Complementation in the Northwest Caucasian Languages

Mukhadin Kumakhov and Karina Vamling

The Northwest Caucasian languages (NWCL) include the following languages: Abkhaz, Abaza, Ubykh, Adyghe and Kabardian. Abkhaz (Abkh) and Abaza (Abz) are closely related and may be considered dialects of one language. Adyghe (Adg) and Kabardian (Kbr) are also closely related and mutually intelligible. Adyghe and Kabardian are often referred to as West and East Circassian respectively. The differences between the two branches of the NWCL are considerable at all levels. Ubykh (Ubkh) takes an intermediate position between the two branches, but is closer to Adyghe and Kabardian in several respects. Writing systems based on the Cyrillic script exist for all the NWCL languages except Ubykh.

The NWCL are spoken in the Central and Northwestern part of the Caucasus in Russia: Kabardian (The Republics of Kabarda-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia), Adyghe (Adyghe Republic), Abaza (Karachaevo-Cherkessia). One NWCL is spoken on the Black Sea Coast in Georgia: Abkhaz (Abkhazia). The Ubykhs have all been assimilated in Turkey, where they were deported in 1864 from the Caucasian Black Sea Coast (the last speaker of the language died in Turkey in 1992). The NWCL are spoken by a total of 707,000 (1989) in the CIS. Large numbers of speakers are also found in Turkey, Jordan, Syria and USA (due to the Russian expansion and conquest of the Caucasus during the last century). The estimated number of speakers of the NWCL in emigration exceeds the numbers in the Caucasus several times over.

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2 Prof. Mukhadin A. Kumakhov passed away in 2008. This article is published in the version that was prepared for publication in 1997 by Prof. M.A. Kumakhov and Prof. K. Vamling, with only minor technical changes.
3 The Kabardians and Besneys living in Karachaevo-Cherkessia figure as Cherkessian in Soviet terminology. The division between Kabardians, Adyghe and Cherkessians is thus a result of the division of the Circassian people between autonomous regions and republics in Soviet times.

Kabardian and Adyghe examples used in the paper have been supplied by Mukhadin Kumakhov and Zara Kumakhova. If not indicated otherwise, the Ubykh examples are cited from unpublished field work data on Ubykh collected by M. Kumakhov. Most Abkhaz and Abaza examples have kindly been checked or supplied by Saria Amichba.

1 General properties of Northwest Caucasian Languages

1.1 Morphological type

The dominating morphological type in the NWCL is the agglutinative. Verbal forms are particularly complex and may be characterized as polysynthetic, including up to four agreement markers. Flectional features also occur, in particular in the vowel alternation in verbal roots between transitive and intransitive forms: \(d\text{-}_{\text{e}}\) ‘sew something’, \(de\text{-}_{\text{n}}\ ‘be engaged in sewing’ (Adg).

The nominal inflection is rather simple, marking of number, definiteness, possession and coordination in all the languages.

The languages are predominantly head marking; the verb includes agreement marking of the subject and various objects. Case marking plays a less prominent role in the NWCL.

1.2 Nominal morphology

Number is marked by suffixes in all the languages, as \(-\text{e}n\) in \(s^\prime\text{e}_z\, s^\prime\text{e}_z\text{-e}_r\ ‘woman, women’ (Adg). In Abkhaz and Abaza different markers are used for plural human and non-human nouns: \(qa\, qa\text{-}_{\text{e}}\ ‘man, men’\, c^\prime\text{l}_a\, c^\prime\text{l}_a\text{-k}_a\ ‘tree, trees’ (Abkh). Ubykh does not differentiate number in the absolutive – \(c\text{-}_{\text{e}}\ ‘horse(s)’ – but does express it in the ergative case \(c\text{-}_{\text{e}}\text{-n}\, c\text{-}_{\text{e}}\text{-na\ ‘horse, horses’, demonstrative ja\text{-}_{\text{e}}\, jo\text{\text{-e}_s\ ‘this horse, these horses’ and possessive s\text{e}\text{-}_{\text{e}}\, s\text{o\text{-e}_s\ ‘my horse, my horses’ forms.}

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Definiteness is marked by prefixes in Abaza mš’ə, a-mš’ ‘a bear, the bear’ and Ubykh q’a, a-q’a ‘a son, the son’ and suffixes in Adyghe c’ə, c’r ‘an ox, the ox’ and Kabardian. The Abkhaz prefix a- expresses a general meaning and the suffix -k’ the indefinite meaning: a-xac’a ‘man (in general)’, xac’a-k’ ‘a man’.

Possessive is a category shared by all the NWCL. Abkhaz and Abaza distinguish feminine and masculine in the second person singular wə-c’la ‘your (masc.) tree’, bə-c’la ‘your (fem.) tree’, and masculine, feminine and neuter in the third person ya-c’la ‘his tree’, l-c’la ‘her tree’, a-c’la ‘its tree’. Alienable and unalienable possession is distinguished in Adyghe: sə-g’ ‘my heart’, si-wən ‘my house’ but not in any of the other NWCL. In Ubykh the possessive makers show a singular and plural distinction whereas the noun itself does not, thereby serving the function of number distinction: wa-lməq ‘your (SG) bag’, wəw-lməq ‘your (PL) bag(s)’.

Coordination is marked by repeated suffixes: sə-na-la sə-t’ə-la ‘my mother and my father’ (Ubkh).

The syntactic cases ergative and absolutive are found only in Adyghe, Kabardian (Absolutive: -ə, -r, Ergative: -m) and Ubykh (Absolutive -ə, Ergative: -n (pl. -na)). Not all nouns in the Circassian languages and Ubykh are marked for case. Personal pronouns in the first and second person lack case marking. The syntactic cases ergative-absolutive are lacking in Abkhaz and Abaza.

1.3 Verbal morphology

The verbal complex is built up by prefixation and suffixification to a minimal root, typically C, CV. Agreement markers, locational and directional markers, causative and other markers related to the valency of the verb (comitative, benefactive etc.) and non-finite negation, precede the root. Tense (present, perfect, imperfect, pluperfect, aorist and future) and modal (conditional, optative, imperative) markers, finite negation, coordinative, interrogative and assertive markers follow the root.

\[\text{(1) } \text{a-ž’-by’ a-w-m-ā-k’a-n} \]
\[\text{DO3SG-OBJ1PL-LOC-SBJ2SG-NEG-CAUS-go-PRS.SG} \]
\[\text{‘You do not allow him to defeat (go at) us’} \]

1.4 Grammatical relations, agreement and case marking

The most salient signal coding grammatical relations in the NWCL is the alignment of agreement markers in the verb. Two orderings exist, roughly corresponding to transitive and intransitive verbs. In the transitive verb the direct object marker is found
in initial position, whereas the rightmost agreement prefix marks the subject (2a). Any indirect or oblique object markers are placed between them (2b).

(2) a. \( wə-z-bja-w \) DO2SG-SBJ1SG-see-FUT1.SG
   ‘I will see you’ Ubkh

   b. \( a-wə-š’-t’-q’an \) DO3SG-OBJ2SG-SBJ1PL-give-PF.PL
   ‘we gave him to you’ Ubkh

Intransitive verbs may be either monovalent or polyvalent. Here, in contrast to the transitive verb, the subject prefix is found in initial position and markers of any objects follow the subject marker.

(3) \( sə-w-pła-n \) SBJ1SG-OBJ2SG-look.at-PRS.SG
   ‘I look at you’ Ubkh

There is thus an ergative pattern in the alignment of agreement markers: the subject of intransitives and direct object of transitives are placed initially, whereas the subject of the transitive verb occupies the rightmost position among the agreement markers. The same principle of alignment is common to all the NWCL.

Features involved in agreement are person and number in Ubykh and the Circassian languages, and person, gender and number in Abkhaz and Abaza.

In Abkhaz and Abaza the markers occur in three sets of prefixes, corresponding to (I) subjects of intransitives and direct objects of transitives, i.e. the absolutive position, (II) other objects, (III) subjects of transitives; the ergative position. The three sets of prefixes are illustrated from Abkhaz. The differences emerge in the third person.

**Table 1. Agreement markers in Abkhaz**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Set I markers ([S, P])</th>
<th>Set II</th>
<th>Set III markers ([A])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>(s(ə))</td>
<td>(s(ə))</td>
<td>(s(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>Masc. (w(ə))</td>
<td>(w(ə))</td>
<td>(w(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fem. (b(ə))</td>
<td>(b(ə))</td>
<td>(b(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>Hum. (d(ə))</td>
<td>Masc. (j(ə))</td>
<td>(j(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fem. (l(ə))</td>
<td>(l(ə))</td>
<td>(l(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non hum. (j(ə))</td>
<td>Non hum. (a)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>(h(ə))</td>
<td>(h(ə))</td>
<td>(h(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>(š’(ə))</td>
<td>(š’(ə))</td>
<td>(š’(ə))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>(j(ə))</td>
<td>(r(ə))</td>
<td>(r(ə))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prefixes from the three series are illustrated in the transitive verb in (4a) and the intransitive in (4b).

(4) a.  jə-l-b-o-jt’
       DO3SG.NHUM-SBJ3SG.FEM-see-DYN-PRS.FIN
‘She (III) sees it (I)’
       Abkh

b.  w-a-š’ta-l-o-jt’
       SBJ2SG.MASC-OBJ3SG.NHUM-run after-DYN-PRS.FIN
‘You (I) run after it (II)’
       Abkh

Agreement markers in Adyghe, Kabardian and Ubykh are given in Table 2. The choice between the alternants is a complex interplay between phonological and morphological factors.

Table 2. Agreement markers in Adyghe, Kabardian and Ubykh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adyghe</th>
<th>Kabardian</th>
<th>Ubykh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>se-, s(ə)-, z-</td>
<td>se-, s(ə)-, z(ə)-</td>
<td>s(ə)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>we-, w(ə)-, p-</td>
<td>we-, w(ə)-, b-, p-</td>
<td>w(ə)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>je-, j(ə), œ-, te-, ta-</td>
<td>je-, j(ə), me-, ma-</td>
<td>je-, j(ə), œ-, n(ə)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>te-, t(ə)-, t’, d-</td>
<td>de-, d(ə)-, t-, t’-</td>
<td>s(ə)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>s”e-, s”(ə)-, z”-</td>
<td>f(ə)-, f(ə)-, v-, f’-</td>
<td>s(ə)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>ja-, a-, me-, ma-</td>
<td>ja-, a-, me-, ma-</td>
<td>a-, na-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The agreement markers show transparent similarities to pronouns in all the NWCL. Compare, for instance, the system of personal pronouns in Abkhaz (Lomtatidze 1967:111) with the agreement prefixes given in Table 1 above. Compare also the possessive prefixes (cf. section 1.2. Nominal morphology).

Table 3. Personal pronouns in Abkhaz

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>sara</td>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>hara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>wara (Masc), bara (Fem.)</td>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>š’ara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>jara ‘he’, lara ‘she’, jara ‘it’</td>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>dara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As expected, the absolutive case marks the subject of intransitive verbs (5a) and direct object of transitive verbs (5b). The ergative case is assigned to subjects of transitive verbs (5b). However, in both the Circassian languages and Ubykh the same marker
also has oblique functions (5a). It marks indirect and oblique objects. Furthermore, the same case also marks the possessor (5c).

(5) a. S’ak˚’e-r mezə-m ma-k˚’e
hunter-ABS forest-ERG SBJ3SG-go.PRS
‘The hunter goes to the forest’ Kbr

b. T’ak˚’e-m tχələ-r ø-tχə-y
writer-ERG book-ABS SBJ3SG-write-PF
‘The writer wrote a book’ Adg

c. fəzə-m jə-psale
woman-ERG POSS3SG-word
‘The woman’s word’ Kbr

As Abkhaz and Abaza lack the opposition between the absolutive and ergative cases, the ergative-absolutive pattern emerges only in the verbal morphology.

1.5 Main word order patterns

Basic word order in the NWCL is SOV (6a). An indirect object immediately follows the subject. Word order is grammatically distinctive in clauses where no case marking is present. This, of course, is particularly important in Abkhaz and Abaza, as the case opposition absolute-ergative is lacking altogether (6b-c).

(6) a. A-baz˚’a-n yə-q˚’a yə-byə-q˚’a
DEF-old.man-ERG POSS3SG-son SBJ3SG-see-PF
‘The old man saw his son’ Ubkh

b. Yara a-x˚’ø˚’ø də-j-aa3-o-jt˚’
he ART-child DO3SG.HUM-SBJ3SG.MASC-foster-DYN-FIN
‘He raises the child’ Abkh

c. A-x˚’ø˚’ø yara də-j-aa3-o-jt˚’
ART-child he DO3SG.HUM-SBJ3SG.MASC-foster-DYN-FIN
‘The child raises him’ Abkh

When the NPs are case marked, there is greater freedom of ordering. The orders VSO and SVO do occur but they are stylistically marked. When the subject and the object NPs are proper nouns or other nouns that do not differentiate ergative and absolutive cases (in Adyghe, Kabardian and Ubykh), the word order is fixed SO with bivalent verbs – transitive in (7a) and intransitive in (b). A change of the order SO, is accompanied by a change of the grammatical meaning in (7).
(7) a.  Inal Anzor je-h
Inal Anzor SBJ3SG-carry.PRS
‘Inal carries Anzor.’

b.  Inal Anzor j-o-we
Inal Anzor OBJ3SG-DYN-hit.PRS
‘Inal hits Anzor.’

When the subject is low on the animacy scale and the object denotes a human in clauses with verbs of the type ‘kill, burn, suffocate…’, the order OSV occurs along with SOV.

(8) Č’ale-ɾ psə-m ə-thala-ɣ
boy-ABS water (river)-ERG SBJ3SG-suffocate.TR-PF
‘The water suffocated the boy (The boy drowned).’

In the NP qualitative adjectives follow the head noun (9a) and relational adjectives precede it (9b).

(9) a.  čə q’ara b.  ayxa-t’ə k’arwat
horse black iron-ADJ bed
‘black horse’ (Abz) ‘iron bed’ (Abkh)

In a possessive NP, the possessor always precedes the head noun:

(10) ax’ə ya-px’a
prince POSS3SG-daughter
‘the prince’s daughter’

A more complex NP illustrates the placement of the possessive prefix initially and the number, case and coordination suffixes added to the final lexical element of the NP. Note that the possessive prefix does not attach to the head noun but to the first element of the NP.

(11) si-px’e wəne yən dax’e-xe-r-əy
POSS1SG-wood house big beautiful-PL-ABS-COORD
‘and my big beautiful wooden houses’

1.6 Pro-drop

Pronominal null subjects and objects are common in any position due to the richness of agreement marking including a full specification of person and numer of subject and objects.
A third person pronoun may be dropped even if there is no corresponding third person agreement marker in the verb. In such cases the zero position in the verb is related to a marker that presupposes the presence of a direct or oblique object, such as causative, locative, version, comitative and other categories. The verb form in (13) includes a so-called version marker \(fe\)- (benefactive), which increases the valency with one argument slot.

(13) (Sə) (wə) (a-š`) wa-o-fe-s'ə-γ
I you he-ERG DO2SG-(OBJ3SG)-V-SBJ1SG-lead-PF Adg
‘I lead you to him (or for him)’

2 Types of complementation

The most characteristic feature of complementation in the NWCL is that it is predominantly non-finite. Complement clauses including complementizers and indicative verbs are very rare. A large number of various non-finite forms occur as complement predicates, including participles, gerunds, conditionals, verbal nouns (masdars) and infinitives. This terminology for the non-finite forms keeps the traditional labels used in descriptions of the NWCL. However, it is important to note that such forms may differ in various respects from the corresponding forms in other European languages. For example, the form called the infinitive in the Circassian languages includes subject and, if transitive, also object agreement marking.

The use and distribution of the forms vary in the different languages. For instance, participles and gerunds occur in complementation in all the NWCL but with varying frequency. Masdar complements are common in Abkhaz and Abaza, less so in Adyghe and Kabardian and are lacking in Ubykh.

Note also that the distinction finite/non-finite differs from the traditional use of the terms. A finite form in the NWCL is able to form a complete sentence, whereas a non-finite form is not. A non-finite form is always dependent on the presence of

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4 The terms participles and gerunds are here used in the tradition following Lomtatidze, Rogava & Kerasheva 1966 and others.
another (finite) form. A formal difference between them is that negation is marked differently in finite and non-finite forms (by a suffix in finite and a prefix in non-finite forms).

3 Internal structure

Like finite verbs, non-finite forms include agreement markers of subject, direct object, indirect object and various oblique relations. The markers are chosen from the same sets of agreement prefixes as for the finite verbs. An exception is the masdar, which takes a subject marker in the form of the possessive prefix. Among the non-finite forms, the participles and the gerunds distinguish temporal categories (although a reduced set compared to tense forms in finite verbs). The case of the subject and object(s) of the non-finite forms in the Circassian languages and Ubykh is assigned similarly to that of the finite forms. Among the complement predicates participles and masdars are case marked themselves.

3.1 Complementizers

There are very few elements in the NWCL that may be considered complementizers. As noted below (cf. section 3.3.), the particle h’a in Abkhaz seems to have such functions. It occurs mostly with non-finite complements but also in indicative complements. The particle h’a is found only in Abkhaz. Due to the presence of ax’ə-the particle h’a is optional in (14a).

(14) a. W-ax’ə-m-ca-wa pšža-m (h’a) SBJ2SG.MASC-PART-NEG-go-DYN.NFIN.PRS beautiful-NEG (that) jə-sa-px’aža-wa-jt’ DO3SG.NHUM-SBJ1SG-consider-DYN.FIN.PRS ‘I think that it is not nice that you don't go’ Abkh

b. D-aa-r h’a s-š’a-wa-jt’ SBJ3SG.HUM-come.here-COND that SBJ1SG-fear-DYN-FIN.PRS ‘I fear that he will come here’ Abkh

3.2 Word-order in subordinate clauses

Word-order within the complement follows the neutral SOV arrangement (15a). Whereas considerable variation is allowed in the simple sentence, such as VSO and OVS, this is generally not acceptable in the subordinate clause (15b).
(15) a. Nəwe-m [ps'as'e-m ʒane-r (ø)-zer-i-də-γe-r] old.woman-ERG girl-ERG shirt-ABS DO3SG-PART-SBJ3SG-sew-PF-ABS ə-ɬeɣ’a-γ SBJ3SG-see-PF ‘The old woman saw that the girl sewed a shirt’ Adg

b. *Nəwe-m [(ø)-zer-i-də-γe-r ps'as'e-m ʒane-r] ə-ɬeɣ’a-γ Adg

Compare (15b) with the corresponding simple sentence (16), where the VSO order is acceptable.

(16) ə-də-γ ps'as'e-m ʒane-r SBJ3SG-sew-PF girl-ERG shirt-ABS ‘The girl sewed a shirt’ Adg

3.3 Indicative complement clauses

Indicative complement clauses are very rare in the NWCL, occurring only under certain stylistic, lexical and grammatical conditions and mainly in the present tense. Such forms are found in casual, oral style in Adyghe and Kabardian complements of a limited group of predicates of knowledge and immediate perception – s’e-n ‘know’, g˚ərəʔ-e-n ‘understand’, lαy’a-n ‘see’ (17a). Similar examples are found in Abkhaz (17b).

(17) a. De d-o-lay’a a-bə tχəl je-tχ we SBJ1PL-DYN-see-PRS he-ERG book.ABS SBJ3SG-write.PRS ‘We see (that) he writes a book’ Kbr

b. Ja-z-dər-wa-jt’ DO3SG.NHUM-SBJ1SG-know-DYN-FIN.PRS b-ca-wa-jt’ SBJ2SG.FEM-go-DYN-FIN.PRS ‘I know (that) you (woman) are going’ Abkh

Note that the complements are marked by a third person marker in the matrix verb in the Abkhaz example (17b), thus formally being object clauses.

Indicative forms are also found in Abkhaz complement clauses with the particle h’a functionally corresponding to a complementizer. Etymologically, it is clearly related to the verb a-h’a-ra ‘say’.
Complement clauses with the particle $h'a$, may alternatively take participles as complement predicate. The particle $h'a$ occurs in complements of different kinds of matrix predicates (see below).

### 3.4 Participial complement clauses

Participles used as complement predicates are distinguished by certain prefixes in the different languages: $\hat{s}(\sigma)$- (Abkh, Abz), $d\hat{y}a$- (Ubkh) and $zer(\sigma)$- (Adg, Kbr). The prefixes have a meaning corresponding to the indicative complementizer ‘that’ (glossed as ‘PART’).

(19) a. Wə-š-aa-wa z-dar-wa-jt’ SBJ2SG.MASC-PART-come.here-DYN.PR SBJ1SG-know-DYN
    ‘I know, that you come here’  
    Abkh

b. Jə-šə-z-ba-z wə-h’a-t’ DO3SG.NHUM-PART-SBJ1SG-see-INFN SBJ2SG.MASC-say-FIN
    ‘You said that I saw (something)’  
    Abz

c. A-px'adək"  dya-k’’a-q’a  œ-z-bja-q’a DEF-girl.ABS PART-go-PF DO3SG-SBJ1SG-see-PF
    ‘I saw that the girl went’  
    Ubkh

d. (We) wə-qs-zer-ə-ye-r se-s”e (you) SBJ2SG-OR-PART-go-PF-ABS SBJ1SG-know.PRS
    ‘I know that you came (here)’  
    Adg

e. Adə-m jə-q”e-m wəne zər-i-s”ə-r father-ERG POSS3SG-son-ERG house-ABS PART-SBJ3SG-do.PRS-ABS
    zəχ-ı-χ-a-s’ LOC-SBJ3SG-hear-PF-ASRT
    ‘Father heard that his son is building a house’  
    Kbr

In Abkhaz and Abaza one finds, besides $\hat{s}(\sigma)$- (Abkh, Abz), the prefixes $ax'(\sigma)$- (Abkh), $?a-/ax’a?a$- (Abz). The prefixes are particularly often found in complements of commentative predicates (20b).

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5 Orientation, usually marking direction of action towards the speaker.
Participles in these languages are used in adjectival and relative (21) functions as well.

(21) sabaj
daj (ø)-p-hø-ye-r
child.ABS DO3SG-SBJ2SG-carry-PF-ABS
‘the child that you carried’

3.5 Gerundival complement clauses

Gerunds are one of the most productive complement types in the NWCL, here examplified from the five languages:

(22) a. Sara d-a”w-wa
Sara SBJ3SG.HUM-cry-DYN.NFIN
d-a-la-ga-t’
SBJ3SG.HUM-OBJ3SG.NHUM-LOC-begin-AOR.FIN
‘Sara began to cry’

b. A-č’k”an d-a-s-wa
ART-boy SBJ3SG.HUM-OBJ3SG.NHUM-hit-DYN.GER
d-a-laga-jt’
SBJ3SG.HUM-OBJ3SG.NHUM-begin-FIN.AOR
‘The boy started hitting’

c. Wä-k”a-w-n  wä-g’o-n  wa-l
SBJ2SG-go-FIN-GER POSS2SG-heart-ERG LOC-lie.PRS
‘You intend to go’

d. (Te) tə-g”oš’ə-e-w  tə-wəbla-γ
(we) SBJ1PL-talk-GER SBJ1PL-begin-PF
‘We started talking’

e. (Fe) šə-r  f-s’-a-we  si-g”əγ-a-s’
you horse-ABS SBJ2PL-sell-PF-GER POSS1SG-thought-PF-ASRT
‘I thought that you had sold the horse’
Gerunds have a rich morphology, including, for instance, comitative markers (a) and markers of orientation, reversed action and potentialis (b).

(23) a. (Səɣ˚a) sə-w-ʒ˚a-k˚-a-w-n s-lak˚a-w
   (I) SBJ1SG-OBJ2SG-COM-go-FUT-GER SBJ1SG-can-FUT
   ‘I can go together with you’                      Ubkh

b. (We) w-a-q˚a-de-mał-ʒ˚a-f-a-we
   (you) SBJ2SG-OBJ3PL-OR-COM-NEG-go-REV-POT-PF-GER
   s-o-bž
   SBJ1SG-DYN-consider.PRS
   ‘I think, that you couldn't come here together with them’   Kbr

In other contexts gerunds have adverbial functions (24).

(24) a. We tɕʰa-m w-je-ʒ˚a-we wə-s˚a-s-s˚
    ‘You are sitting having read the book’              Kbr

b. Se wən-e-m s-je-mał-pl-a-we
   I house-ERG SBJ1SG-OBJ3SG-NEG-look.at-PF-GER
   s-o-k˚e-ž˚
   SBJ1SG-DYN-go.PRS-REV
   ‘I leave without having looked at the house’          Kbr

3.6 Infinitival complement clauses

The infinitive is a complement type that is limited to Kabardian and Adyghe among the NWCL. It is marked by the -n suffix, which coincides with the future tense marker. The infinitive lacks tense and case but takes, apart from that, a rich set up of markers – subject and object agreement, benefactive, malefactive, causative, comitative, reflexive, negation etc.

(25) a. (we) wə-čaje-n wə-feja-ɣ˚
    (you) SBJ2SG-sleep-INF SBJ2SG-want-PF
    ‘You wanted to sleep’                                Adg

b. (Sa) (we) (a-bə-ɣe-m)
   (I) (you) (he-ERG-PL-ERG)
   w-a-de-z˚ye-k˚-e-n
   DO2SG-OBJ3PL-COM-SBJ1SG-CAUS-go-INF
   si-g˚e-ɣe-t
   POSS1SG-thought-IMPF
   ‘I intended to make you go together with them’          Kbr
When infinitives occur in complements of phasal verbs, the subject marker is optional (26a). Compare this, for instance, to the infinitival complement of a modal matrix verb (26b), where the subject marker is obligatory.

(26) a. Te wane-r (t’)-s”ə-n tə-wəble-ʃ’t  
     we house-ABS (SBJ1PL)-do-INF SBJ1PL-begin-FUT  
     ‘We will begin to build the house’  
     Adg

b. Te wane-r *ø/t’-s”ə-n t-leč”ə-ʃ’t  
     we house-ABS SBJ1PL-do-INF SBJ1PL-can-FUT  
     ‘We will be able to build the house’  
     Adg

3.7 Masdar (verbal noun) complement clauses

The masdar shows both verbal and nominal features. It is case marked and assigned case by the matrix verb. Other categories are the possessive, coordinative and number.

(27) a. A-ča-ra wa-lga-t’  
     ART-eat-VN SBJ2SG.MASC-finish-FIN.AOR  
     ‘You stopped eating’  
     Abz

b. A-ca-ra sa-q˚’c’ə-ʃ’t  
     ART-go-VN SBJ1SG-stop-FIN.AOR  
     ‘I stopped going’  
     Abkh

c. (Te) tʃe-na-r tə-wəble-ʃ’ə-ʃ’təγ  
     (we) write-VN-ABS SBJ1PL-begin-REV-IMPF  
     ‘We continued writing’  
     Adg

d. (Fe) fi-je-ye-ʒe-na-r  
     (you) POSS2PL-OBJ3SG-CAUS-study-VN-ABS  
     s”ə-v-o-ʒe-ʃ  
     LOC-SBJ2PL-DYN-begin-REV  
     ‘You begin instructing someone (your instruction of someone)’  
     Kbr

If all the other non-finite forms mark the grammatical relations in the same way as it is done in finite clauses, masdars constitute an exception. The subject is marked by a possessive prefix initially in the masdar phrase. The subject is identified as S+A, thus differently from the division in S [ABS] and A [ERG] in finite and other non-finite positions. The direct object is transformed into a noun in attributive position before
the masdar. As seen from the examples below, the possessive prefix attaches to this preposed noun (and not to the head noun, cf. also (11)). Both coreference (28a) and disjoint subject reference (28b) are possible here.

(28) a. Se [si-lə ʃχə-na-r] sə-wəχ-a-s'
   I POSS1SG-meat eat-VN-ABS SBJ1SG-finish-PF-ASRT
   ‘I finished eating the meat’

b. We [si-ʒane də-na-r] b-ʒe-wəʔ-a-s'
you POSS1SG-shirt sew-VN-ABS SBJ2SG-CAUS-stop.ITR-PF-ASRT
   ‘You stopped my sewing the shirt’

3.8 Interrogative complements

The ‘alternative’ form is used in interrogative complements with polar questions: I wonder if he does it or not. It is formed by repeated complement predicates, where the first one takes the interrogative suffix and the second one the negation prefix and the interrogative suffix. The alternative construction is particularly frequent in Adyghe and Kabardian.

(29) a. (Se) s-s’e-r-ep s’ə-k’ e-ra
   (I) SBJ1SG-know-DYN-NEG SBJ2SG-go.PRS-INT
   s’ə-mə-k’ e-ra
   SBJ2SG-NEG-go.PRS-INT
   ‘I don’t know if you go or not’
   Adg

b. (We) wə-q’ə-ze-wəʔs’ə-yat wə-s-leɣ’-a-re
   (you) SBJ2SG-OR-OBJ1SG-ask-PLUP2 DO2SG-SBJ1SG-see-PF-INT
   wə-z-mə-leɣ’-a-re
   DO2SG-SBJ1SG-NEG-see-PF-INT
   ‘You asked me whether I had seen you or not’
   Kbr

Another interrogative complement type is formed by the suffix -məj (Adg, Kbr), which roughly corresponds to ‘if’ (30).

(30) (Sə) a-r k’ə-məj qə-s-s’ə-s’t
   (I) he-ABS go.PRS-if OR-SBJ1SG-find.out-FUT
   ‘I will find out if he goes’
   Adg

Participles formed by prefixes marking location, time, direction and other relations are also found in complement clauses. These prefixes have several meanings, depending on the context: zəš’- (Adg), s’- (Kbr) ‘where, when’, zde- (Adg, Kbr)
'where, to where’, zero- ‘where, how’ (Adg, Kbr). The participle is marked by the absolutive case in the same way as an ordinary direct object (31).

(31) a. A-r mezə-m s'ə-k”e-r we w-o-s”e
he-ABS wood-ERG when-go-ABS you SBJ2SG-DYN-know.PRS
‘You know when he goes to the wood’

b. We wə-zere-k”e-re-r se s-s”e-r-ep
you SBJ2SG-how-go-PART-ABS I SBJ1SG-know-PRS-NEG
‘I don’t know how you go.’

c. Ps'as'e-r zde-s'əsə-r e’ale-m jə-leɣ’ə-ɣ
girl-ABS where-sit-ABS boy-ERG SBJ3SG-see-PF
‘The boy saw where the girl sits.’

The corresponding simple question (32a) is formed by sats'əɣ’ə ‘when’ and the participle including the prefix s’- ‘when’. If (31a) is turned into an interrogative clause with an embedded question, the wh-word sats'əɣ’ə ‘when’ is no longer allowed (32b). The interrogative suffix -re is added to the matrix verb.

(32) a. A-r mezə-m sats'əɣ’e s'ə-k”e-r?
he-ABS wood-ERG when when-go.PRS-ABS
‘When does he go to the wood?’

b. A-r mezə-m s'ə-k”e-r we p’-s”e-re
he-ABS wood-ERG when-go-ABS you SBJ2SG-know.PRS-INT
‘Do you know, when he goes to the wood?’

3.9 Other types of complement clauses

In this section we look at some minor complement types and constructions occurring in different languages: the conditional, the non-finite form with arbitrary subject reference, the imperative and the obligative construction.

The conditional (33a) and the purposive-conditional (33b) are particularly frequent complement types in Abkhaz and Abaza, marked by the suffixes -r and -rc respectively.

(33) a. Jə-s-fa-r s-tax’ə-w-p’
DO3SG.NHUM-SBJ1SG-eat-COND SBJ1SG-want-FIN-PRS.STAT
‘I want to eat (it).’

b. S-ca-rc s-tax’ə-w-p’
SBJ1SG-go-PCOND SBJ1SG-want-FIN-PRS.STAT
‘I want to go.’
In Kabardian and Adyghe the conditional is much less frequent, but it does occur with volitional verbs (34).

(34) (Se) (we) sə-qʼe-p-ş-a-mə s-fʼe-ʃʼ-t
(l) (you) DO1SG-OR-SBJ2SG-lead-PF-COND SBJ1SG-V-want-IMPF
‘I wanted you to take me here.’  Kbr

The non-finite form with arbitrary subject reference is a form of high frequency in Adyghe and Kabardian (for details, see Kumakhov & Vamling 1994). Formally, it is the second person singular prefix w- (p-) that serves the function of marking arbitrary reference of the subject. This prefix is obligatorily present in such forms. Note that object markers in the third person may be present, keeping their usual functions.

(35) a. ʔeʃʼe-t txə̌ɔ-r p-txə-n-čʼe
important-IMPF book-ABS SUBJ2SG-write-INF-INSTR
‘It was important to write the book.’  Kbr

b. Helemet-sʼ a-bə w-e-plʼə-n-čʼe
interesting-ASRT he/it-ERG SUBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-look.at-INF-INSTR
‘It is interesting to look at him (at it)’  Kbr

In this form the suffix -n occurs, as in infinitives. However, a marked difference from infinitives is that this form usually takes a frozen case suffix – the instrumental -čʼe in most instances, but also the absolutive -r or the adverbial -w cases.

(36) Deyʼe-sʼ no-bə ʃə-夔psʼə-n (-o, -r, -čʼe, -w)
nice-ASRT today REFL-SBJ2SG-bathe-INF (-o,-ABS,-INSTR,-ADV)
‘It's nice to take a swim today.’  Kbr

The obligative construction is formed by the participle χʼəj-a-r ‘have to’ (37a) preceded by an infinitive, that exceptionally takes the participial prefix zer-o- (Kumakhov and Vamling, 1997). Example (37b) illustrates the imperative that is used in certain complements in Abkhaz and Abaza.

(37) a. (Se) s-sʼəɣʼəpsʼ-a-qʼam (fe) fə-zero-s-tygʼə-n
(l) SBJ1SG-forget-PF-NEG (you) DO2PL-PART-S1SG-see-INF
χʼej-a-r (=fə-s-tygʼə-n zer-o-χʼej-a-r)
have.to-PF-ABS (DO2PL-SBJ1SG-see-INF PART-have.to-PF-ABS)
‘I didn't forget that I had to see you’  Kbr

b. Wə-na-gəl s-χʼa-tʼ
SBJ2SG:MASC-OR-stand.up.IMP SBJ1SG-say-FIN.PRS
‘I ordered you to stand up’  Abz
3.10 Causatives

Among the NWCL only Ubykh has an analytic causative construction. The two components of the construction are the complement verb and causative matrix verb with the root -š- ‘do’.

(38)  

A-wə-n-t’  \( \)  yə-s-šə-n  
DO3SG-OBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-give  \( \)  Particle-SBJ1SG-do-PRS.SG  
‘I made him give him to you’ (Dumézil 1975: 92)  
Ubkh

Tense, mood, causative, negating and interrogative markers are found only in the matrix verb, which is placed in postposition to the complement verb.

(39)  

A-fə-w-q’  \( \)  yə-sə-m-də-šə-n  
DO3SG-LOC-OBJ2SG-cut  \( \)  Particle-SBJ1SG-NEG-CAUS-do-PRS.SG  
‘I do not make you cut him’ (Dumézil 1975: 178)  
Ubkh

Morphological causatives are found in all NWCL. The causative forms are marked by prefixes before the verbal root: \( r- \) (Abkh), \( rə- \) (Abz), \( də- \) (Ubkh), \( ŋe- \) (Adg, Kbr).

(40) a.  

sə-w-də-q”at”q’a  \( \)  wə-z-ŋe-k”e-s”t  
DO1SG-SBJ2SG-CAUS-stay-PF.SG  \( \)  DO2SG-SBJ1SG-CAUS-go-FUT  
‘You made me stay’  
Ubkh  \( \)  ‘I make you go’  \( \)  Adg

b.  

wə-l-sə-r-ba-jt’  \( \)  DO2SG.MASC-OBJ3SG.FEM-SBJ1SG-CAUS-see-FIN.AOR  
‘I made you see her’  
Abkh

c.  

jə-w-d-ra-fə-jt’  \( \)  DO3SG.NHUM-OBJ2SG.MASC-SBJ3PL-CAUS-eat-FIN.PRS  
‘They make you (masc.) eat it’  
Abz

d.  

The subject of the intransitive assumes the grammatical role of direct object of the transitive (41a). This role (=DO) is retained in the causative of the transitive, while the causee becomes an indirect object (41b-c).

(41) a.  

Se  a-r  \( \)  sə-z-ŋe-t-a-s’  \( \)  
I  he-ABS  LOC-SBJ1SG-CAUS-stand-PF-ASRT  
‘I made him stand.’  
Kbr

b.  

Wə-s-h-a-s’  \( \)  DO2SG-SBJ1SG-carry-PF-ASRT  
‘I carried you.’  
Kbr
In some cases the prefix loses its primary causative meaning and functions as a transitivizing prefix. This results in double causative markers when such verbs combine with the causative prefix ‘make, force’, as in (42b).

(42) a. ø-z-ye-z’˚a-γ
   DO3SG-SBJ1SG-CAUS-become.fried-PF
   ‘I fry it’
   Adg

b. ø-sə-j-ye-ye-z’˚a-γ
   DO3SG-OBJ1SG-SBJ3SG-CAUS-CAUS-become.fried-PF
   ‘he made me fry it’
   Adg

3.11 Potentialis

Potentialis forms are found in all the NWCL. The predicate ‘can, be able’ is represented by an affix in the verb form.

(43) a. sə-p-fe-hə-γ
   OBJ1SG-SBJ2SG-POT-carry-PF
   ‘You could carry me’
   Adg

b. wə-m-k’˚a-fa-n
   SBJ2SG-NEG-go-POT-PRS.SG
   ‘You couldn’t go’
   Ubkh

c. s-şχə-s’˚a-s’t
   SBJ1SG-eat-POT-FUT
   ‘I can eat’
   Adg

d. də-s-zə-k’˚a-ji’t
   OBJ3SG.HUM-SBJ1SG-POT-catch-FIN.PRS
   ‘I can catch him/her’
   Abz

Both the morphological causative and potentialis constructions correspond to matrix predicates with similar meanings, as shown by the manipulative matrix verb in (44a) and the modal in (44b).

(44) a. Se a-r je-z-yez-a-s’ a-bə nobe
   I he-ABS DO3SG-SBJ1SG-force-PF-ASRT he-ERG today
   lez’γe-r jə-wəχə-nu
   work-ABS SBJ3SG-finish-INF
   ‘I forced him to finish the work today’
   Kbr
4 External relations

Complement clauses are found both in subject and object position. Object clauses occur as direct objects as well as objects of intransitive (45) verbs.

(45) L’ə-r lə-r jə-ʃə-ŋ me-šane
man-ABS meat-ABS SBJ3SG-eat.TR-INF SBJ3SG-be.afraid.PRS
‘The man is afraid to eat the meat’ Kbr

Clauses in subject position are found with various de-adjectival commentative predicates corresponding to ‘easy’, ‘difficult’, ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘important’ etc. The subject clause is usually postposed, though not necessarily.

(46) Heləmət-s’ [ŋələ-r p-tə-ŋə-r]
Interesting.PRS-ASRT book-ABS SBJ2SG-write-INF-ABS
‘It is interesting to write the book.’ Kbr

Participial or masdar clauses are found in subject position with another small group of verbs – with the meanings ‘worry’, ‘frighten’, ‘irritate’. The causative prefix in these verbs has a transitivizing function. The participle in subject position is marked by the ergative case, it is placed initially as other subjects and is reflected in the matrix verb by the third person subject marker.

(47) S’awe-r zere-səməq’e-m nə-r je-γe-s’əməq”ə
son-ABS PART-be.ill-ERG mother-ABS SBJ3SG-CAUS-worry.PRS
‘It worries mother that her son is ill’ Adg

Clauses occurring as complements of postpositions constitute a marginal case, illustrated in (48).

(48) Se s-o-šane wə-q’ə-ʒεnə-k”e-nu-m s’heɛ’e
I SBJ1SG-DYN-be.afraid.PRS SBJ2SG-OR-PART-go-FUT-ERG for
‘I am afraid that you will come’ Kbr

Clauses as complements of nouns are examplified with the noun murad (Kbr) ‘intention’. The complement takes the form of an infinitive that assigns the absolutive case to its object in the ordinary way. Abs θε.ERG is the possessor and is related to
the possessive marker in jo-murad-o-r ‘intention’. The complement clause is thus embedded in the NP.

(49) A-bo [mašone jo-dəɣ’ə-nəw ] jo-murad-o-r
he-ERG car.ABS SBJ3SG-steal-INF POSS3SG-intention-ABS
‘His intention to steal the car…’

4.1 Word order

As noted above, word order is rather free, allowing SOV, VSO and SVO. The most neutral order is SOV, in both simple and complex sentences. The object complement clause occurs in medial position, i.e. before the matrix verb.

(50) a. A-px’adsk˚’ a-wax-g’ə my’aw-q’a
DET-girl.ABS SBJ3SG-cry-PRS.GER begin-PF.SG
‘The girl started crying’

b. ɣa-k˚’abž’a-n [a-davrəšə-n a-məzə-n psa
POSS3SG-husband-ERG [DET-dervish-ERG DET-child-ERG soul.ABS
dyə-wa-n-l-q’a] mə-c’-a-najt’
PART-LOC-SBJ3SG-put-PF.SG] NEG-know-IMPF.SG
‘Her husband didn’t know that the dervish had planted his soul into the child’ (Dumézil 1975:207)

When the matrix subject is dropped, the complement is usually preposed to the matrix predicate.

(51) A-ʂ’ah˚a-ra wa-q˚’ac˚’-jt˚’
ART-sing-VN SBJ3SG-stop-FIN.AOR
‘You stopped singing’

It is possible to move the subject out of the complement to the initial position in the sentence (52a). Again, this is only possible if the two NPs are differentiated by case. If proper nouns are used, this is no longer possible (52b).

(52) a. L˚ə-r s’əzə-m jə-s’e q˚ə-zere-k˚’ə-ye-r
man-ABS woman-ERG SBJ3SG-know.PRS OR-PART-go-PF-ABS
‘The woman knows that the man came’

b. *Anzor Murat jə-s˚’e q˚ə-zere-k˚’ə-ye-r
Anzor Murat SBJ3SG-know.PRS OR-PART-go-PF-ABS
‘Anzor knows that Murat came’
First and second personal pronouns also lack the opposition ergative-absolutive. However, this non-distinctness is compensated for by the information given by the overt agreement markers in the matrix and complement predicates.

(53)  Se we p’-s”e-t sə-zero-laž’e-r
I you SBJ2SG-know-IMPF SBJ1SG-PART-work.PRS-ABS
‘You knew that I am working’ Kbr

4.2 Case marking, coreference and pro-drop

Subject case assignment and the presence of overt complement subjects are closely related to referential conditions between the matrix subject/object and the complement subject. Under certain conditions there are alternative assignments of subject case, ergative or absolutive, as in (54).

(54) a.  L’ə-m/ʃr  šχe-n s”-i-ʒ-a-s’
man-ERG/-ABS eat.ITR-INF s”-i-ʒ-a-s’
‘The man began to eat’ Kbr

b.  L’ə-m/ʃr lə-r ja-ʒə-n
man-ERG/-ABS meat-ABS SBJ3SG-eat.TR-INF
me-ʒane
SBJ3SG-be.afraid.ITR.PRS
‘The man is afraid to eat the meat’ Kbr

The first requirement is, of course, that the matrix and the complement predicate differ in transitivity and hence also in their case assignment properties. In (54a) the matrix predicate is transitive and the complement intransitive. In (54b) the situation is the reverse: the complement predicate is transitive and the matrix is intransitive. In both cases there is a choice between the ergative and absolutive cases for the subject.

The placement of the subject in relation to the complement and matrix predicate is also of importance in allowing ergative or absolutive case marking of the subject. In this case, the subject is typically placed before the complement predicate and thus separated from the matrix predicate (55).

(55)  L’ə-m/ʃr (e)-zero-səma že-r je-s”e-ž
man-ERG/-ABS SBJ3SG-PART-be.ill.PRS-ABS SBJ3SG-know.PRS-REV
‘The man remembers that he is ill’ Kbr

If the subject is placed before (56a) or after (adjacent to) the matrix predicate (56b), case may be assigned only by the matrix predicate.
A further condition that has to hold is coreference between the matrix and complement subjects. However, obligatory subject control is not necessary. In the set of examples below we find matrix verbs with both obligatory subject coreference (57a, b) and with subject coreference without control restrictions (57c). Example (57d) shows the contrast with different subjects, where case may be assigned only by the matrix verb.

\[(57)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad (\emptyset\text{-})\text{-zer\-sama\-ʒe-r} & \quad l'\text{-}a-m/*\text{-}-r & \quad je-s''e-ž \\
\text{SBJ3SG-PART-be.ill.PRS-ABS} & \quad \text{man-ERG/*-ABS} & \quad \text{S3SG-know.PRS-REV} \\
\text{‘The man remembers that he is ill’} & \quad \text{Kbr}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad (\emptyset\text{-})\text{-zer\-sama\-ʒe-r} & \quad je-s''e-ž & \quad l'\text{-}a-m/*\text{-}-r \\
\text{SBJ3SG-PART-be.ill.PRS-ABS} & \quad \text{SBJ3SG-know.PRS-REV} & \quad \text{man-ERG/*-ABS} \\
\text{‘The man remembers that he is ill’} & \quad \text{Kbr}
\end{align*}
\]

It is not only the question of transitivity vs. intransitivity that determines the case marking. The two examples (58a) and (58b) differ in the presence of the suffix -ž of ‘reversed action’ in (b) but not in (a), which changes the meaning of the matrix verb. A verb that includes the reversed action marker is in a sense reflexive and presupposes coreference between the matrix and complement subjects.

\[(58)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad l'\text{-}a-m/*\text{-}r & \quad (\emptyset\text{-})\text{-zer\-sama\-ʒe-r} & \quad je-s''e \\
\text{man-ERG/*-ABS} & \quad \text{SBJ3SG-PART-be.ill.PRS-ABS} & \quad \text{SBJ3SG-know.PRS} \\
\text{‘The man knows that he is ill’} & \quad \text{Kbr}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad l'\text{-}a-m/r & \quad (\emptyset\text{-})\text{-zer\-sama\-ʒe-r} & \quad je-s''e-ž \\
\text{man-ERG/-ABS} & \quad \text{SBJ3SG-PART-be.ill.PRS-ABS} & \quad \text{SBJ3SG-know.PRS-REV} \\
\text{‘The man remembers that he is ill’} & \quad \text{Kbr}
\end{align*}
\]
Finally, we note a case where ergative case marking occurs and absolutive is excluded, despite the intransitivity of the matrix verb (59). In this example the ergative case marking seems to be related to the presence of the possessive marker.

(59) Je-l’ə-m (*-r) lə-r jə-šχə-n
POSS3SG-husband-ERG/*ABS meat-ABS SBJ3SG-eat-INF
me-šə-ne
SBJ3SG-be.afraid-INF
‘Her husband is afraid to eat the meat’

Turning now to the problem of pro-drop. As noted above, all non-finite forms (except masdars) have the same slots for agreement marking as do finite verbs. Generally, it is possible to have an NP or overt personal pronoun corresponding to each argument position. However, this does not happen in spontaneous production, as personal pronouns are primarily used for emphatic purposes. Pro-drop is also more common in oral style than in written standard language.

In complementation the occurrence of overt pronouns is further restricted. Under coreference with the matrix subject, an overt complement subject is not allowed to appear (60a). At the same time, if the complement subject is overt, then the matrix subject has to be dropped under coreference (60b).

(60) a. L’ə-m ø/*a-r ŝχə-n s”'-i-z-a-s’
man-ERG he-ABS eat.ITR-INF LOC-SBJ3SG-begin.TR-PF-ASRT
‘The man began to eat’

b. ø/*Abə l’ə-r ŝχə-n s”'-i-z-a-s’
he-ERG man-ABS eat.ITR-INF LOC-SBJ3SG-begin.TR-PF-ASRT
‘The man began to eat’

In cases of object control, the complement subject is also usually deleted ((61) but cf. also (44a)).

(61) Zine Anzor je-leʔə-ɣ ø/*abə pismo
Zina Anzor OBJ3SG-ask-PF he.ERG letter
(ø)-q’ə-f-i-tχə-new
DO3SG-OR-V-SBJ3SG-write-INF
‘Zina asked Anzor to write a letter’

Under disjoint reference the complement subject pronoun is present in most cases.

(62) A-əə je-lay’ we wə-k’’e-n
he-ERG SBJ3SG-see.PRS you SBJ2SG-go-INF
wə-zərə-χə’ej-r
SBJ2SG-PART-want-ABS
‘He sees that you want to go’
4.3 Selectional restrictions with respect to verb classes

4.3.1 Verbs of knowledge, saying and immediate perception

Matrix verbs of knowledge, saying and immediate perception take participial and gerundival complements in all the NWCL, as illustrated below. Such forms are the neutral choice for the complement predicate of matrix predicates in this group. Participles are found in the complements of (63a-c).

(63) a. Te te-s’e we wa-zere-s mêz’a-ye-r
we SBJ1PL-know.PRS you SBJ2SG-PART-be.ill-PF-ABS
‘We know that you were ill’

b. Sa-š-ca-z wa-h’a-jt’
SBJ1SG-PART-go-INF-PAST SBJ2SG-say-FIN.AOR
‘You said that I went away’

c. ɣa-px’a a-tat (ø)-da-dwa-q’a (ø)-bja-q’a
POSS3SG-daughter DEF-man.ABS SBJ3SG-PART-die-PF SBJ3SG-see-PF
‘His/her daughter saw that this man died’

Examples (64a-c) show complement clauses with gerund predicates.

(64) a. Š’a-ca-wa-nə h-ða-ya-jt’
SBJ2SG-go-DYN-GER SBJ1PL-know-DYN-FIN.PRS
‘We know that you go’

b. Ps’as’e-m we tɔ-ta-r qe-p-ʃ’eʃ-a-ye-w
girl-ERG you book-ABS OR-SBJ2SG-buy-PF-GER
qə-s’i-ʔ-a-γ OR-OBJ1SG-SBJ3SG-say-PF
‘The girl told me that you bought a book’

c. S’ala s’o-j-k’-a-na-gə z-bja-q’a
you SBJ2PL-OR-go-PRS.PL-GER SBJ1PL-see-PF
‘I have seen that you are coming’

Compare also section 3.3., where it is pointed out that indicative complement forms occur with this group of matrix predicates under certain conditions.

A clause reflecting direct speech is given in the indicative, preceded by the matrix subject and followed by the verb ʔ’-ʔ’a-’ɣ ‘said’. In indirect speech the complement predicate is changed into a participle or gerund, with appropriate changes of person (speaker first person to reported third person).
Among the immediate perception verbs, certain verbs may also function as predicates of knowledge, as in (68a). This is reflected in which temporal categories are allowed in the complement. As an immediate perception verb the time reference of the matrix and complement verb are required to overlap (68b), whereas the time reference of the complement is not determined by the knowledge matrix verb.
4.3.2 Commentative predicates

Commentative predicates and also verbs such as ‘pretend’, ‘remember (that)’, ‘forget (that)’ take participial (but not gerundival) complements (69a–e).

(69) a. A-š' zeχ-je-χə w-je-ʒe-w
he-ERG LOC-SBJ3SG-hear.PRS SBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-read.PRS-GER

(w-je-ʒə-ye-w, w-je-ʒe-ʃ'te-w)
SBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-read-PF-GER, SBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-read-FUT-GER

‘He hears that you are reading/were reading/will be reading’ Adg

b. A-š' je-ley'ə w-je-ʒe-w
he-ERG SBJ3SG-see.PRS SBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-read.PRS-GER

(*w-je-ʒe-ya-w, *w-je-ʒe-ʃ'te-w)
SBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-read-PF-GER, SBJ2SG-OBJ3SG-read-FUT-GER

‘He sees that you are reading (*were reading, *will be reading)’ Adg

c. A-ə' a-s"ablən (ø)-gə-mə-t
DEF-prince.ABS DEF-country-ERG SBJ3SG-LOC-NEG-be-PART

(ø)-ɣ'ə-najt'
SBJ3SG-seem-IMPF

‘It seemed to her that the prince was not in that country’ Ubkh

d. We se q'ale-m wə-zerə-s-ʃ-a-r
you 1 town-ERG DO2SG-PART-SBJ1SG-take-PF-ABS

p-s'əɣ'əps'ə-ʒ-a-s'
SBJ2SG-forget-REV-PF-ASRT

‘You have already forgotten that I took you to town’ Kbr

e. Də-ʃə-čmazə"-ə-z w-ʒə-jt'
SBJ3SG.HUM-PART-be.ill-NFIN-PAST SBJ2SG.MASC-hide-FIN.AOR

‘You hid that he was ill’ Abkh
4.3.3 Modal verbs
In all the NWCL, modal verbs in a broader sense, corresponding to verbs such as ‘can’, ‘want’, including phasal verbs, select gerundival forms for their complements (70) or nominalized forms (verbal nouns and infinitives) as in (71a-b). The gerund used in complements of this group of matrix predicates differs from gerundival complements of epistemic matrix verbs in that there is no tense marking. The morphologically unmarked gerund used here corresponds to the present form in the temporal paradigm.

(70) A-məz a-wax'ə (ø)-məj'a-w-q'a
    DEF-child SB13G-cry-GER SB13G-LOC-begin-PF.SG
‘The child began to cry’

(71) a. Fəzə-m jə-da-na-r jə-wəχ-a-s'
    woman-ERG POSS3SG-sew-VN-ABS SB13G-finish-PF-ASRT
‘The woman finished (her) sewing’

b. A-ga-ra s-a-q'əc'ə-jt'
    ART-carry-VN SB1J3G-OBJ3SG.NHUM-stop-FIN.AOR
‘I stopped carrying’

4.3.4 Manipulative verbs
Verbs in this group select infinitive and masdar complements (72). Quite often the matrix verb itself includes the causative prefix, as in (72b). However, in such cases the causative prefix has lost its strong causative meaning and functions as a transitivizing prefix.

(72) a. L'ə-m q'ə-z-ž-i-ʔ-a-s'
    man-ERG OR-OBJ13G-LOC-SBJ3G-say-PF-ASRT
    məbdəj ɬ sə-sə-tə-nəw
    here SB13G-LOC-stand-INF
‘The man told me to stand here’

b. De fe fə-q'ə-d-yə-deʔ'-a-s'
    we you DO2PL-OR-SBJ1PL-CAUS-hear-PF-ASRT
    f'i-lez'əye-r nobe fə-wəχə-nəw
    POSS2PL-work-ABS today SB1J2PL-finish-INF
‘We persuaded you to finish your work today’

b. Se we sa-we-leʔ’ psənč’ew pismo-r
    I you SB1J3G-OBJ2SG-ask.PRS quickly letter-ABS
    p-təχə-new
    SB1J2SG-write-INF
‘I ask you to write a letter’
4.3.5 Raising verbs

A small number of raising verbs are found in the Circassian languages: ɬə (Kbr, Adg), pćə (Adg), bzə (Kbr) ‘consider’, s’es’ən (Adg), j’es’ən (Kab) ‘seem’.

In (73a) we ‘you’ is the subject of the non-finite, stative complement predicate ʷəs’ak”ew, that includes the second person subject marker ʷə-. In (b) the status of we ‘you’ has changed; here it is case marked as the object of the matrix predicate, which also includes the corresponding object marker. At the same time, the complement predicate has lost its subject marker.

(73) a. Fəzə-m we ʷə-s'ak”e-w jə-lə-te-t
    woman-ERG you SBJ2SG-hunter.PRS-ADV SBJ3SG-consider-IMPF
    ‘The woman thinks (considers) that you are a hunter’ Kbr

b. Fəzə-m we s’ak”e-w ʷə-j-lə-ə-t
    woman-ERG you hunter-ADV DO2SG-SBJ3SG-consider-IMPF
    ‘The woman considers you a hunter’ Kbr

c. Zeč’e-mə-j ʷə ə-c’əf dəų’e-w s”-a-lə-te
    all-ERG-COORD you person good-ADV DO2PL-SBJ3PL-hear.PRS
    ‘And all consider you good people’ Adg

4.5 Complement types and finite/non-finite features

We have seen that there is a range of complement types in the NWCL with different verbal and nominal features. The forms occurring in complement clauses are predominantly of the dependent type, or non-finite type in traditional Caucasian terminology (i.e. they are always dependent on the presence of some other finite verb form).

To a varying degree, the dependent verb forms are marked for tense, subject and object agreement. Participles encode the same categories as finite verbs, but a smaller set of tense forms compared to the finite forms. Gerunds are split into two types, where one is marked for tense and the other is not. Infinitives do not distinguish tense. They are generally marked for subject person, but allow ’subject marker’-drop with phasal verbs (see 26a). Finally, in the most nominal of the complement types, the masdar, the subject is marked as an NP possessor. Any direct object is marked as an attributive noun.

In Table 4 the complement types are arranged on a scale ranging from free (non-dependent) forms with full marking of tense, subject and object agreement to reduced specification of these categories. The distribution of the classes of matrix verbs given in the table represents the core cases common to all or a majority of the NWCL.
Table 4. Finite/non-finite features of the complement predicates

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Complement type</th>
<th>Classes of matrix verbs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Finite</td>
<td>[+Free, +Tense, +SBJ, +OBJ] Saying: direct quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participle</td>
<td>[-Free, +Tense, +SBJ, +OBJ] Knowledge, Saying, Perception, Commentative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerund1</td>
<td>[-Free, +Tense, +SBJ, +OBJ] Knowledge, Saying, Perception</td>
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<td>Gerund2</td>
<td>[-Free, -Tense, +SBJ, +OBJ] Modal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infinitive1</td>
<td>[-Free, -Tense, +SBJ, +OBJ] Manipulative, Modal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive2</td>
<td>[-Free, -Tense, -SBJ, +OBJ] Phasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masdar</td>
<td>[-Free, -Tense, POSS.SBJ] Phasal, Manipulative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly, the complement types which independently express both tense and subject reference in the upper part of the table correlate with matrix verbs used for the least tightly integrated types of situation where the matrix and complement clauses represent separate events (cf. Givon 1990). Towards the lower part of the table are found matrix predicates used in situations that are more tightly integrated, where the matrix and complement clauses represent two merging or overlapping events. Features of merging, i.e. coreference between the complement subject and matrix subject or object and determined time reference (cf. Noonan 1985) correlate here with complement types that lack marking of tense and subject reference.

References


Spruit A. 1986. Abkhaz studies. Rijksuniversiteit of Leiden (Diss.).

**Glosses**

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