

## Applicative Constructions in Abzakh – a West Circassian Dialect

Mezane Konuk\*

### Abstract

This paper analyses the applicative constructions in Abzakh dialect spoken in the Yeleme village in Antalya, Turkey. Abzakh is a dialect of West Circassian which belongs to the Northwest Caucasian language family (NWC). The present paper focuses on the morphosyntactic properties of the applicative constructions in Abzakh, which are also attested in the standardized West Circassian spoken in the Caucasus. The analysis shows that Abzakh has seventeen applicative markers, thirteen of which are locative applicatives. The applicative constructions in Abzakh are non-direct applicative constructions in that they do not promote an adjunct argument to a direct object position but to an indirect object position. Abzakh makes a wide use of applicative markers, i.e. in reciprocal & reflexive constructions, in relativisation and in factive complementation. Thus, compared to the applicative constructions in standard West Circassian, Abzakh spoken in the Yeleme village stays conservative in terms of morphosyntactic and semantic properties.

**Keywords:** Applicative constructions, Circassian, Adyghe, non-direct applicatives.

### Batı Çerkesçesinin Abzah Lehçesinde Aplikatif Yapılar

#### Özet

Bu makalede Antalya'nın Yeleme köyünde konuşulan Abzah lehçesindeki aplikatif yapılar incelenmektedir. Abzah, Kuzeybatı Kafkas dil ailesine dahil olan Çerkesçenin batı lehçelerinden biridir. Bu makale, Abzah lehçesinde bulunan ve Kafkasya'da konuşulan yazı ve edebiyat dilinde de tespit edilen aplikatif yapıların yapısal ve sözdizimsel özelliklerine odaklanmaktadır. Analiz göstermektedir ki Abzah lehçesi on üçü lokatif olmak üzere toplamda on yedi aplikatif eke sahiptir. Abzakh lehçesindeki aplikatif yapılar direkt olmayan aplikatif yapılardır. Yine

---

\* Mezane Konuk – Doctor in linguistics, affiliated member of LACITO - CNRS (Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale – Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). E-mail: mezanekonuk@gmail.com, ORCID 0009-0009-8704-4092

(Received/Gönderim: 10.04.2023; Accepted/Kabul: 30.05.2023)

Abzakh lehçesi, dönüşlü ve işteş yapılardan yan cümleciklere kadar birçok yapıda aplikatif eklerini kullanır. Yazı ve edebiyat dili olarak kabul edilen Batı Çerkesçesi ile karşılaştırıldığında yapısal ve sözdizimsel açıdan benzer özellikler gösterir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aplikatif yapılar, Çerkesçe, Adıge, direkt olmayan aplikatif yapılar.

### **Introduction**

This paper analyses the applicative constructions in Abzakh dialect spoken in the Yeleme village in Antalya, Turkey. From typological point of view, the term “applicative” is defined by Peterson (39) as follows:

In terms of their morphosyntax, applicative constructions are constructions, or sentential structures, which involve a participant that normally wouldn't be instantiated in a core object relation, but rather as an oblique of one or another sort, in a core (usually direct object) instantiation. There must be overt marking of the construction in the verbal complex, although the marking may be simply homophonous, or nearly so, with the element that would have served as the oblique marker. The construction should also be highly productive across a significant portion of the verbal lexicon (all verbs, all transitive verbs, etc.).

The properties of the applicative constructions may vary from one language to another. The propositions for the terminology to analyze the applicative constructions will be discussed in the section 3.

The paper is structured as follows: Before starting the morphosyntactic analysis, a brief information on the Northwest Caucasian languages and on the Circassian language will be given in the first part. In the second part, the morphosyntactic properties of the Abzakh dialect are reminded. The third part deals with the morphosyntactic properties of the applicative constructions in Abzakh. The use of applicative markers in reciprocal & reflexive constructions and in subordinate clauses are briefly discussed in the fourth part. In this paper, only the morphosyntactic properties of the applicative constructions in Abzakh is discussed, the sociolinguistic aspects including dominant language influence on the language are disregarded.

### Northwest Caucasian languages

Abzakh is a dialect of the West Circassian branch of the Circassian language which belongs to the Northwest Caucasian language family (NWC). The table below shows the languages of this family and the dialects of the Circassian language. The schema below is based on the analysis of Catherine Paris' classification.

- Circassian
  - o East Circassian
    - Kabardian
    - Besleney
  - o West Circassian
    - Abzakh
    - Shapsugh
    - Temirgoy
    - Bzhedugh
- Abkhaz-Abaza
  - o Abkhaz
  - o Abaza
- Ubykh

*Table 1: Table of the Northwest Caucasian languages (based on Paris, Système phonologique et phénomènes phonétiques dans le parler besney de Zennun Köyü, Tcherkesse oriental, 25-26).*

For the terminology adopted here, the *Circassian language* refers both to *Adyghe* and *Kabardian*, which are referred in this paper as *West Circassian* and *East Circassian* respectively. The terms *Adyghe* and *Kabardian* are used in the Russian linguistic terminology, following the historical developments in the Caucasus. After the October Revolution in 1917, in coordination with the linguistic policies of The Soviet Russia, the Baksan sub-dialect of the Kabardian dialect was accepted as the official language (Paris, 26-27), which is now accepted as standard East Circassian spoken in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria in the Russian Federation. For the Standard West Circassian, which is the standard language of the Republic of Adyghea now, the Temirgoy dialect was chosen as the literary language in 1918 (Paris, 27). Therefore, the West Circassian and the East Circassian are the

standardized forms of the Temirgoy and Kabardian dialects respectively. Yet in this paper, only the data on the Abzakh dialect collected in Yeleme village in Antalya is discussed, ignoring the standardized dialects spoken in the Caucasus.<sup>1</sup>

Since the exile in 1864, the sociolinguistic panorama of the Circassian language has changed considerably. The standard West Circassian is based on the Temirgoy dialect and spoken in the Republic of Adygea in the Caucasus in Russian Federation. Bzhedugh and Shapsugh dialects are spoken both in the Caucasus and in the diaspora spread over the different countries in the Middle East. However, the Abzakh dialect is mainly spoken by the diaspora, only a limited number of speakers can be found in the Hakurinehabl village in Caucasus. Therefore, the dialect analyzed in this paper can be defined as a diasporic dialect. The map below illustrates the location of the Yeleme village in Turkey:



*Map 1: Location of the Yeleme village*

---

<sup>1</sup> The data comes from the corpus collected during the fieldworks conducted in Yeleme in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2022. I would like to express my gratitude to ED 612-Sciences du langage - l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle and to LACITO-CNRS for the financial support. Thank you to all my consultants as well. All the shortcomings are mine.

According to UNESCO, Circassian language is considered to be a vulnerable language but not an endangered language: « *Despite the turbulent history, the endangerment status of the extant Abkhaz-Adyge [Abkhaz-Circassian] languages is no worse than vulnerable.* ») (Moseley, 41) However, the transmission of the language to the younger generations is worrisome because of the linguistic policies of the countries in which the language is spoken. And yet, the situation in diaspora is worse than in the Caucasus. For the Abzakh dialect spoken in Yeleme, it can be said that only up to 150 speakers can be found and the transmission of the language to the younger generations has stopped, which reflects the situation of the most of the Circassian villages in the diaspora. Specifically speaking for the Yeleme, the fact that the villagers dwell in the city center of Antalya for the economic and educational reasons – and thus going to the village only for the summer period – and that the arising majority of the newly arrived dwellers in Yeleme – mostly Turkish dwellers and to some extent Circassians speaking the other dialects – makes the transmission of the Abzakh dialect to the younger generations harder. Therefore, considering the current linguistic situation, the analysis of the grammar not only of the Abzakh dialect spoken in Yeleme but that of the other dialects of Circassian as well can be considered to be an important task.

### **1. General morphosyntactic properties of the Abzakh dialect**

West Caucasian languages are known for having a highly complex verbal system. This complexity is due to many affixes added to the verbal stem. The table 2 visualizes the affixes that can be added to the verb in Abzakh.

morpheme	position
Absolute argument	-8
Cislocative marker	-7
Applicative argument	-6
Applicative marker	-5
Oblique argument <sub>IO</sub>	-4
Oblique argument <sub>AGT</sub>	-3
Dynamic marker	-2
Causative	-1
Root	0
Directional morphemes	1
Mood	2
Aspect	3
3PL.ABS	4
Negation marker	5
Interrogation marker	6

Table 2: Structure of the finite verb form in Abzakh. (based on Konuk 208).

As presented in the table 2, the verb can not only have prefixes such as cislocative marker, applicative markers and (a) causative marker(s) but also affixes such as TAM (tense, aspect and mood) markers as well as the negation and the interrogation markers. As the applicative and the causative markers add one or more arguments on the verb, Abzakh is a transitivity language, which is attested by Arkadiev & Letuchiy (496) for the standard West Circassian (Adyghe) as well: « (...) Adyghe is a “transitivity” language, i.e. it has a lot of morphosyntactic devices which allow to add an argument to the valency structure of the verb, such as causative and a variety of applicatives. »

In Abzakh, like in other Circassian dialects, the core arguments are indexed in the verb. Before analyzing these transitivity affixes, all these core arguments indexed in the verb should be presented. The table 3 summarizes the syntactic roles of these arguments.

<b>Absolutif</b>	U term of the monovalent verbs
	P term of the bivalent transitive verbs
	A term of the bivalent intransitive verbs
	P term of the trivalent verbs
<b>Oblique</b>	A term of the bivalent transitive verbs
	R term of the bivalent intransitive verbs
	A term of the trivalent verbs
	R term of the trivalent verbs

Table 3: Case markers and syntactic roles of the arguments indexed in the verb<sup>2</sup>

The use of an applicative marker requires the indexation of the applicative argument as well; thus, following the terminology of Catherine Paris in *Traits communs de la syntaxe des langues du Caucase du Nord-ouest (Tcherkesse, abkhaz, oubykh)* (6), the applicative marker and the person marker can be considered as a preverbal bloc (*bloc préverbal* according to Paris and *applicative complex* according to Lander (3518)) and their place depends on the valency of the verb. Thus, briefly presenting the valency of the verbs in Abzakh would facilitate the reading of the present paper.

In Abzakh, verbs can be analyzed in three classes in terms of valency: Monovalent verbs, bivalent verbs and trivalent verbs. However, bivalent verbs are analyzed in two sub-categories according to their transitivity: Bivalent transitive verbs and bivalent intransitive verbs. For an analysis based on the term “transitivity”, Denis Cresseils’ definition is followed:

« – in transitive predication, the core arguments are A (the argument encoded like the agent of core transitive verbs) and P (the argument encoded like the patient of core transitive verbs);

– in intransitive predications, the core argument is the argument whose coding coincides with that of the unique argument of (a major class of) monovalent verbs. » (Cresseils, 28)

<sup>2</sup> Terminology adopted from Hélène Gérardin (39) : U term: unique argument, A term: agentive argument, P term: patientive argument, R term: recipient argument. S term is not used since it might be confused with the term ‘subject’, the definition of which might vary from one language to another.

Examples in Abzakh justifies the use of these terms. Monovalent verbs have one argument marked by absolutive and, apart from 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, this unique argument (U term) is obligatorily indexed in the verb. Examples 1(a) and 1(b) illustrate the phenomenon:

Ex (1a):

univərsətəjt-əm    sə-kʷe-ɸ  
university-OBL    1SG.ABS.U-go- PERF

«I went to the university.» (Or: “I studied at the university. / I have a bachelors degree.)

Ex (1b):

univərsətəjt-əm    kʷe-ɸɜ  
university-OBL    go-PERF

«S/he went to the university.» (Or : “S/he studied at he university. / S/he has a bachelors degree.)

Turning to the bivalent verbs, as stated above, they are divided into two groups according to the definition of the term “transitivity”. The bivalent transitive verbs are action verbs and the bivalent intransitive verbs are *verbes de visée*, which are defined by Gilbert Lazard (1994, 150-151) as «*des actions orientées en direction d’un objet sans nécessairement l’atteindre et l’affecter*»<sup>3</sup>. It is exactly how Catherine Paris (1991, 63) defines these verbs: «*un procès orienté dans la direction de quelque chose sans envisager un aboutissement*».<sup>4</sup> Therefore, on the one hand, we have the class of bivalent transitive verbs which have an agentive argument (A term) marked by the oblique case and a patientive argument (P term) marked by the absolutive case; on the other hand, we have the class of bivalent intransitive verbs which have an agentive

---

<sup>3</sup> «Actions oriented in the direction of an object without arriving at an endpoint and affecting it.»

<sup>4</sup> «A process oriented in the direction of something without aiming at realizing it.»



argument (A term) marked by the absolutive case, just like the U term of the monovalent verbs, but a recipient argument (R term) marked by the oblique case:

Syntactic level		absolutive argument + oblique argument + verb
Semantic level	Bivalent transitive verbs	Patient <sub>(ABS)</sub> + Agent <sub>(OBL)</sub> + verb
	Bivalent intransitive verbs	Agent <sub>(ABS)</sub> + Recipient <sub>(OBL)</sub> + verb

Table 4: The places of the arguments in the verb according to the semantic and syntactic levels

In example (2), we have a bivalent transitive verb ‘eat’ and in the example (3), we have a bivalent intransitive verb ‘read’.

Ex (2):

ʃəpsə pʼestə-r                      t-ʃxə-ʃt  
 shipsi.pʼaste-ABS/DEF      1PL.OBL.A-eat-CERT

«We are going to eat shipsi-pʼaste.»

Ex (3):

mə            txət-əm      t-j3-d̄33-ʃt  
 DEM<sub>PROX</sub>    book-OBL    1PL.ABS.A-3SG.OBL.R-read-CERT

«We are going to read/study this book.»

In trivalent verbs, like “say” in the example below, the agentif argument and the recipient argument are marked by the oblique case and the patientive argument is marked by the absolutive case. The order of the indexation of the arguments is : P term – R term – A term – verb.

Ex (4):

jətʔenɜ    nɜmɜʔ    zɜgʷɜrɜ    dɜhe    q-wɜ-s-ʔʷɜtɜ-n  
 then      another    thing      more    CIS-2SG.OBL.R-1SG.OBL.A-tell-PROB

«And then, I will tell you one more thing.»

It is a characteristic of the Abzakh that, if the absolutive argument is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, it is not marked on the verb, which is highly common across the languages of the world. In order to facilitate the reading, zero marker  $\emptyset$  is not used in the examples. Nevertheless, if we have a 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural as the absolutive argument, it can optionally be marked on the verb by the plural marker -xɜ.

In applicative constructions, as the applicative argument is an oblique argument, from syntactic point of view, the place of the applicative bloc in the verb is after the absolutive argument. The table (5) visualizes its place according to the valency of the verb:

Monovalent verbs	U Term + Applicative bloc + Verb
Bivalent transitive verbs and trivalent verbs	P Term + Applicative bloc + A Term + Verb
Bivalent intransitive verbs	A Term + Applicative bloc + P Term + Verb

*Table 5: Place of the applicative bloc in the verb*

After having pointed out the primary properties of the verbal system of Abzakh, we can briefly recall the main characteristics of the applicative constructions and analyze their characteristics in Abzakh.

### **Properties of the Applicative Constructions in Abzakh**

According to the definition given by Peterson above, in order to qualify a construction as an “applicative construction”, there must be a marker on the verb and this marker must promote an oblique argument to the core argument position. Apart from this property, this construction should be productive in the given language.

For the Abzakh, compare the following examples:

Ex (5a):

psəheləʒʷʒ    s-ʒ-ʃʔə  
 ravioli            1SG.OBL.A-DYN<sub>PRES</sub>-make

«I make (some) raviolis.»

In example (5a), the verb is a bivalent transitive verb who has an oblique agent and an absolutive patient. However, it is possible to add an adjunct which is marked by a postposition, *pejʒ* “for”:

Ex (5b) :

wʒ-j            pejʒ    psəheləʒʷʒ    s-ʒ-ʃʔə  
 2SG-OBL    for    ravioli            1SG.OBL.A-DYN<sub>PRES</sub>-make

«I make (some) raviolis for you.»

In example (5b), the adjunct marked by the postposition is not indexed in the verb. However, as shown in the example (5c), the use of the benefactive applicative marker *fʒ*- indexes an argument in the verb, *p*- “2SG.OBL”:

Ex (5c) :

(wʒ)    psəheləʒʷʒ    p-fʒ-s-ʒ-ʃʔə  
 2SG    ravioli            2SG.OBL.APPL-BEN-1SG.OBL.A-DYN<sub>PRES</sub>-make

«I make you (some) raviolis.»

Thus, having a special marker affixed to the verb and an adjunct promoted to the core argument status, Abzakh has clearly an applicative construction. However, its properties might be slightly different from that of the canonical applicative constructions (the constructions that promotes an adjunct to the direct object position) attested in a number of languages in the world in that the adjunct is not promoted to the direct object position.

Abzakh has a great number of affixes that mark the comitative, benefactive, malefactive, instrument and location. These markers are called as *préverbes* by Catherine Paris and Niaz Batouka:

Les préverbes sont des éléments pré-radicaux qui précisent certaines modalités de l'action. Un préverbe apparaît en fonction d'une situation donnée dont on donne la description précise lors de l'acte de communication. Il stipule le cadre spatial de l'action, le pour et le contre, la direction, l'accompagnement ... etc., il correspond en d'autres termes à ce que l'on peut appeler des indications situationnelles (Batouka, 69).<sup>5</sup>

Catherine Paris states that these affixes index their arguments in the verb and that they create a bloc:

Toujours en tcherkesse (mais vraisemblablement dans les deux autres langues aussi [l'abkhaz et l'oubykh]), tout préverbe apporte avec lui son 'actant' obligatoire, celui-ci le précède immédiatement et forme avec lui un bloc stable (...) (Paris, 6)<sup>6</sup>

The more recent works on West and East Circassian define these prefixes/preverbs as applicative markers:

The valency of Circassian verbs may be increased by applicative and other derivational formations, reflected in personal prefixes in the verb (Kumakhov and Vamling (56).

All NWC [Northwest Caucasian] languages have a productive causative as well as a considerable number of applicatives comprizing many specialized locative preverbs (Arkadiev et Lander, 409).

---

<sup>5</sup> "Preverbs are pre-radical elements that specify certain modalities of action. A preverb appears according to a given situation whose precise description is given during the act of communication. It stipulates the spatial framework of the action, the pros and cons, the direction, the accompaniment ... etc., it corresponds in other words to what can be called situational indications."

<sup>6</sup> "Still in Circassian (but probably in the other two languages as well [Abkhaz and Ubykh]), every preverb brings with it its obligatory 'actant', which immediately precedes it and forms with it a stable block (...)"

The more recent works also propose that the applicative marker creates a bloc together with the person marker that it indexes in the verb:

Applicative markers usually appear together with indirect object prefixes indexing the participant they introduce within so-called *applicative complexes*. The canonical applicative complex, then, consists of an indexing prefix immediately preceding an applicative prefix (Arkadiev et al., 5).

These prefixes/preverbs or applicative markers that are found in Abzakh spoken in Antalya can be visualized as follows:

Affix	Meaning	Glose
<i>d(3)-</i>	Comitative	COM
<i>f(3)-</i>	Benefactive	BEN
<i>ʃ<sup>w</sup>(3)-</i>	Malefactive	MAL
<i>r(3)-</i>	Instrumental	INST
	Many locatives	LOC <sub>MEANING</sub>

Table 6: *Applicative markers in Abzakh*

To the comitative, benefactive, malefactive and instrumental applicative markers, the locative applicative markers listed in the table (7) can be added:

Morpheme	Meaning
ʃʒ-	«there»
dʒ-	«there ( <i>close place</i> )»
xʒ-	«in (a mass)»
jə-	«in»
kʷʒʒʒʒʒʒʒʒ-	«into»
tʒj-	«on»
ʒʒ-	«under»
ʒʷə-	«in front of»
qʷʒ-	«behind»
pʒ-	«in front of (attached)»
bʒ-	«between»
gʷʒ-	«next to»
ʒə-	«behind» (action verbs)

Table 7: Locative applicative markers in Abzakh

The affixes presented in the tables (6) and (7) above promote an adjunct to a core argument position. Peterson argues that in most of the languages of the world, the applicative constructions promote an adjunct to the direct object position (Peterson 39). However, each language has its language specific properties. In standard West Circassian the applicative arguments are indirect objects of the given verb, they are marked by the oblique case. Thus Letuchiy considers the applicative constructions in standard West Circassian as noncanonical applicative constructions (2012, 337) : « *Adyghe does not have a canonical applicative which introduces a new direct object* ». Beck proposes the terms direct and indirect applicative constructions according to the fact that the language promotes an adjunct to the direct object position or not. His terminology is followed by Zúñiga and Kittilä (58) as well:

Direct applicatives are characterized by the introduced participant having direct object status, (...) while the latter's applied objects are nondirect or obliques.

When we analyze the examples in Abzakh, one can clearly observe that the applicative argument is not a direct object of the verb.

Ex (6) :

(w3)	mə	ʔel3-m	wə-d-j3-d̄ʒ3-ft
2SG	DEM <sub>PROX</sub>	child-OBL	2SG.ABS.A-COM-3SG.OBL.P-read-CERT

«You will read (that) with this guy.»

In the example above, we have a bivalent intransitive verb *j3d̄ʒ3n* “read” whose A term is marked by the absolutive case and R term (recipient) is marked by the oblique case. But as the personal pronouns are not marked by a case affix, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular is not marked by the absolutive marker in the example (6). However, it can be clearly seen that the applicative argument *mə ʔel3-m* “this guy” is marked by the oblique case. Thus, the comitative argument is marked in the same way that an indirect object would be marked. Thus, Abzakh has nondirect applicatives.

However, these *non-canonical applicative constructions* are not limited to the transitive verbs, as seen in the example (6) above. An applicative marker can mark a monovalent verb, a bivalent verb as well as a trivalent verb. Thus, these markers are highly productive in Abzakh. But another feature that requires our attention is that, especially with monovalent verbs, their use may be interpreted in a figurative meaning.

Ex (7a) :

†ʔə-r	p-f3-†ʔe-Ɂ
man-ABS/DEF	2SG.OBL.APPL-BEN-die-PERF

Litt: The man died to/for you.

«The man is crazy in love with you.»

Ex (7b):

w3	mə	ʔel3-m	wə-d3-kʔw3-ft
2SG	DEM <sub>PROX</sub>	guy-OBL	2SG.ABS.U-COM-go-CERT

«You will go with this guy. / You will marry this guy.»

With trivalent verbs, the benefactive applicative can be used in order to stress the dative argument, without any attempt to add a new one. Therefore, both of the examples below are grammatically correct and have the same meaning even though their different interpretations are possible according to an analysis on pragmatical level.

Ex (8a) (example (4) above is retaken):

jətʔenɜ nɜməʔ zəgʷɜrɜ dehe q-wɜ-s-ʔʷɜtɜ-n  
 then another thing more CIS-2SG.OBL.R-1SG.OBL.A-tell-PROB

«And then, I will tell you one more thing.»

Ex (8b) :

jətʔenɜ neməʔ zəgʷɜrɜ dehe qə-p-fɜ-s-ʔʷɜtɜ-n  
 then another thing more CIS-2SG.OBL.APPL-BEN-1SG.OBL.A-tell-PROB

«And then, I will tell you one more thing.»

Apart from the example (8b), the examples (9) and (10) below demonstrate that the semantic scope of the benefactive marker can be extended to the dative use of it as well.

Ex (9):

mə-j	wə-z-fɜ-kʔʷ-ɛɛ-ɜr	sɜ	zɜxɜ-s-hə-ɛ
DEM <sub>PROX</sub> -	2SG.ABS.U-oneself-BEN-go-	1SG	<hear>-1SG.OBL.A-
OBL	PERF-ABS		<hear>-PERF

«I heard that you came here.»

Ex (10):

heʔɜ-w	qə-t-fɜ-kʔʷ-ɛɛ-ɜx	dyzdʒɜ-m	q-jə-tʃʔə-x-əj
guest-	CIS-1.PL.OBL.APPL-BEN-	Düzce-	CIS-LOC <sub>IN</sub> -go_out-
ADV	come-PERF-3.PL.ABS.U	OBL	3.PL.ABS.U-CONV

«They came us as guest.»

Apart from the dative use of the benefactive marker, it might also express “potential”.



Ex (11a) :

sə-fɜ-txɜ-ft

1SG.ABS.U-BEN-write-CERT

«I will write him/her.»

Ex (11b) :

sə-fɜ-txə-ft

1SG.OBL.A-BEN-write-CERT

«I will be able to write.»

This use of the benefactive marker is only possible with the bivalent transitive verbs. The ə/ə alternation on the root final vowel shows us that in example (11a) the verb is intransitive while in (11b) it is transitive. This phenomenon attested also in the standard West Circassian is explained by Lander as non-canonical marking of the agent with the transitive constructions, a valid explanation for the Abzakh as well:

Further, with transitive stems certain applicative markers are regularly used for the non-canonical marking of agents; the cases in point include the “potential” construction, where the prefix corresponding to the potential (transitive) agent appears within a benefactive complex (...) (Lander, 3520).

To continue with the morphosyntactic properties of the applicative constructions, let me remind you that in Abzakh, even though the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular absolutive argument is not indexed in the verb, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular oblique argument – be it a P term or an A term – is obligatorily indexed. However, in applicative constructions, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular oblique applicative argument is not indexed in the verb.

Ex (12a):

mə qɜlɜm-əm sə-r-ɜ-txɜ

DEM<sub>PROX</sub> pen-OBL 1SG.ABS.U-INST-DYN<sub>PRES</sub>-write

«I write/am writing with this pen.»

But if we commute the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, we observe that it is clearly indexed, always in the oblique form:

Ex (12b) :

txəʈ-ər	mə	qəlɜm-xɜ	s-ɐ-r-ɜ-txə
book-ABS/DEF	DEM <sub>PROX</sub>	pen-PL	1SG.ABS.A-3PL.OBL.APPL-INST-DYN <sub>PRES</sub> -write

«I write/am writing the book with these pens.»

According to the work of Arkadiev and Lander, non-indexation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (oblique) applicative argument is the phenomenon attested in the standard West Circassian as well. The second line of the example (13) is the transcription in IPA.

Ex (13): (Arkadiev et Lander)

ɸ<sup>w</sup>eg<sup>w</sup>ə-m sə-tje-ha-ʒ'ə-ɸ

ɸ<sup>w</sup>ɜg<sup>w</sup>ə-m sə-tʃ-he-ʒ'ə-ɸ

road-OBL 1SG.ABS-LOC:on-enter-RE-PST

«I entered (lit. on the surface of) the road.»

The explication for zero marking of this 3<sup>rd</sup> person oblique is a complex issue and might be found if a diachronic or comparative study among the sister languages is conducted as future research. An alternative analysis of the indirect object involving a “dative” applicative and a zero 3.SG.OBL *jɜ*- object marker is proposed by Lander (3518): “*The dative complex includes the dative marker (j)e- (which under certain conditions appears as r-) and involves an indirect object whose semantic role can be determined on the basis of the semantics of the stem and need not be specified (...)*”. According to this proposition, the morpheme *jɜ* - is a dative applicative marker and the 3.SG.OBL is always zero marked. But in this paper, the morpheme *jɜ*- is considered to be 3SG.OBL form indexed in the verb according to its valency and not a dative applicative marker.

In Abzakh, verbs are classified primarily as dynamic verbs and static verbs. The use of applicative markers with dynamic verbs are

not obligatory in Abzakh. However, the static verbs like (to be in sitting position, to be in lying position, to be in standing position etc.) require the use of an applicative marker. This phenomenon is also attested in the standard West Circassian:

(...) applicative complexes are normally non-obligatory, although there are some *applicative tantum* predicates involving “bound” roots (e.g., in Circassian posture roots ‘sit’, ‘stand’, ‘lie’, as well as ‘be’, roots expressing directed motion such as ‘go in’ and ‘go out’ and some others) which cannot be used without locative preverbs introducing the landmark argument (...) (Arkadiev et al., 8).

In the example (14), the static verb “to be in sitting position” is obligatorily marked by the locative applicative *ʃə-*:

Ex (14):

wənɜ-m            sə-ʃə-s  
 maison-OBL    1SG.ABS.U-LOC<sub>THERE</sub>-sit

Litt: I am in a sitting position there at home.  
 «I am at home.»

The locative applicative markers in Circassian are lesser studied compared to the benefactive, malefactive, instrumental and comitative markers. Because of the non-indexation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person oblique applicative argument, one can easily think that they behave more likely as the way the cislocative marker *qV-* behaves. However, a close analysis with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural show that these markers are among the applicative markers just like the benefactive, malefactive, comitative and instrumental markers are.

Ex (15):

tsʔəf-xɜ-r	dʒə	qelɜ	jən-xɜ-mɜ	je-dɜ-s-əx
people-PL-	now	city	big-PL-	3PL.OBL.APPL-LOC <sub>THERE(CLOSE)</sub> -sit-
ABS			OBL.PL	3PL.ABS.U

«Now, people live in big cities.»

In the example above, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural (3PL.OBL.APP) that refers to the locative argument (big cities) is overtly indexed in the verb as 3PL.OBL.APPL *je-*.

The locative applicatives have more specified meanings (see Konuk, 321-36 for more detailed semantic description of the locative applicatives). But the localization can be marked both on the noun phrase by the instrumental case marker and on the verb by the locative applicative marker *də-*:

Ex (16) :

t <sup>w</sup> ərəkəjə-m	də-s-əx	d <sup>w</sup> əd <sup>h</sup> d <sup>h</sup> zə	ʃənəq <sup>w</sup> ə-m-tʃ <sup>h</sup> ə
Turkey-OBL	LOC <sub>THERE(CLOSE)</sub> -sit-	Düzce	region-OBL-INST
	3.PL.ABS.U		

Litt : In Turkey they sit there, (near)by the Düzce region.  
 «They live in Turkey, nearby the Düzce region.»

Another particularity of the locative applicatives is that they can be used as derivational markers as well:

Ex (17):

d <sup>h</sup> zə	fədzə	təxət-xə-r	qə-ʔə-d-ɛz-tʃ <sup>h</sup> ə-ɛ	tə
DEM	like	book-PL- ABS/DEF	CIS-LOC <sub>UNDER</sub> -1PL.OBL.C <sub>EUR</sub> -CAUS- go_out-ACMP	1.PL

Litt : We made the books gone out under CISLOCATIF like (litt: looking like) that.  
 «We published that kind of books.»

It is not uncommon that the locative applicatives behave as derivational markers. This use of the applicatives is attested in Laz (a South Caucasian language) as well: « *A partir d'une même racine, différents verbes peuvent donc être formés à l'aide des préverbes spatiaux (...)*<sup>7</sup> » (Lacroix, 404)

Furthermore, the complexity of the verbal system of Abzakh can still be rendered more complex: More than one applicative

---

<sup>7</sup> «From the same root, different verbs can be formed with the help of the spatial preverbs (...).»

marker can be affixed to the verb. But using more than one applicative marker seems to be less productive.

Ex (18):

sə-p-f-e-d3-g<sup>wə</sup>ʃ'e-ɸ

1SG.ABS.U-2SG.OBL.APPL-BEN-3PL.OBL.APPL-COM-talk-PERF

«I talked to them for you.» / «I talked to them on behalf of you.»

To summarize the morphosyntactic properties of the applicative constructions in Abzakh, first, one can observe that the applicative argument marker precedes the applicative marker and that they create the applicative bloc (or the applicative complex). Second, Abzakh has nondirect applicative constructions in that the applicative argument is an indirect object. From syntactic point of view, adding an applicative argument does not reorganize the syntactic structure of the non-applicative construction.

### Applicative markers in reciprocal & reflexive constructions and in subordinate clauses

The applicative markers are highly productive in Abzakh. One should also note that the applicatives can be used in reflexive and reciprocal constructions. In the example (19), we have a reflexive construction as the predicate of the subordinate clause, where the locative applicative *ʃə-* marks the non-finite form of the verb “put”:

Ex (19):

ʃəβən-x3-r	zə-ʃə-mə-ʃx-m3	dəjnə-zə	səmed33	χ <sup>wə</sup> ə-ʃt
clothe-PL-	oneself-LOC <sub>THERE</sub> -NEG-	freeze-	sick	be-
ABS	put-if	CONV		CERT

Litt: The clothes if he does not put on himself (take out), freezing, he will become sick.

«If the does not take his clothes off, freezing, he will become sick.»

(In the context: the clothes are wet.)

The use of the applicative marker is not obligatory in reflexive constructions it is used when the context requires. However, in some reciprocal constructions, the instrumental applicative marker is obligatorily used:

Ex (20):

tə-z3-r-3-†zɤ<sup>wə</sup>

1PL.ABS.P-oneself-INST-DYN<sub>PRES</sub>-see

Litt: We see by oneself.

«We see each other.»

Ex (21):

ʃ<sup>wə</sup>-qə-z3-r-3-p†ə

2PL.ABS.A-CIS-oneself-INST-DYN<sub>PRES</sub>-look

Litt : You CISLOCATIF by oneself look.

«You look at each other.»

In the reciprocal constructions above, we have a bivalent transitive verb in the example (20) and a bivalent intransitive verb in the example (21). In both examples, it is the instrumental marker *rV-* which indexes the invariable person marker *z3-* and it is the applicative complex that makes the reciprocal interpretation possible. Thus, the use of the applicative complex (the instrumental marker and the invariable person marker) is obligatory in the reciprocal constructions of the bivalent verbs.

In Abzakh, the verbo-nominal opposition is weak. Thus, applicative markers are also attested in non-finite forms, which are the predicates of the relative clauses and the factive complementations (terminology adopted from Letuchiy, 91). In Abzakh, the predicates of the subordinate clauses are non-finite forms of the verbs and the structure of factive complementation clauses resemble to that of the relative clauses. In Abzakh, all the arguments can be relativized, and all the oblique arguments are relativised in the same way: the indexed person marker of the reletivised argument is replaced by the invariable person marker *zV-*. In the example (22), the dative argument (the boy) of the

relative clause is relativised and its coreferencing person marker is replaced by the invariable person marker creating an applicative bloc (or applicative complex) with the benefactive marker.

Ex (22):

[txəʃ	wə-zə-f-j3-dʒə-ɸ3]	ʔel3-r
book	2SG.ABS.A-oneself-BEN-3SG.OBL.R-read-PERF	boy-ABS/DEF
zə	mef3	gʷ3r3-m
one	day	any-OBL
j3j3j3ər3w	j3-dʒ3-ft	
himself	3SG.OBL.R-read-CERT	

«One day, the boy to whom you are reading a book will read by himself.»

In factive complementations, the applicative blocs *z3r3-* in the example (23) and *zəf3-* in the example (24) are glossed as “that” and “why” respectively. However, these applicative complexes are a the combination of the invariable personal marker *zV-* and the instrumental marker *r3-* or the benefactive marker *f3-*.

Ex (23) :

[e-r	z3r3-səmədʒ3-r]	s-3-fʔ3
DEM <sub>DISTAL</sub> -ABS	que-sick-ABS	1SG.OBL.A-DYN <sub>PRES</sub> -know

« I know that s/he is sick. »

Ex (24):

[səmədʒ3	sə-zəf3-χʷə-ɸ3-r]	s-3-fʔ3
ill	1SG.ABS.U-why-become-PERF-ABS	1SG.OBL.A-DYN <sub>PRES</sub> -know

« I know why I became ill. »

Thus, the use of the applicative markers in reciprocal and reflexive constructions as well as in subordinate clauses proves that they are highly productive in Abzakh.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis on the applicative constructions in the Abzakh dialect spoken in the Yeleme village in Antalya shows that it has seventeen applicative markers, thirteen of which are locative applicatives. From morphological point of view, the person markers precede the applicative marker and they create the applicative bloc. However, one should bear in mind that the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular is not indexed in the verb. From syntactic point of view, as pointed out for the standard West Circassian, the applicative constructions in Abzakh are non-direct applicative constructions in that they do not promote an adjunct argument to a direct object position but to an indirect object position. Also, the applicative markers are highly productive in Abzakh, i.e. in reciprocal & reflexive constructions, in relativisation and in factive complementation. From semantic point of view, the benefactive applicative marker might have the “potential” interpretation only with the transitive bivalent verbs and some of the locative applicatives might function as derivational affixes. To sum up, if compared to the applicative constructions in standard West Circassian, Abzakh spoken in the Yeleme village stays conservative in terms of morphosyntactic and semantic properties.

#### **List of abbreviations:**

- 1SG.ABS.A: 1st person singular absolutive, agentive argument
- 1SG.OBL.A: 1st person singular oblique, agentive argument
- 1SG.ABS.U: 1st person singular absolutive, unique argument
- 1PL.ABS.A : 1st plural absolutive, agentive argument
- 1PL.OBL.A : 1st plural oblique agentive argument
- 2SG.ABS.A : 2nd person absolutive, agentive argument
- 2SG.ABS.U : 2nd person absolutive, unique argument
- 2SG.OBL.APPL: 2nd person singular oblique, applicative argument
- 2SG.OBL.R : 2nd person singular oblique, recipient argument
- 3SG.OBL.P : 3rd person singular oblique, patientive argument
- 3PL.ABS.U : 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural absolutive, unique argument
- 3PL.OBL.APPL : 3rd person plural oblique applicative argument
- ABS: Absolutive
- BEN : Benefactive
- CERT : Certainty mood



COM: Comitative  
CONV: Converb  
CIS: Cislocative  
DEM<sub>PROX</sub>: Proximal demonstrative  
DYN<sub>PRES</sub>: Dyntamique present  
INST: Instrumental applicative  
LOC<sub>THERE(CLOSE)</sub>: Locative applicative marker<sub>there(close)</sub>  
OBL : Oblique  
OBL.PL : Plural oblique  
PERF: Perfective aspect  
PL: Plural  
PROB : Probability mood

### Citations

Arkadiev, Peter, et al. « Applicative constructions in the Northwest Caucasian languages ». *Applicative Constructions. A Comparative Handbook*, ed. Denis Creissels et Fernando Zúñiga.

Arkadiev, Peter, et Yury Lander. « The Northwest Caucasian languages ». *The Oxford handbook of the languages of the Caucasus*, 2020, p. 369-446.

Arkadiev, Peter, et Alexander Letuchiy. « Prefixes and Suffixes in the Adyghe Polysynthetic Wordform : Types of Interaction ». *Languages and Cultures in the Caucasus*, 2011.

Beck, David. « A taxonomy and typology of Lushootseed valency-increasing suffixes ». *International Journal of American Linguistics*, vol. 75, n° 4, 2009, p. 533-69.

Creissels, Denis. «Transitivity, Valence and Voice. European summer school in linguistic typology. Porquerolles». *Unpublished manuscript. Obtenido de [https://typoling2016.sciencesconf.org/conference/typoling2016/pages/ESSLT\\_20\\_16\\_Creissels\\_Syllabus.pdf](https://typoling2016.sciencesconf.org/conference/typoling2016/pages/ESSLT_20_16_Creissels_Syllabus.pdf)*, 2016.

Gérardin, Hélène. «Valence et classification typologique des verbes en géorgien ». *Tous les chemins mènent à Paris. Studies inspired by Agnes Korn*, édité par Murad Suleymanov et Dorian Pastor, DR. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2022.

Konuk, Mezane. *Description grammaticale de l'abzakh - tcherkesse occidentale*. Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3, 2022.

Kumakhov, Mukhadin, et Karina Vamling. *Circassian Clause Structure*. Malmö University, vol. 1, 2009.

Lacroix, René. *Description du dialecte laze d'Arhavi (caucasique du sud, Turquie)*. *Grammaire et textes*. Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2009, [http://theses.univ-lyon2.fr/documents/lyon2/2009/lacroix\\_r](http://theses.univ-lyon2.fr/documents/lyon2/2009/lacroix_r).

Lander, Yury. « Word formation in Adyghe ». *Word-Formation. An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe*, vol. 5, 2016, p. 3508-26.

Lazard, Gilbert. *L'actance*. Presses Universitaires de France, PUF, 1994.

Letuchiy, A. B. « Agreement with complement clauses in Adyghe ». *Rhema. Pema*, n° 4, 2016, p. 83-104.

Letuchiy, Alexander. « Ergativity in the Adyghe system of valency changing derivations ». *Ergativity, Valency and Voice*, édité par Gilles Authier et Katharina Haude, DE GRUYTER, 2012. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110227734.323>.

Moseley, Christopher. *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. Unesco, 2010, <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>.

Paris, Catherine. *L'abzakh (dialecte du tcherkesse occidental), parler de Berike, Syrie*. 1991, p. 27-66.

---. *Système phonologique et phénomènes phonétiques dans le parler besney de Zennun Köyü, Tcherkesse oriental*. C. Klincksieck, 1974.

---. *Traits communs de la syntaxe des langues du Caucase du Nord-ouest (Tcherkesse, abkhaz, oubykh)*. date inconnue. Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire de la Sorbonne, Salle de réserve.

Peterson, David A. *Applicative constructions*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Zúñiga, Fernando, et Seppo Kittilä. *Grammatical voice*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.