0 Introduction

Various parts of the Adyghe (Circassian < Northwest Caucasian) grammar provide evidence for different types of clausal organization.

Non-configurationality

- Free word order & radical pro-drop + polysynthetic verbal indexing
- No Weak Crossover effects
- “Backward” binding

Syntactic ergativity

- A′-extraction
- Case marking and verbal indexing patterns
- Word order restrictions in relative clauses

Syntactic accusativity

- Anaphor binding
- Argument encoding in nominalizations
- Addressee of imperatives

Proposal:

The clause is structured in three distinct strata: accusatively built vP, syntactically ergative TP and non-configurational CP. The contradictory argument properties can be resolved via the following configuration:

- VoiceP (projection immediately dominating vP) is a phase.
- Ergative is inherent case, assigned by v; absolutive is assigned by T.
- Verbal cross-reference markers are pronominal elements, following the Pronominal Argument Hypothesis (Jelinek 1984).

1 This talk is based on data from published sources, as well as data collected in the Republic of Adygea (Russia) in 2010 and 2014. I am deeply indebted to the speakers of Adyghe for their generous help. I am thankful to all the people who took the time to discuss this topic with me, although they might not necessarily agree with my conclusions, most notably Greg Kobele, Yury Lander, Jason Merchant, Line Mikkelsen, Yakov G. Testelets, and especially Karlos Arregi. All mistakes and shortcomings are solely mine.

1 Following Pensalfini (2004), encyclopedic information (lexical roots) is barred from being realized in argument positions within vP. This leads to the dislocation of full non-absolutive DPs.

1 The verb and basic clause structure

1.1 Polysynthesis

All participants cross-referenced on verb, full DPs optional:

(1) sa- qa- [p- f-] [a- r-] ja- we- λευ defend -u
1SG.ABS- DIR- 2SG.IO- BEN- 3PL.IO- DAT- 3SG.ERG- CAUS- see -PST

‘He showed me to them for your sake.’ (Korotkova & Lander 2010)

Templatic morphology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument structure zone (A)</th>
<th>Pre-base elements (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>DIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Simplified verbal template (Arkadiev et al. 2009)


1. Uniform phonological form, resemble free-standing pronouns (Table 2):

2. Anaphors and relativizers are marked on the head predicate or nominal analogous to personal markers, in the morphological slot designated for the corresponding argument:

(2) zeć’ε čaf-xe-τ z-α-λευ defend-3PL.ERG-see

‘All the people see themselves.’ (Letuchiy 2010)
1.2 Morphological ergativity

Manifests itself in:

1. Verbal cross-reference: designated position for absolutive (intransitive subject and direct object) versus ergative transitive subject (Table 1).

2. Case marking:

- \( r \) (ABS) intransitive subject
  - direct object (3a)
  - transitive agents (3b)
  - applicatives (3c)
  - possessors (4)
  - complements of postpositions (5)

- \( m \) (OBL) transitive agents
  - applicatives (3b)
  - possessors (4)

3. Suffixal number agreement – only with the absolutive argument:

2. Non-configurationality

The behavior of full DPs suggests non-configurationality.

1. **Free word order and radical pro-drop (1):**

2. **No weak crossover effects**

\(^2\)me is a portmanteau morpheme that can optionally replace -xe-m ‘PL-OBL’.
Dimensions of (Non)configurationality: Argument Structure in Adyghe
LSA Annual Meeting, 7-10 January 2016

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3 Syntactic ergativity


1. $A'$-extraction (relativization): absolutive unmarked, all other participants marked (by prefix identical to reflexive pronoun, i.e. resembles resumption $^4$)

14. a. $\mathbf{\dot{c}}\'\text{ale-}m$ ap$\text{c}^\prime$-r $a$-q$^\prime$-wata-r
   boy-OBL glass-ABS 3SG.ERG-break-PST
   ‘The boy broke the glass.’

b. $[l_1(\text{ERG})$ ap$c\text{c}^\prime$-r $z_o$-q$^\prime$-wata-re] $\mathbf{\dot{c}}\text{ale-r}_1$
   glass-ABS REL.ERG-break-PST boy-ABS
   ‘the boy that broke the glass’

15. a. se $\text{txa}\text{lo}-r$ s-?w
   I book-ABS 1SG.ERG-hold
   ‘I am holding the book.’

b. $[s_1(\text{ABS})$ s-?w] $\text{txa}\text{lo}-r_1$
   I 1SG.ERG-hold book-ABS
   ‘the book that I am holding’

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3. Co-referent/bound arguments may be omitted, regardless of position in matrix or embedded clause or syntactic status of embedded clause $^3$

(12) a. $\text{p\text{s}a\text{s}e-}r_1$(SUBJ) $q_e$-io-ur $[\text{pro}_1(10)$
   girl-ABS DIR-cry-PST
   $s_o$-z-\$e-\text{de-g}^\prime w^\prime a\text{\textsc{\textae}}-\text{m}$
   1SG.ABS-REL.TMP-3SG.IO-COM-talk-OBL
   ‘The girl started crying, when I started talking to her.$_1$’

b. $\text{pro}_1$(SUBJ) $q_e$-io-ur $[\text{p\text{s}a\text{s}e-m}_1$(10)
   DIR-cry-PST girl-ABS
   $s_o$-z-\$e-\text{de-g}^\prime w^\prime a\text{\textsc{\textae}}-\text{m}$
   1SG.ABS-REL.TMP-COM-talk-OBL
   ‘The girl started crying, when I started talking to her$_1$ (lit. She$_1$
   started crying, when I started talking to the girl$(_1)$’ (Testelets 2009:691)

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$^3$This is reminiscent of the Backward Raising, argued for Adyghe by Potsdam & Polinsky (2012). Backward Raising is argued to track the ergative argument of transitive verbs and absolutive argument of intransitive verbs; the data presented here suggests that the phenomenon is not restricted to clausal complements or to a single type of predication.

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2. $\text{A'}$-movement of possessors: some dialects allow only for absolutive (Shapsug; [Lander to appear]): relativization out of other arguments requires restructuring.

(17) a. [škola$m$ $\varnothing$-jø-wanaša]$(\text{ABS})$ be mašew
school-OBL 3SG.PR-POS-ROOF not long ago
a-relase
3PL.ERG-color.PST
‘They colored the roof of the school not so long ago.’

b. škol-ew $[t_1(\text{POSS}) z$-jø-wanaša]$(\text{ABS})$ be mašew
school-ADV REL.PR-POS-ROOF not long ago
a-relase-r
3PL.ERG-color.PST-ABS
‘the school whose roof they colored not so long ago’

(18) a. [č’eleješak$^w$-m $\varnothing$-jø-tetrad]$(\text{IO})$
pupil-OBL 3SG.PR-POS-notebook
s- $\varnothing$-je-pleštaše
1SG.ABS-3SG.IO-DAT-look.IPF
‘I was looking at the pupil’s copy-book.’

b. č’eleješak$^w$-ew $[t_1(\text{POSS}) z$-jø-tetrad]$(\text{ABS})$
pupil-ADV REL-PR-POS-notebook
sa-z-e-pleštaše-r
1SG.ABS-REL.IO-DAT-look.IPF-ABS
‘the pupil at whose copy-book I was looking (lit. the pupil whose copy-book is what I am looking at)’

3. Word order: in internally headed relative clauses, internal head (marked with -ew ‘ADV’) may not intervene between absolutive argument and predicate.

(19) xet $[[\text{č’er}$-e]-$\text{če}$-weš].ew
who you.PL person-famous-ADV DIR-2PL.IO-LOC-leave.PST-ABS
‘What famous person comes from your people?’ [Lander to appear]

(20) $[\varnothing$-m]$_{\text{ERG}} [\text{qebar-ew}] q$-a, $\text{?}^\text{w}$-ete$\text{s’}$-t$\text{o}$-m
head-OBL news-ADV DIR-3SG.ERG-tell.FUT-OBLL
č’č’-č’p$\text{e}$š-ep$\text{e}$-š$\text{a}$
re-ques’tor […]
impatiently POSS.family wait.IPPl
‘The family waited impatiently for the story the head would tell…’ [Lander to appear]

(21) a. $[\text{čaf-ew}]$ $[q$-aje-r$_1]$$_{\text{ABS}}$ $\varnothing$-$\text{z}$-šxare-r
person-ADV cheese-ABS 3SG.ABS-REL-ERG-eat.DYN-ABS
herezaaew s’$\text{at}$
is content
‘The person eating cheese is content’

b. $[{q}$-aje-r$_1]$$_{\text{ABS}}$ $[\text{čaf-ew}]$ $\varnothing$-$\text{z}$-šxare-r
cheese-ABS person-ADV 3SG.ABS-REL-ERG-eat.DYN-ABS
herezaaew s’$\text{at}$
is content
‘The person eating cheese is content’ [Lander to appear]

(22) a. $[\text{tour}$-ak$^w$-ew] $[\varnothing$-aje-r$_1]$$_{\text{ABS}}$ $\varnothing$-še-$\text{p}$-teq$^w$-are-r
thief-ADV gold-ABS 3SG.ABS-REL.IO-LOC-spill.PST-ABS
‘the thief from whose hands the gold spilled’

b. $[{\varnothing}$-aje-r$_1]$$_{\text{ABS}}$ $[\text{tour}$-ak$^w$-ew] $\varnothing$-še-$\text{p}$-teq$^w$-are-r
gold-ABS thief-ADV 3SG.ABS-REL.IO-LOC-spill.PST-ABS
Expected: ‘the thief from whose hands the gold spilled’ [Lander 2009:624]

Summary:

Restrictions on $\text{A'}$-extraction point towards syntactic ergativity in Polinsky’s (in press) terms; may be accounted for by high licensing of absolutive (Coon et al. 2014). High licensing correlates with (leftmost) surface position and case assignment.

Word order restrictions suggest that the absolutive DP forms a constituent with the predicate, to the exclusion of all other arguments.

4 Syntactic accusativity

Accusativity manifests itself in:
1. **Anaphor binding:**

(23)  z-ja-wač’-a-ır  \(_{\text{erg}} > \text{abs} \)

\[ \text{refl.abs-3sg.erg-kill-pst} \]

‘He killed himself.’

(24)  m’amäženč’e  sa-z-e-ploač’-a-ır  \(_{\text{mirr} - \text{ins}} \)

\[ \text{1sg.abs-refl.1o-date-look-pst} \]

‘I looked at myself in the mirror.’ (Arkadiev et al. 2009:64)

2. **Argument encoding in nominalizations (Ershova 2015):**

(a) [pغاš-e-m  ja-lere-thač’-a-ır]  \(_{\text{erg}} > \text{poss} \)

\[ [\text{girl-oBl}_1 \text{erg} \ \text{poss} - [\text{dish}_1 \text{abs} - \text{wash} - \text{nml}] \text{abs} > \text{inc} \]

sjezeš’ow  \[ 1sg.\text{abs} - \text{tire} - \text{pst} \]

‘I’m tired of the girl’s dish washing.’

(b) # [lare-me  ja-pšěš-e-thač’-a-ır]  \(_{\text{abs} > \text{poss}} \)

\[ [\text{dish}_1 \text{pl} - \text{obl} ]_2 \text{abs} - [\text{girl}_1 \text{erg} - \text{wash} - \text{nml}] \text{abs} > \text{inc} \]

sjezeš’ow  \[ 1sg.\text{abs} - \text{tire} - \text{pst} \]

Expected: ‘I’m tired of the girl’s dish washing.’ (‘Seems as if the dishes are washing the girl’s abs.’)

3. **Addressee of imperatives**

(27)  wə-ma-ho  \(_{\text{erg}} > \text{abs} \)

\[ 2sg.\text{erg} - \text{neg-carry} \]

‘don’t carry it’

(28)  s’am-bo-je-‡  ma tšaλo-m  \(_{\text{abs} > \text{io}} \)

\[ 2pl.abs-3sg.1o-date - \text{read this book-obl} \]

‘Read this book.’ (Kuznetsova 2009:289–290)

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**Summary:** Patterns pointing to accusativity are local: anaphor binding expressed within verb; the nominalized projection is smaller than TP; imperative clauses can be argued to involve a functional head that selects for VoiceP.

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5 **Summary**

- Polysynthetic verb highly configurational with fixed positions for argument markers, while behavior of full DPs suggests non-configurationality.
- Resumption triggered by relativization of non-absolutive arguments suggests that they are “trapped” within a phase, while the absolutive is not (cf. Coon et al. 2014).
- Word order restrictions in relative clauses suggest that the absolutive DP forms a constituent with the predicate, to the exclusion of other arguments.
- Restrictions on A’-extraction out of non-absolutive arguments point towards their adjoined position.
- Patterns pointing to accusativity are local, possibly restricted to vP.

6 **Building the clause**

6.1 **Syntactic accusativity in vP**

- vP is organized based on agentivity: more agentive argument c-commands less agentive (internal) argument. Structure of transitive predicate with applicative in (29).

- VoiceP (projection selecting for vP) is a phase: if anaphor binding is analyzed as an Agree relation (Reuland 2011; Antonenko 2012), restriction of binding to phase comes naturally.

- Nominalizations are formed by a nominalizer selecting for vP, within which the ergative or absolutive intransitive subject is the highest argument.

- Functional head introducing imperative force (e.g. Jussive in Zanutttini et al. 2012) may merge low, selecting for VoiceP.

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5 It is unclear if Adyghe makes a distinction between low and high applicatives (Pylkkänen 2008); the structures offered here assume that applicatives are merged high, but this question remains open for future research.
6.2 Deriving syntactic ergativity

6.2.1 Case licensing and high absolutive

- \(\hat{v}\) and \(\text{Appl}\) assign case to their specifiers (cf. ergative as inherent case in [Legate 2008; Coon et al. 2014] etc.). At the time \(T\) is merged, the only active DP is the complement of \(V\).

- Direct object raises to Spec,\(TP\) to check EPP feature on \(T\); \(T\) assigns absolutive case and agrees with \(\text{DP}_{\text{ABS}}\) in number (here marked as \(\phi\)).

6.2.2 Phasehood and restrictions on extraction

- \(\text{VoiceP}\) is a phase ⇒ for \(\text{DP}_{\text{ABS}}\) to raise to Spec,\(TP\), it must first land in Spec,\(\text{VoiceP}\).

- With the specifier of \(\text{VoiceP}\) occupied, all other arguments are trapped in their positions.

- \(A'\)-movement of non-absolutive arguments repaired via resumption (i.e. \(\text{REL}=\text{REFL}\)).

6.3 DP dislocation and non-configurationality

- Adyghe is a language that bans encyclopedic information from being realized in argument positions within \(vP\), based on [Pensalfinis 2004] typology of non-configurational languages.

- \(vP\) can only host functional features, i.e. pronominal clitics.

- DPs relating to these argument positions are dislocated and adjoined to CP, as proposed for non-configurational languages by [Jelinek 1984] and [Baker 1996]. There they are assigned default case – oblique -\(m\).
• **Absolutive is special:** DP$_{ABS}$ in Spec,TP is not necessarily dislocated (but can be subsequently scrambled). In (32) DP$_{ABS}$ forms a constituent with TP to the exclusion of all other arguments; it is also the only DP in an argument position.

• ⇒ DP$_{ABS}$ is most accessible for extraction and least flexible in respect to word order.

(31)

(32)

7 Conclusion

Adyghe argument structure can be derived through a combination of parameters: VoiceP as a phase and binding locality domain, high licensing of the absolutive and a ban on realization of encyclopedic information in argument positions within vP.

References


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