They work in the club.' (K: 88)

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- Abaza locative preverbs form a continuum:

	have related nouns	retain lexical meaning	example
type I	yes	always	*lakta*- ‘face’ *gara*- ‘craddle’
type II	yes	sometimes	*čʼa*- ‘face, vertical surface’ *ʕʷna* ‘house, room’
type III	yes	no	*qa*- ‘head’ > ‘above’ *šʼḳla* ‘stirrup’ > ‘behind’
type IV	no	no	*ta*- ‘inside’, *ča*- ‘below’

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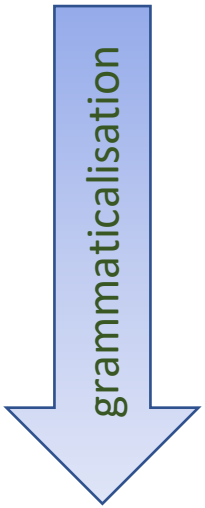
type III	yes	no	*qa-* ‘head’ > ‘above’ *šʼḳla* ‘stirrup’ > ‘behind’
type IV	no	no	*ta-* ‘inside’, *ṭa-* ‘below’



From incorporated nouns to affixes

- Abaza locative preverbs form a continuum:

	have related nouns	retain lexical meaning	example
type I	yes	always	*lakta-* 'face' *gara-* 'cradle'
type II	yes	sometimes	*ča-* 'face, vertical surface' *ʕʷna* 'house, room'
type III	yes	no	*qa-* 'head' > 'above' *š'kla* 'stirrup' > 'behind'
type IV	no	no	*ta-* 'inside', *ça-* 'below'

incorporation

lexical affixation

grammaticalisation

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- Grammaticalisation and affixalisation of incorporated nouns in Abaza is evidenced by their acquiring morphosemantic properties absent with nouns and characteristic of the indisputable lexical affixes.

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- Many preverbs in Abaza and Abkhaz distinguish introvert (essive-locative, with final -*a*) and extravert (elative, with apocope, final -*ə* or metathesis) forms (Spruit 1986: 16-17, Avidzba 2017).

(29) a. *a-ġanǯ'a* *a-ʕʷara* *j-ta-pssʕa-χ-ṭ*
DEF-crow 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:in-fly-RE(AOR)-DCL

'The crow flew back into its nest.' (K: 197)

b. *a-warba* *a-ʕʷara* *j-tə-pssʕa-ṭ*
DEF-eagle 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:in.ELAT-fly(AOR)-DCL

'The eagle flew out of its nest.' (K: 205)

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- Many preverbs in Abaza and Abkhaz distinguish introvert (essive-locative, with final -*a*) and extravert (elative, with apocope, final -*ə* or metathesis) forms (Spruit 1986: 16-17, Avidzba 2017).

(29) a. *a-ġanžʼa* *a-ʕʷara* *j-ta-pssʕa-χ-ṭ*
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'The crow flew back into its nest.' (K: 197) introvert

b. *a-warba* *a-ʕʷara* *j-tə-pssʕa-ṭ*
DEF-eagle 3SG.N.IO-nest 3SG.N.ABS-LOC:in.ELAT-fly(AOR)-DCL
'The eagle flew out of its nest.' (K: 205) extravert

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- The same distinction is attested with preverbs I have classified as incorporated nouns.
- No evidence of a similar distinction outside the verb.
- A clear sign of affixalisation of the incorporated nouns.
- Notably, can precede semantic change.

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- With incorporated body-part nouns:

(30) a. *ɑ-ʒə* *jə-qʷdɑ-žž-wɑ-n* introvert
DEF-water 3SG.M.IO-LOC:neck-pour:liquid-IPF-PST
'Water was pouring on his neck.' (K: 274)

b. *ɑ-mχʷ-kʷɑ* *lə-qʷdə-l-ŝa-ṭ* extravert
DEF-beads-PL 3SG.F.IO-LOC:neck.ELAT-3SG.F.ERG-tear_off(AOR)-DCL
'She tore the beads off her neck.' (K: 275)

From incorporated nouns to affixes

- With incorporated non-relational nouns:

(31) a. *aʕʷ* *čʕʷa-l-ga-ṭ* introvert
DEF+trough LOC:oven-3SG.F.ERG-carry(AOR)-DCL
'She brought the trough to the oven.' (K: 211)

b. *d-čʕʷə-r-ga-χ-ṭ* extravert
3SG.H.ABS-LOC:oven.ELAT-3PL.ERG-carry-RE(AOR)-DCL
'They carried him out of the oven.' (K: 218)

Cross-linguistic perspective

- Body-part nouns are frequent targets of incorporation in the languages of the world (Mattissen 2006: 310–315; Massam 2009: 1090; Lehmann 2016: 43-47; Zariquiey 2018; Vinyar 2021; Olthof et al. 2021: 228).
- The path from body-part incorporation to applicatives is documented outside of NWC as well (Fleck 2006; Nordlinger 2019), *pace* Peterson (2007: 141).
- However, the semantic roles of incorporated body-part nouns are usually patient / theme or instrument, rather than spatial landmark.

Cross-linguistic perspective

Mohawk (Iroquoian, Canada, USA, Mithun 1996: 643)

(32) *wa-hi-kų́hs-ohare-ʔ* patient
PST-1SG>3SG.M-face-мыть-PUNC
'I washed his face.'

Bininj Gun-wok (Gunwinyguan, Australia, Evans 1996: 84)

(33) *ga-bid-wayda-n* instrument
3-hand-wave-NPST
'He is waving his hand.'

Cross-linguistic perspective

- Incorporation of body-parts as locations is, however, also attested, even if rarely.

Warray (Gunwinyguan, Australia, Harvey 1996: 144)

(34) *ngirri* *wang* *ban-nabat-nawa-m* *an-nebe-yang*
dog meat 1SG.O-hand-take-PFV.PST CL-hand-ABL
'The dog took the meat out of my hand.'

Oluta Popoluca (Mixe-Zoque, Mexico, Zavala 2000: 591)

(35) *sa:rakü* *ta=küx-tu:t-aʔx-ü-w=aʔ* *min=ʔunaʔk*
Sara 1.ABS=back-put-APPL-INV-CMPL-3 2.PR=son
'Sara put your son on my back.'

Cross-linguistic perspective

Mithun (1984: 874):

- Type IV noun incorporation, where "a generic N is incorporated to qualify the V, while a more specific external NP identifies the implied referent"

Caddo (Caddoan, USA; ibid. : 865): 'eye' > 'round object'

(36) a. *kassi'* *háh-'ič'á-sswí'-sa'*
bead PROG-eye-string-PROG
'She is stringing beads.'

b. *ka'ás* *háh-'ič'áh-'í'-sa'*
plum PROG-eye-grow-PROG
'Plums are growing.'

Cross-linguistic perspective

Verbal classifiers (Aikhenvald 2000: 149):

- "Verbal classifiers appear on the verb, categorizing the referent of its argument in terms of its shape, consistency, size, structure, position, and animacy."
- "Verbal classifiers always refer to a predicate argument (usually S in an intransitive or O in a transitive clause) and can co-occur with it."
- "In a few languages, verbal classifiers can also refer to peripheral arguments." (ibid. 162)

Cross-linguistic perspective

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”:

(37) a. *waxa-nu-x-ti* ‘He sat on the patio.’

b. *waxa-ru-x-ti* ‘He sat in the street.’

c. *waxa-k’ara-x-ti* ‘He sat inside the house.’

Cross-linguistic perspective

- Incorporation of spatial modifiers is uncommon in the languages of the world (Vinyar 2021).

Warray (Gunwinyguan, Australia, Harvey 1996: 144)

(38) *an-mewel* *at-windi* *at-mirral-lagi-yn*
CL-clothes 1SG.S-hang_out 1SG.S-sun-put-PST.PFV
'I hung the clothes out in the sun.'

Chukchi (Vinyar & Gerasimenko 2018: 97)

(39) *ramaj-paɬqəntat-ɣʔ-e*
village-returnTH-2/3SG.S
'S/he returned from the village.'

Cross-linguistic perspective

- No languages have been reported so far that would only allow noun incorporation to target locative participants.
- Cf. Mithun (1984: 875)'s claim that all languages with noun incorporation minimally incorporate patients of transitive verbs.
- However, this can be due to fact that the definitions of noun incorporation are centered around the incorporation of the patient into a transitive verb in the first place.

Conclusions

- There is noun incorporation in the Northwest Caucasian languages.
- It is most robustly attested in Abaza and Abkhaz.
- It is typologically non-trivial:
  - only Mithun (1984)'s types I (V+N compound) and type IV (classifers) without the intermediate types;
  - the class of nouns subject to incorporation is closed and the very process is no longer productive;
  - incorporated nouns invariably function as spatial modifiers, not as patiens or absolutives.

Conclusions

- There is noun incorporation in the Northwest Caucasian languages.
- It is most robustly attested in Abaza and Abkhaz.
- It is typologically non-trivial:
  - even those incorporated nouns that retain their semantics and referentiality fall into one distrubutional class with unequivocal locative prefixes;
  - continuum from incorporated nouns to lexical affixes;
  - evidence of several successive layers of incorporation and ensuing affixalisation.

ŝə-zʕʷáda-ƛa-ṭ
2PL.ABS-healthy-INC(AOR)-DCL
‘Thank you! Merci!’

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