Abkhaz is one of the three languages comprising the Abkhazo-Adyghean, or West Caucasian branch of North Caucasian linguistic family (the other branch being Nakh-Daghestanian, or East Caucasian). Abkhaz is spoken by approximately 100,000 people in the former Soviet Union (mainly in the Republic of Abkhazia, Caucasus), and by at least the same number of speakers in Turkey and some Middle east countries (small Abkhaz colonies can be found also in Western Europe and the USA). Abkhaz is notorious for ist huge consonantal inventory (up to 67 consonants in the Bzyp dialect) and by its minmal vocalic system: only 2 vowels. Though Abkhaz was studied by a number of scholars (e.g. P. Uslar in XIX century, or K. Lomtatidze in Georgia and G. Hewitt in Great Britain), many aspects of Abkhaz grammar (especially its syntax) still have to be adequately described. Abkhaz is the only West Caucasian language to possess the category of grammatical classes, manifested in personal pronouns, verb conjugation, numerals and in the category of number.

Abkhaz is an ergative language, the ergative construction being represented not by case endings, as in related Circassian and Ubykh (Abkhaz does not have a case system), but by the order of actant markers. The verbal root consists usually of one consonant, preceded by a string of prefixes (class-personal, directional, temporal, negational, causatival, etc.) and followed by few suffixes. Verbs can be stative or dynamic, finite or non-finite.

The grammatical sketch of Abkhaz includes information about its phonological system, morphology, and syntax. A short text is provided with grammatical comments.

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Abkhaz

Viacheslav A. Chirikba

Viacheslav A. Chirikba : Abkhaz

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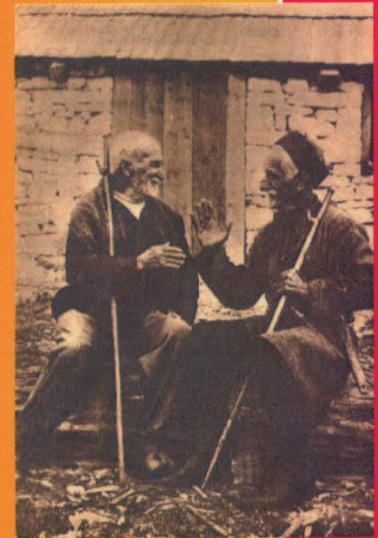
Abkhaz

Viacheslav A. Chirikba

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Abbreviations

A – Agent	L – loanword
Abx – Abkhaz	LOC – locative
ABS – absolutive	M – masculine
ADDR – addressee	MASD – masdar
ADV – adverb	Meg – Megrelian
AM – agreement marker	NEG – negative
AOR – Aorist	NFIN – non-finite
ART – article	NH – non-human
ASP – Aspect	NVOL – non-volitional
BENF – benefactive	O – (transitive) Object
bot. – botanic	OBL – Obligative
BSh – Bagrat Shinkuba[1]	P – bilabial stop
Bz – Bzyp Abkhaz	PCONV – past converb
C – consonant	PERF – Perfect
CAUS –causative	PIDF – Past Indefinite
(P)Circ – (Proto-)Circassian	PL, pl. – Plural
COM – Comitative	PLUPRF – Pluperfect
COND – Conditional	POSS – Possessive
CONV - Converb	POT – Potential
DETR – Detrimental	PRES – Present
DG[2] – Dmitry Gulia	PREV – preverb
DIR – directional	PPART – Past Participle
DO – Direct Object	PREV – preverb
DUR – durative	PURP – purposive
DYN – dynamic	QU – Interrogative
EMPH – emphatic	QUOT – quotative
EXC – Excessive	R – resonant
EXP – Experiencer	RECI – Reciprocal
EXT – extension	REL – relative
FIN – finite	RELA – relational
F – feminine	RFL – reflexive
FPREV – free preverb	Rus – Russian
FUT – Future	S – (intransitive) Subject
Geo – Georgian	SG (sg.) – singular
H – human	SPREV – stem preverb
IDF – indefinite article	STAT – stative
IDF.SG – indefinite singular	SUBJ – Subjunctive
IMPER – Imperative	suf. – suffix
IMPRF – Imperfect	T – dental stop
INFER – inferential	Tap – Tapanta Abaza
INTRJ – interjection	Tu – Turkish
IO – Indirect Object	V – vowel
ITER – Iterative	VOC – vocative
	# – absolute end or beginning of the word

° – labialization
' – glottalization
' – palatalization

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[1] Literary texts by the writer Bagrat Shinkuba.
[2] Henceforth DG will refer to the following edition: Dmit'ri Gulia. Ialk'aau. Aq°a: Alašara, 1973.

0. SOCIO- AND GEOLINGUISTIC SITUATION.[3]

0.1. Location.

0.1.1. Abkhazia.

Abkhazia, the homeland of Abkhazians, is situated on the Caucasian Black Sea coast between the rivers Ingur (Abx *Jagrэ́* [egrэ́])[4] on the southeast, bordering on the Megrelian and Svanetian regions of Georgia, and Psou (< Abx *Psaw*) on the northwest, bordering on the Krasnodar region of Russia. Abkhazia covers a territory of 8,700 sq. km, the greater part of which is occupied by mountains and hills, coming down close to the sea. The warm waters of the Black Sea wash the Abkhazian coast, which is 200 km long. The climate at the coastline is humid subtropical, whereas some mountain peaks are covered with perennial snow.

The capital of Abkhazia is Sukhum (Abx *Áq'ºa*), which in 1989 had a population of 121,000; after the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-93, this number has been significantly reduced. The seven administrative regions from the southeast to the northwest are Gal, Tqwarchal, Ochamchyra, Gulrypsh, Sukhum, Gudauta, and Gagra.

The Abkhazians call themselves *ápswa* (pl. *ápswaa*) and their home country *Apsnэ́*,[5] 'the land of the Apsians'. The major ethnographic groups are Bzyp (or Gudauta) and Abzhywa (or Ochamchyra) Abkhazians. A small group of Samyrzaqan Abkhazians, living in the southernmost Gal district, who speak a form of Abzhywa, has undergone a strong Megrelian cultural and linguistic influence. The other ethnographic groups – the mountainous tribes of Tsabal, Guma, Ahchypsy, Pskhwy and Aibga, as well as the western Sadz group, are today not represented in Abkhazia, being exiled to Ottoman Turkey in the middle of the 19th century.

The traditional occupations of Abkhazians are agriculture (mainly maize, which replaced the more traditional millet, beans, kohlrabi, etc.), animal husbandry (including apiculture) and hunting, as well as various crafts. The national economy is based on subtropical agriculture (tobacco, tea, citrus and other subtropical plants), light industry, mining and tourism. Of importance are also forestry and fishery.

0.1.2. Diaspora.

The Russian subjugation of Abkhazia in 1864 caused a massive emigration of Abkhazians to the then Ottoman Empire. As a result, by the end of the 19th century Abkhazia had lost some 60 percent of its indigenous population, and the exiled Abkhazians found themselves scattered across the vast Ottoman state, whose descendants form the contemporary "Abkhaz Diaspora". Turkey hosts the biggest Diaspora community, which surpasses the number of Abkhazians in the Caucasus. The Abkhazian villages there concentrate around the cities of Adapazarı, Düzce, Hendek, Sinop and Samsun in the northern part of the country and around Bilecik, İnegöl and Eskişehir in the west. In Syria, the Abkhaz live near or in the cities of Damascus and Homs. In Adjaria (southern Georgia), the Abkhazians live mainly around and in the capital Batumi. Small Abkhazian communities are also to be found in quite a few countries of Western Europe. In America a small Abkhazian community is situated in the state of New Jersey. Nearly all Abkhazians who live in Western Europe and America are relatively recent immigrants from Turkey (in America also from Syria). Many Abkhazians . live in the Russian Federation (especially in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don, Krasnodar), and, in lesser numbers, in other former Soviet republics. A significant recent

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[3]I would like to thank Kh. Amychba, B. Dzhonua, L. Gegenava, V. van Gerven, B.G. Hewitt, Z. Khiba, W. Lucassen, M. Schop and R. Smeets for much appreciated discussions, comments and suggestions.

[4]Rus *Ingur(i)* < Geo *engur-i*, Meg *ingiri*.

[5]*-nэ* is the locative suffix.

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emigration wave to Russia and elsewhere was caused by the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-93.

0.2. Political and Sociolinguistic Status.

Abkhaz is the official language in the Republic of Abkhazia (*Apsnэ́ Ahºэntkárra*), it is taught in schools and at the state-run university in the capital city Sukhum. In schools, Abkhaz is the language of instruction until the 4th grade, after which the teaching shifts to the Russian language, Abkhaz remaining only one of the subjects. At the university level, some of the disciplines are taught in Abkhaz. A large amount of literature (books, newspapers, magazines) was produced in Abkhaz in the Soviet times, but the number of titles has dropped considerably during the post-Soviet period. There are Abkhaz radio and TV broadcasting, as well as theatre productions and folklore groups.

The majority of Abkhazians in Abkhazia are bilingual, the second language being predominantly Russian. According to the last Soviet census of 1989, 78.8 per cent of Abkhazians were fluent in Russian. A part of the South Abkhazians is also conversant in Megrelian, whereas knowledge of Georgian is quite limited. Besides Abkhaz, other main languages spoken in Abkhazia are Russian, Armenian, Megrelian, Georgian, Svan, and Greek. The schooling system provides education in Abkhaz, Russian, Armenian and Georgian.

Before the Georgian-Abkhaz war, the Abkhazians constituted 17.8 per cent of their republic's ethnic breakdown, being the second largest minority after the Kartvelians (i.e. Megrelians, Georgians and Svans), who comprised 45.7 per cent. The other ethnic groups in Abkhazia are Armenians and Russians (before the war, 14.6 and 14.3 per cent, respectively), as well as a small Pontic Greek community (before the war, some 5 per cent of the population total). Despite the considerable ethnic mix (mainly in urban areas), the number of mixed marriages in Abkhazia is relatively low, all ethnic groups preferring members of their own community as marriage partners. Statistically, the largest number of mixed marriages of Abkhazians before the recent war was with Kartvelians (mainly Megrelians).

During and after the war of 1992-93, many Abkhazians, as well as many Russians, Armenians and Greeks[6], moved to Russia and other countries, whereas the majority of Georgians left for Georgia. The current population can roughly be estimated at 300.000, the Abkhazians presently being perhaps numerically the largest ethnic group.

In the Diaspora, the Adjarian Abkhazians, beside Abkhaz and Russian, speak Georgian, and the older generation also Turkish. The Turkish Abkhazians are bilingual with Turkish, and those living in the Arab countries with Arabic as the second language. The Abkhazians living in Western countries are typically trilingual (Abkhaz, Turkish or Arabic, and the language of the country they live in: German, Dutch, English, or French). The linguistic assimilation is going on at a fast pace, and the majority of Turkish and Arab Abkhazians younger than thirty years old are monolingual Turkish or Arabic speakers. However, the presence of a large Diaspora community, numerous clubs and organizations, which carry out various forms of cultural activity, and the resumed ties with the Caucasian homeland help the members of the Diaspora community, despite the perhaps irreversible linguistic assimilation, to maintain their Abkhaz identity. The number of mixed marriages in the Turkish Diaspora is comparatively low, Abkhaz marriage partners being preferred to others.

0.3. Number of speakers.

According to the 1989 Soviet population census, the number of Abkhazians in the USSR comprised 105,308, of whom 93.5 per cent named Abkhaz as their native tongue. The

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[6]After the war the number of Pontic Greeks has shrunk, due to emigration, from 15,000 to some 2000.

majority of them lived in Abkhazia, comprising 93,000 (out of Abkhazia's total population of more than 500,000).

There are at least two times as many Abkhazians in the Diaspora than in Abkhazia itself. Several thousand Abkhazians live now in Adjaria, where they arrived in the 19th century during the exodus movement. The biggest Abkhaz community is in Turkey, but the exact numbers there are not available (estimates range from 100,000 to 500,000). Smaller Abkhaz communities can be found in Syria (some 5,000), Jordan and elsewhere in the Middle East. In the West, the largest community is in Germany (some 5,000), smaller groups are in The Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Austria and USA, represented mainly by recent immigrants from Turkey and the Middle East.

The accelerating urbanization process in Abkhazia and the large-scale migration from villages to the cities are factors which adversely affect the functioning of the Abkhaz language: in the multi-ethnic urban communities it is losing the competition with Russian, which is a *lingua franca* in Abkhazia. Given the parallel fast process of linguistic assimilation in the Diaspora, Abkhaz can be regarded as an endangered language.

0.4. History.
0.4.1. Early History.
One of the first references to Abkhazians in written sources belongs to Pliny the Minor (1st c. AD), who mentions *gens Absilae* 'the people of Absilians' (cf. Abx self-designation *aps-wa*), localized at the site of the fortress of Sebastopolis (contemporary Sukhum). Flavius Arrian in his "Black Sea Periplus" (2nd c. AD) mentions, beside the tribe of Apsilians ('Αψίλαι), another Abkhaz tribe of Abasgians ('Άβασγοι). *Notitia Dignitatum*, a document dated to end of the 4th - beginning of the 5th c. AD informs us of the participation of Abkhazian (Abasgian) troops in the Byzantine army in Africa (*Ala prima Abasgorum Hibeos oasis maioris* 'The first wing of Abazgians in the big Hibeos oasis'), but a similar unit is mentioned in an even earlier document to have been stationed in the Grand Oasis already in 309 AD.[7] In the 6th c. Abkhazia officially adopts Christianity, though even earlier, in 325, the Abkhazian archbishop Stratophil from Pitiunt (modern Pitsunda) participated in the first Christian world congress in Nicea. In the 8th - 10th c. the Abkhazians form the powerful Abkhazian Kingdom, which led to the merger of various Abkhaz tribes, first of all Apsilians, Abazgians, Missiminians and Sanigians, into a single ethnos. In the 11th c. the Abkhaz and Georgian royal dynasties united, and the joint kingdom existed until the 14th c., when it was crushed by the Mongol invasion.

In the 15th – 19th centuries the Abkhazian Principality ruled by the Chachba (Shervashidze) dynasty, fell under the influence of Ottoman Turkey. Large sections of the population formally adopted Islam, though strong Christian and even pagan traditions have survived until present day.

In 1810 the Abkhazian Principality came under the protectorate of Imperial Russia, but in 1864 its autonomy was abolished and direct Russian military rule was established. This caused a series of rebellions, which were severely punished, forcing tens of thousands of Abkhazians to flee to the Ottoman Empire, which period is recorded in popular memory as *a-mhaǯ'ór-ra* ('The Exile', or 'The Exodus'). The emptied Abkhaz lands became subject of Kartvelian (predominantly Megrelian), Hemshin Armenian, Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian, Cossack) and Pontic Greek colonization, which by the end of the 19th century had turned the previously predominantly mono-ethnic Abkhazia into a multi-ethnic country, in which the Abkhazians found themselves only a minority.

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[7]Cf. Zukerman, C. Le camp de Ψωβθις/Sosteos et les *Catafractarii*. In: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphic. Bonn, Band. 100, 1994, p. 202. I would like to thank Mira Inal-ipa for providing me with a copy of this article.

0.4.2. Modern Period.
Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, in 1921 the Abkhaz SSR was proclaimed, but in the same year Abkhazia was compelled to sign a confederative "Treaty of Union" with the neighbouring Georgian SSR. In 1931 its status was downgraded to the level of an Autonomous republic within Georgia. Serious Georgianization attempts followed. These policies were reversed after the death of Stalin in 1953; Abkhaz schools were reopened and the teaching of Abkhaz resumed. Relations with Georgia remained tense during the rest of the Soviet era, and the early post-Soviet period witnessed, in 1992-93, a full-scale war with the newly independent Republic of Georgia. Since its victory in 1993, Abkhazia has been functioning as a *de facto* independent state, though until now it has not been recognized by the international community. The UN-led talks on the core issue of the political status of Abkhazia have been stalled, and the country currently endures a political and economic embargo, established jointly by Georgia and Russia.

0.5. Early Glosses and Recordings of Abkhaz.
The most ancient recorded Abkhaz gloss is presumably the word "Aki", or "Aku" written on the golden Colchyan coins (2nd c. BC), identified by D. Kapanadze as the native Abkhaz name of Sukhum, *áqʷˀa*.[8] More hypothetical is the comparison of the Greek and Roman term *apsil-*, Georgian *apšil-*[9] and Armenian *apˁšil* 'Apsilian' (the early Abkhaz tribe) with the name of the war-like tribe *abešla* in northern Asia Minor, known from Assyrian chronicles of the 12th c. BC.

The Classical Greek and Roman authors recorded such Abkhaz ethnonyms as Apsílai, Abasgoi, Misimianoì, Sannígai, etc. The ethnonym Apsil- contains the same element *aps* as in the Abkhaz self-designation *áps-wa* (-wa is the ethnic suffix). The latter can be etymologized as being derived from the epithet 'the mortal one' (in relation to human beings, as opposed to immortal gods), the root *apsa-* (in the Bzyp dialect *apsə-*) being presumably related to *ˀpsə- 'to die' (cf. Chirikba 1991).

The Greek *Abasg-oi*, *Abask-oi*, which is the source of Geo *apxaz-i* (with the metathesis due probably to Megrelian intermediary) and eventually of Rus *abxaz* (< Geo) and English *Abkhaz(ian)* (< Rus), is in all probability based on the Old Abkhaz plural form *abaz-ḥa* 'Ab(kh)azians' (sg. *abaza*, cf. Circ, Tap *abaza* 'Abaza', Tu *abaza* 'Abkhaz, Abaza'), to which the Greek suffix *-oi* was added.[10] Old Russian *obézŭ* 'Abkhazian', as well as Circassian and Turkish forms, reflect the singular form of the same ethnonym.

Byzantine Greek sources mention such Abkhaz toponyms as *Tsakhar*, *Tzibilé//Tzibilón* (modern *c'abal*), personal names *Tuana* (cf. Abx family name *tʷan*)[11], *Khados* (presumably reflecting Old Abx *qada* 'leader'). The Armenian geography *Ašxarhac'oyc'* (7th c. AD) mentions the toponym *pisinun* in Abkhazia, which some regard as reflecting Abx *Apsnə* 'Abkhazia' (cf. Butba 2001: 78).

An unmistakably Abkhaz gloss is found in the mediaeval Georgian chronicles: Lasha, the nickname of Giorgi, the son of the famous Georgian Queen Tamar (12th c. AD), translated, as explained by the chronicle, from the language of the 'apsars' (i.e. Abkhazians) as 'illuminator'. Lasha is indeed based on Abx *laša* 'light'[12], while *aps-ar* contains the same

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[8]Cf. Inal-ipa (1965: 109).
[9]The Old Georgian sources refer to *apšil-et-i* 'the land of Apshilians'. The back fricative in Georgian and Armenian presumably reflects the archaic middle (hissing-hushing) Bzyp sibilant *š*, present in Bzyp *áps-wa* 'Abkhaz'.
[10]Cf. Ionova, S. and Tatarshao, A. (Iz istorii izuchenija abazinskoj onomastiki. In: Sovremennye problemy kavkazskogo jazykoznanija i fol'kloristiki. Sukhum, 2000, p. 156) on the element *-g-* in the Greek form.
[11]Cf. Inal-ipa (1976: 234, 267).
[12]As pointed out already by Klaproth (1814: 180, fn).

root as the Abkhaz self-designation *áps-wa*, as well as the archaic plural suffix *-ar*.[13] Interesting also is the gloss used as epithet to the name of the last Abkhaz king Theodosius the Blind (10th c. AD), on whom the mediaeval Georgian Chronicle "Matiane Kartlisaj" comments: *romelsa erkua čala-mepe* 'who was called Chala-King', cf. Abx *a-čala* 'sickly, weak'.[14]

The map compiled by the Genoese Peter Vesconti, dated by 1318, records the name of the modern town of Gagra as *Kakara*, which was also mentioned later, in 1494, in the form of *Kakkari* on the map by Freduce.[15] These references reflect the original form of the toponym, **ga-k'ə-ra*, plausibly explained by the Abkhaz scholar V. Kvarchija as 'the holder of the coast'.[16]

The Dominican monk Giovanni da Lucca, who in 1637 visited Abkhazia, mentioned that the local ruler was called *Puso*, which Uslar (1887: 155) correctly identified as Abx *a-póza* 'chieftain, leader'. More sizable Abkhaz linguistic material appeared in the 17th century "Book of Travels" (*Seyahatname*) written by the famous Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi, who put down some 40 words and phrases in "the language of the strange and amazing Abazas" (*lisān-i 'acīb u garīb-i Abāza*). The analysis of the linguistic material quite precisely recorded by Çelebi in the Ottoman script (as is well-known, his mother was Abkhaz, and he could have heard the language at home), demonstrates that it belongs to the Sadz dialect.[17]

Some 40 Abkhaz words were recorded and published in 1819 by the Armenian traveller Mina Medici.[18] A small Abkhaz word-list compiled and published by the English traveller James Stanislaus Bell (1841: 353-354), in all probability also, as much as Çelebi's notes, represents a specimen of Sadz, featuring such Sadz traits as consonant gemination, full vowel grade of the words and some specific Sadz lexemes.[19] A short Abkhaz word-list is given in the appendix to the first volume by Gamba.[20] Somewhere between 1830 and 1840 the Russian officer Vladimir Romanov compiled a small Russian-Abkhaz dictionary (containing some 2000 words and four pages of short phrases), which manuscript was recently discovered by the French philologist Bernard Outtier in the Public Library in the Georgian capital Tbilisi. More sizable word-lists published by Pallas (1786-89), Ellis (1788), Güldenstädt (1791) and Klaproth (1814) are based on the North Caucasian (i.e. Tapanta and Ashkharywa) dialects.

0.6. Genetic Background.
Abkhaz (*ápswa bəzš°á*) is one of the five languages belonging to the small West Caucasian family (the others being Abaza, Adyghe, Kabardian, and the now extinct Ubykh, whose habitat is located to the west and north of Abkhazia). Strictly speaking, Abkhaz and Abaza can be regarded as dialects of one language, and the same applies to Adyghe and Kabardian, jointly known as Circassian. Despite skeptics, it is not possible to deny the existence of genetic links between the West Caucasian languages and the East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) family of languages (cf. Trubetzkoy 1922; 1930; Abdokov 1983; Nikolayev and Starostin 1994; cf. also Chirikba 1996: 402-406), which together form the North

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[13]On this suffix see below, in 2.1.6.

[14]Kvarchija, p.c.

[15]Cf. Kvarchija (1985: 26).

[16]The specific geographical setting of Gagra, which indeed closed the access from the northwestern areas to the coastline, has traditionally been an essential element in the regional defensive strategy against attacks from the mountainous tribes.

[17]Cf. Chirikba (1996b: 67-8), Chirikba, Forthcoming.

[18]Cf. Medici, Mina. History of Pont. Venice, 1819 (in Armenian); cf. also Melikset-Bekov, D. Pontica Transcaucasica Ethnica. (Po dannym Minaja Medichi ot 1815-1819 gg.). In: Sovetskaja Etnografija, No. 2, 1950.

[19]Cf. Chirikba (1996b: 68).

[20]Gamba, J-F. Voyage dans la Russie-Méridionale et particulièrement dans les Provinces situées au-delà du Caucase, fait depuis 1820 jusqu'en 1824, 3 vols, Paris: C.J. Trouvé.

Caucasian linguistic family. Besides, according to some authors, the West Caucasian languages can be genetically related to the extinct Hattic language of the Ancient Asia Minor (cf. Dunaevskaja 1960; Ardzinba 1974; 1979; Ivanov 1985; Braun 1994; Chirikba 1996: 406-432). On the other hand, the relation of the North Caucasian family to the neighbouring Kartvelian family has not been proven and is unlikely.

There are some indications that proto-West Caucasian first split into proto-Circassian and proto-Ubykh-Abkhaz, with subsequent division of the latter and the substantial influence of Circassian on Ubykh.[21] The West Caucasian historical division can be shown in the following scheme:

Proto-West Caucasian

Proto-Ubykh-Abkhaz

Circassian   Ubykh   Abkhaz
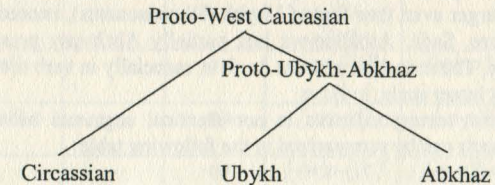
0.7. Dialects.
The Abkhaz dialects can be subdivided into three groups: southern (Abkhaz proper), northern (Tapanta) and the intermediate Ashkharywa group. Tapanta, which comprises the northern branch, is the most divergent of all dialects, whereas Ashkharywa, though geographically close to Tapanta, shows greater affinity to the southern group. Both Tapanta and Ashkharywa underwent a considerable and still continuing influence from Kabardian; parallel to this, there was also a certain convergence process between these dialects, the dominant role being played by Tapanta, which forms the basis of Literary Abaza. The southern group consists of a southwestern branch (comprising Sadz, with special links to Ahchypsy and Ashkharywa) and a southeastern branch (comprising Ahchypsy, Bzyp and Abzhywa). Ahchypsy shows specific links to Sadz and can probably be regarded as an intermediate dialect between the latter and Bzyp.

Until 1864, the speakers of Sadz used to live between the rivers Bzyp and Khosta (Khamysh), bordering Bzyp Abkhaz and Ubykh, respectively. Sadz is comprised of two sub-dialects, Khaltsys and Tswydzhy. Khaltsys villages prior to emigration were Khamysh, Arydkyt (modern Adler), Tsandrypsh, Giachrypsh, Mkialrypsh, Gagrypsh, etc. The Tswydzhy lived on the Kudepsta River. The Bzyp dialect zone stretches from the Bzyp River to the western environs of Sukhum. It is comprised of three sub-dialects: Lykhny, Kaldakhuara and Aatsy. The speakers of Abzhywa stretch from the eastern environs of Sukhum to the southeast as far as Gal. Abzhywa is comprised of four sub-dialects: Atara, Chkhuartal, Dzhgiarda and a more archaic Tsabal. The latter, now found only in Turkey, preserves some archaic phonetic features linking it to Bzyp and Ahchypsy. Besides, the speech of the Guma and Abzhaqwa tribes, which occupied the territories of the modern Sukhum and Gulrypsh regions, was intermediate between Bzyp and Abzhywa. With the expulsion of Sadz, Ahchypsy, Pskhwy, Tsabal, Abzhaqwa and Guma speakers, the two remaining South Abkhaz dialects in the Caucasus are Bzyp and Abzhywa.

South Abkhaz dialects are very close to each other, Sadz being the most divergent of them. The differences are mainly phonetic and lexical, and only partially morphological. Phonetically, the Bzyp dialect can be regarded as the most archaic one, and Abzhywa – as the most simplified.

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[21]Cf. Chirikba (1996: 7-8). M. Kumakhov (1984: 251-268), on the contrary, supposes that the proto-language first split into proto-Ubykh-Circassian and proto-Abkhaz.

0.7.1. Phonetic Differences Between Dialects.

The phonemic system of dialects is richer than that of Standard Abkhaz, as presented below in the table in **1.1.** Thus, Abzhywa, Sadz and Ashkharywa have an additional glottalized fricative *f'*, found in one morpheme only (*f'a* 'thin', corresponding to Bzyp *p'a* and Tap *c'a*). Bzyp preserves a full series of dento-alveolar sibilants (affricates *ʒ́ ć ć' ʒ́° ć° ć'°*, fricatives *ź ś ź° ś°*), non-labialized counterparts of which were lost by all other dialects by merging with the dentals *ʒ c c' z s*.[22] The labialized fricative series, preserved in (Tswydzhy) Sadz, Ahchypsy, Tsabal and in the northern dialects, merged in Abzhywa and Khaltsys Sadz with the alveolars *ž° š°*. Unlike its sister dialects, Sadz possesses phonemic gemination, which renders its consonant system larger even than that of Ubykh (80 consonants), exceeding 100 units. As to the syllable structure, Sadz, Ashkharywa and partially Ahchypsy preserve the full vowel grade of many roots. The reduction process **a → ə*, especially in verb roots, is strong in Sadz, and, on a somewhat lesser scale, in Bzyp.

　　The phonemic correspondences in non-identical segments between all (North and South) Abkhaz dialects can be summarized in the following table:

Common Abkhaz[23]	Abzhywa		Bzyp	Ahchypsy	Sadz		Ashkharywa	Tapanta
	proper	Tsabal			Khaltsys	Tswydzhy		
*ʒ́	ʒ	ʒ	ʒ́	ʒ	ʒ	ʒ	ʒ	ʒ
*ć	c	c	ć	c	c	c	c	c
*ć'	c'	c'	ć'	c'	c'	c'	c'	c'
*ʒ́°	ʒ°	ʒ°	ʒ°	ʒ°	ʒ°	ʒ°	ʒ°	ʒ(°)/ʒ°
*ć°	c°	c°	c°	c°	c°	c°	c°	ć(°)/ć°
*ć'°	c'°	c'°	c'°	c'°	c'°	c'°	c'°	ć'(°)/ć'°
*ʒ́°	v	v	v	v	v	v	v	ʒ
*ć°	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	c
*ć'°	f'	p'	p'	p'	f'	f'	f'	c'
*ź	z	z	ź	z	z	z	z	z
*ś	s	s	ś	s	s	s	s	s
*ź°	ž°	ź°	ź°	ź°	ž°/ź°	ź°	ź°	ź(°)/ź°
*ś°	š°	ś°	ś°	ś°	š°/ś°	ś°	ś°	ś(°)/ś°
*ž°	ž°	ž°	ž°	ž°	ž°	ž°	ž°	ʑ(°)/ž(°)
*š°	š°	š°	š°	š°	š°	š°	š°	ś(°)/š(°)
*ħ	aa	aa	aa	aa	aa	aa	ħ/ā	ħ
*ħ°	j°	j°	j°	j°	j°	j°	ħ°	ħ°
*d°	d°	d°	d°	d°	d°	d°	d(°)/b	ʒ́(°)/ʒ(°)
*t°	t°	t°	t°	t°	t°	t°	t(°)/p	ć(°)/ć(°)
*t'°	t'°	t'°	t'°	t'°	t'°	t'°	t'(°)/p'	ć'(°)/ć'(°)
*q	x	x	x	x	x	x	q	q
*q°	x°	x°	x°	x°	x°	x°	q°	q°

0.7.2. Morphological Differences.

The major morphological differences between Abkhaz dialects can be summarized in the following table. Tsabal 1 and 2 represent two isolects of Tsabal; Khaltsys and Tswydzhy are two sub-dialects of Sadz; Kuvinsk and Apsua are two sub-dialects of Ashkharywa.

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[22]Turkey Bzyp and some Caucasian Bzyp isolects have also lost the simple dento-alveolar sibilants.
[23]Cf. the Common Abkhaz reconstruction in Nikolayev & Starostin (1994: 193-197) and in Chirikba (1996: 58-108).

Dialect		Obligatory prefixed particle -ag'ə in negative forms	Past converb suffix	Present finite dynamic ending	Present finite stative ending	Future II endings
Abzhywa	proper	–	-nə	[-we-jt'//-wo-jt'//-o-(j)t']	[-u-p'//-ow-p']	-š-t'
	Tsabal1	–	-nə	[-oo-(j)t']	[-oo-p'//-u-p']	-š-t'
	Tsabal2	–	-nə	[-we-jt']	[-o-p'//-u-p']	-š-t'
Bzyp		–	-nə	[-(w)o-(j)t']	[-u-p'//-ow-p']	-š-t'
Sadz	Khaltsys	+	-nə	[-u-(j)t']	[-u-p'//-u-jt'//-jt']	[-u-š-t']
	Tswydzhy	+	-nə	[-oo-t']	[-u-p'//-u-jt'//-jt']	[-u-š-t']
Ahchypsy		+	-nə	[-oo-t'//-o-jt'//-wo-jt']	[-o-p'//-oo-p'//-ow-p'//-u-p'//-jt']	-š-t'
Ashkharywa	Kuvinsk	+	-nə//-š'(t)a	[-oo-(j)t'//-o-(j)t']	[-u-p'//-o-p'//-jt']	[-u-š(e-j)t', -wa-š(e-j)t']
	Apsua	+	-nə//-š'(t)a	[-u-j(t')//-e-t']	[-u-t'//-o-t'//-e-t'//-j(t')]	[-wa-š-t'//-u-š-t'//-š-t']
Tapanta		+	-ta	-jd	-b	[-u-š-d//-wa-š-d]

0.7.3. Lexical Differences.

The dialects differ in the preservation or loss of one or another native lexical item, as well as in the scope of foreign borrowings. Bzyp probably contains less borrowed words than any other Abkhaz dialect. Abzhywa has a much greater number of Kartvelian (predominantly Megrelian) loans, while Sadz has fewer Kartvelianisms but comparatively more words borrowed from Circassian. Both North Caucasian dialects (Tapanta and Ashkharywa) have in general a much greater number of Circassian, Turkic, Persian and Arabic loanwords than any South Abkhaz dialect, whereas the number of Kartvelian loans in these two dialects is rather modest.

0.8. Historical Stages of Abkhaz.

The following historical stages in the development of Abkhaz can be outlined: 1) The Common Abkhaz period. 2) The split of North Abkhaz (Tapanta Abaza) from Common Abkhaz. 3). The split of Ashkharywa from South Abkhaz. 4) The division of South Abkhaz into southeastern (Bzyp, Abzhywa, Ahchypsy) and southwestern (Sadz) dialects.

The Scheme of Abkhaz Dialectal Division

```
                        Common Abkhaz
                     /                  \
        North Abkhaz (Abaza)        South Abkhaz (Apsua)
                                     /            \
                            Southwestern       Southeastern
                                              /           \
Tapanta    Ashkharywa      Sadz   Ahchypsy     Bzyp        Abzhywa
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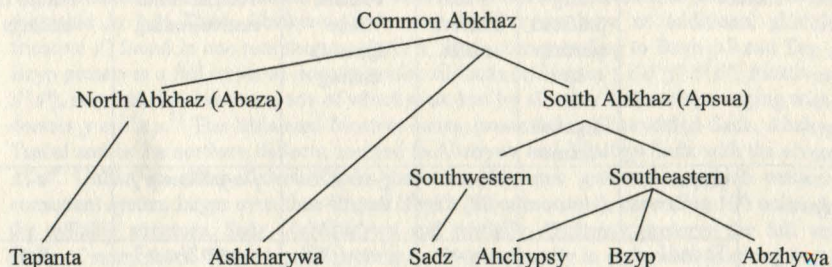
0.9. Contact Situation.

Abkhaz has for centuries been in contact with Megrelian, with the result that Megrelian loanwords (including many Georgian lexemes acquired via Megrelian) are quite numerous in Abkhaz. They are not that numerous, however, in the speech of Turkish Abkhazians, which testifies to the fact that the majority of them have penetrated Abkhaz during the last 80 years, after large numbers of Megrelians settled in Abkhazia following the exodus of many Abkhazians to Ottoman Turkey. The southern Abzhywa dialect has the highest number of Megrelianisms and a level of Abkhazo-Megrelian bilingualism in some parts of the Ochamchyra (historical Abzhywa) and especially Gal (historical Samyrzaqan) regions. The process was mutual, and Abkhaz made its own noticeable impact on Megrelian lexicon, as well as on its morphology and even syntax (cf. Hewitt 1992; 2001; Chirikba 1998a). A small layer of old Georgian loans goes back to the time of the mediaeval united Georgian-Abkhaz Kingdom. A part of them (together with some Megrelian words) is shared with Tapanta Abaza, which means that they can be traced back to the Common Abkhaz period. Direct contacts with modern Georgian have become a factor mainly since the beginning of the 20[th] century, and quite a few Georgianisms have found their way into Abkhaz via the written language. However, after the 1950s, Georgian ceased to be a source-language for Abkhaz. Older contacts with Circassians, Alans (old Ossetians) and Ottoman Turks have also left a noticeable impact on the Abkhaz vocabulary. Of all loans, the numerous Russian ones are the most recent, and Russian still continues to be the source-language as far as modern terminology is concerned. More recent contacts of Abkhazians with Svans, Hemshin Armenians and Pontic Greeks have not left any trace in the language.

Over recent decades attempts at "purification" of the literary language from obviously borrowed lexemes (mostly from or via Russian, and, to a lesser extent, from Georgian) can be observed, which are being replaced either by archaic or, in most cases, by newly coined words. This process has intensified since the achievement of *de facto* independence in 1993 (cf. Khetsija 1988; cf. also below, in **8.2.**).

0.10. Writing System.

There is no direct evidence that until the middle of the 19[th] century the Abkhazians ever possessed a native written tradition, and in different periods Greek, Georgian and Turkish were used for the limited writing needs.

As an indirect, and a rather bleak indication of at least a theoretical possibility of the existence of some literacy in Abkhaz in older times can be mentioned the reference in *Vita Constantini*, a 9 century work devoted to the life of Cyril (the creator of the Slavic script), to Abasgians (Abkhazians) among those peoples (Armenians, Iberians [Georgians], Goths, etc.) as having an alphabet and Christian service in their own language (cf. Kollautz 1968: 31; Inal-

ipa 1976: 258). A similar allusion to Abkhazians as professing Christianity in their own tongue was made by the 15[th] century Bavarian author Johann Schiltberger.[24] The Russian "Story of Babylon", composed between the 14[th] and 15[th] centuries, contains a reference to inscriptions written in three languages: Greek, Abkhazian (*obezsky*) and Russian, but it is unclear whether the author meant Abkhazian *per se*, or Georgian, as up to the 16[th] century the words *Bez, Obez* ('Abkhazia') were used indiscriminately in Russian for both 'Abkhazia' and 'Georgia'.[25] This terminological confusion is even more evident in case of the colophon appended in 1048 to the text of the Naples Latin version of the Greek novel "Barlaam and Ioasaph", and which states that the text was 'translated from the Abkhazian (Abasgian) language' (*Translata abasgo genere stilo*), by which Georgian must obviously have been meant.[26]

The first book in Abkhaz, "Abkhaz Primer" (*Apsš°a Anban*), published in 1865 under the supervision of the Russian general and orientalist I.A. Bartolomej, was based on the Cyrillic transcription used by Peter Uslar in his "Abkhaz Grammar". The second Abkhaz Primer was published in 1892 by the teacher of the Sukhum Mountain School Konstantin Machavariani and his young pupil, later to become the great Abkhaz poet and public figure, Dmitry Gulia. This was followed by the primer published anonymously in 1906, which partially made use of Machavariani's and Gulia's material. The Machavariani and Gulia alphabet was modified by the pedagogue Aleksej Chochua. Chochua's alphabet, published in 1909, contained 55 letters and was used in Abkhaz schools until 1926. In 1914 a second and somewhat improved variant of Chochua's Primer was published. In 1926 the influential Soviet Academician Nikolaj Marr proposed his own, so-called "analytical alphabet", based on Latin characters, which, after heated debates, was adopted in Abkhazia, to be replaced only two years later, in 1928, by yet another new "unified" Latin-based alphabet designed by another great Russian Caucasologist, Nikolaj Yakovlev. In 1938 Yakovlev's system was abandoned to give way to the new Georgian-based alphabet (as occurred also in South Ossetia), whereas in other Soviet minority languages the Latin-based alphabets were replaced by modified Cyrillic ones.

In 1945-46 the Abkhaz-language school system was eliminated, and the language of instruction became Georgian, unknown to the majority of Abkhazians. After Stalin's death in 1953, the Abkhazian schools were reopened, and in 1954 a return was made to Chochua's Cyrillic-based system, which, with some modifications, is in use until now. The most recent orthographic reform (in 1996) eliminated one of the major drawbacks of Chochua's alphabet, unifying the rendition of labialized consonants by a single character (ә), instead of two different characters (ә, y) used in the old alphabet. The frequent and often politically motivated changes to the Abkhaz writing system undoubtedly adversely affected the functioning of the literary language.

The order of the symbols used in the Abkhaz alphabet is: а, б, в, г, гь, гә, г̇, г̇ь, г̇ә, д, дә, е, ж, жь, жә, з, ӡ, ӡә, и, к, кь, кә, қ, қь, қә, k̇, k̇ь, k̇ә, л, м, н, о, п, ҧ, р, с, т, тә, ҭ, ҭә, у, ф, х, хь, хә, х̇, х̇ә, ц, цә, ҵ, ҵә, ч, ҷ, е̇, е̇, ш, шь, шә, ы, ҩ, џ, џь, ь, ә.

Though based on a phonological principle, this is not being followed consistently throughout. Thus, though palatalization is rendered by the Russian "soft sign" (ь), in the case of back affricates (ч, ҷ) this sign is absent, while the non-palatalized (or retroflex)

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[24]Cf. The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1396-1427. Translated from the Heidelberg ms., edited in 1859 by Professor Karl Friedrich Neumann, by Commander J. Buchan Telfer, R.N., with notes by Professor P. Bruun. London: The Hakluyt Society, 1879, p. 78.

[25]Cf. Skazanie o Vavilone. In: Biblioteka literatury Drevnej Rusi. Tom 6. XIV – seredina XV veka. Sankt-Peterburg: Nauka, 1999, p. 50-55 and 520; cf. also Inal-ipa (1976: 416-417).

[26]Cf. Inal-ipa (1976: 271).

counterparts are rendered by specially designed characters (є, ҽ), absent in the Russian alphabet. The comma-like diacritic is used to mark both glottalization in back affricates (ҷ, ҿ) and aspiration in stops (қ, ҧ, ҭ). Besides, it is also used to produce the uvular fricative ҕ, as opposed to the velar stop ҕ, and the pharyngeal fricative ҳ, as opposed to uvular х. Yet another diacritic is used to render the glottalized dental affricate (ҵ). Finally, there is no logical explanation for the absence of a special character for the palatal resonant /j/ (й), present both in the Russian alphabet and in some earlier versions of the Cyrillic-based Abkhaz alphabet.

In the Diaspora, the first known attempt to create an Abkhaz alphabet was the Latin-based system designed by Mustafa Butba and published in 1919 in Istanbul (Abitp 1919), remarkably, seven years before Marr's alphabet and nine years before Turkey shifted to the Latin-based alphabet. However, the efforts to introduce literacy in Abkhaz, as indeed in other Turkey's minority languages were thwarted by the government. New laws recently adopted in Turkey, which allow some degree of education in minority tongues, were received with cautious enthusiasm by the Abkhaz and other members of the North Caucasian Diaspora community. This raised once again the issue of the present Cyrillic-based Abkhaz writing system, which many Turkish Abkhazians would like to see replaced by a more familiar Latin script. The opinions are divided between those who insist on the adherence to the already traditional and functional Cyrillic Abkhaz alphabet and those who advocate a shift to the Roman script, for which end attempts are being made to design a system based on the current Turkish alphabet. Consequently, those enthusiasts who teach Abkhaz in Abkhaz cultural centres in Turkey, are forced to choose between the two possibilities.

In Abkhazia too, there are some voices which advocate a shift to the Latin-based system, but this meets with strong opposition, mostly from the writers, who, not unreasonably, argue that such a change would inevitably (once again!) interrupt the literary tradition. Yet, it is probably conceivable to introduce a parallel Latin-based Abkhaz alphabet to cater for the ever growing cultural needs of the sizable Diaspora community.

0.11. Abkhaz Literature.
Beside the primers, the earliest publications in Abkhaz were translations of religious Christian texts: "The Abridged Holy History" (1866), "The Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom" (1907), "Prayer book" (1907), "Service book" (1907), "The Main Festivals of the Orthodox Church" (1910), "Musical Notation for Abkhaz Liturgical Hymns" (1912), "Gospels" (1912), etc. Dmitry Gulia's "Poems" (1912) became the first published Abkhaz literary work. Dmitry Gulia (dərmǝjt' gʷǝlója) played a crucial role in the establishment and development of the Abkhaz literary language. 1919 saw the publication of the first Abkhaz-language newspaper "Apsny" (Abkhazia), and in 1920 Samson Chanba published his first Abkhaz dramatic piece "Amhadzhir".

As base for the newly formed literary language initially the Bzyp dialect was chosen, but very soon it was replaced by the phonetically simpler Abzhywa (59 consonant phonemes as opposed to 67 in Bzyp), with the single elimination of the rare phoneme f'. According to Genko (1957: 186), the development of Literary Abkhaz has three stages: (a) 1856-1866 (the publication of Bartolomej's Abkhaz primer and the "Abridged Holy History"), (b) 1892-1921 – the publication of the first books by Gulia and Chanba, the textbooks by Chochua, the newspaper "Apsny" and the shift from the Bzyp dialect norm to the Abzhywa one, (c) the contemporary period - publications of works by D. Gulia, S. Chanba, I. Koghonia, B. Shinkuba, I. Papaskir, etc. V. Kondzharija (1984: 13) proposed another periodization of the development of the Literary Abkhaz, simply dividing it into the pre-revolutionary (i.e. before 1917) and post-revolutionary periods.

Early Abkhaz literature was nourished by motifs from the Nart sagas, historical, heroic and mythological stories, popular songs, ballads, fables, fairy-tales and anecdotes. Another source of influence were works of classical Russian and, to a less degree, Georgian literatures.

For the present time there exists a rather rich literature in Abkhaz, which has developed a standardized orthographic system, diversified terminology and various functional styles. The most significant modern writers are Bagrat Shinkuba (universally regarded as the outstanding figure), Mikhail Lakerbay (†), Ivan Papaskir (†), Ivan Tarba (†), Aleksey Gogua, Gennadiy Alamia, Platon Bebia, Aleksey Dzhenia and others. Stories and novels by Fazil Iskander, who writes in Russian, have earned international acclaim.

0.12. A Short History of Abkhaz Studies.
The first stone of the scientific study of Abkhaz was laid by a small paper by the German orientalist Georg Rosen (1846). The first grammar of Abkhaz was compiled in 1862 by the outstanding Russian linguist, General Peter Karl von Uslar (the lithographic edition appeared in 1862, the printed version in 1887), which remains a valuable work even now. In 1863 A. Schiefner published the German summary of Uslar's grammar, thus making it accessible to a West European readership. In the last decades of the 19th c. and in the beginning of the 20th c. Abkhaz was studied in Abkhazia by P. Charaia (1912), D. Gulia (1927), A. Khashba (1930; 1934; cf. also 1972), V. Kukba (1934), in Russia by A. Dirr (1915), N. Marr (1938), N. Yakovlev (1951), A. Genko (1928; 1957), in Germany by G. Deeters (1931), K. Bouda (1939), in Finland by G. Schmidt (1925; 1950), in France by G. Dumézil (1967). The present-day centre of Abkhaz studies is the Abkhaz capital Sukhum, where work such linguists as S. Amichba, Sh. Aristava, L. Chkadua, B. Dzhonua, A. Khetsija, E. Kilba, T. Shakryl, V. Kvarchija, O. Dzidzarija, et al. Abkhaz is also studied in Georgia (K. Lomtatidze, T. Gvantseladze), Great Britain (G. Hewitt, Z. Khiba), The Netherlands (W. Lucassen, A. Spruit, V. Chirikba), France (G. Charachidzé) and the USA (L. Trigo, B. Vaux, D. Kathman).

The second (after Uslar) Russian-language grammar of Abkhaz was published in 1968 in Sukhum (cf. Grammatika[27]). The Abkhaz grammar written by N. Yakovlev still remains unpublished, and the one written by A. Genko vanished in the blockade of Leningrad during the Second World War. Several grammars have been published in Abkhaz (cf. Arstaa & Ch'k'adua 1966; Amch'-pha & Gublia 1984, Arstaa 1996). In French, a short grammatical sketch of Abkhaz was provided by G. Dumézil's in his Études Abkhaz (1967). By far the most comprehensive modern account of Abkhaz in any language is Hewitt's grammar published in 1979 (cf. also Hewitt 1987; 1989; Hewitt & Khiba 1998). Of importance are also numerous works by K. Lomtatidze (1945; 1954; 1955; 1967; 1976; 1976a; 1982), morphological studies by L. Chkadua (1970), K. Shakryl (1967), T. Khalbad (1975), syntactic works by Sh. Aristava (1982), Sh. Arstaa & L. Ch'k'adua (1983), M. Tsikolia (1973), I. Getsadze (1979), accentological studies by V. Dybo (1989), A. Spruit (1986), L. Trigo (1992), lexicological and dialectological studies by Kh. Bgazhba (1964), S. Amichba (1984), V. Kondzharija (1976), M. Tsikolia (1969), V. Kvarchija (1981), O. Dzidzarija (2002), B. Dzhonua (2002), toponymical research by V. Kvarchija (1985; 1988), etc. Cf. also Chirikba (1996; 1997; 1998; Forthcoming). Works devoted to the genetic relations between West Caucasian languages have been published by A. Abdokov (1983), B. Balkarov (1979), V. Chirikba (1996), G. Dumézil (1932; 1975), M. Kumakhov (1984), S. Nikolayev & S. Starostin (1994), K. Shakryl (1968; 1971), A. Shagirov (1982).

A number of dictionaries have been published: a) Abkhaz-Russian: in 1926 by Marr, in 1998 by A. Genko (originally prepared in the 1930s); a two-volume dictionary in 1986 by K. Shakryl et al. (1986; 1987); b) Russian-Abkhaz: prepared by A. Khashba and V. Kukba on the basis of N. Marr (1926) and edited by K. Dondua (1928), the dictionary edited by Kh. Bgazhba (1964a); c) Abkhaz-Georgian by B. Dzhanashia (1954); d) Abkhaz-Turkish by F. Agrba. There are also a number of specialized dictionaries, cf. T. Khalbad (1977), N. Arshba (1980), A. Khetsija (1986), V. Kaslandzija (1995), V. Chirikba (1996a), L. Samanba (2001), etc. Abkhaz has been quite well documented, since the end of the 19th century, by thousands

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[27]Henceforth this will serve as a shorthand reference to Aristava et al. (1968).

of texts belonging practically to all literary and some scientific genres. Many folklore texts have also been published, just to mention Nart (1962), S. Zykhuba (1967), B. Shinkuba (1990), A. Anshba (1995), B. Gurgulia (2000), etc.

1. PHONOLOGY.

1.1. Consonants.

Abkhaz is a polyconsonantal language: its Abzhywa dialect possesses 59 consonantal phonemes, Bzyp - 67, and Sadz (if one adds the geminated consonants) – more than 100 consonants. By contrast, it has a minimal vowel system: there are only two phonemic vowels.

Table of Literary Abkhaz Consonant System

		Stops	Affricates	Fricatives	Resonants	Semi-vowels
Labials	bilabial	b p p'			m	w
	dentolabial			v f		
Dentals	simple	d t t'	ʒ c c'	z s	n r	
	labialized	d° t° t'°	ʒ° c° c'°			
Alveolars	simple		ǯ č č'	ž š		
	labialized			ž° š°		
	palatalized		ǯ' č' č''	ž' š'		
Palatals	simple					j
	labialized					j°
Laterals	simple			l		
Velars	simple	g k k'				
	labialized	g° k° k'°				
	palatalized	g' k' k''				
Uvulars	simple	q'		γ x		
	labialized	q'°		γ° x°		
	palatalized	q''		γ' x'		
Pharyngals	simple	(ʔ)		h		
	labialized			h°		

　　Based on the simpler Abzhywa system, Standard Abkhaz counts 58 consonants[28], subdivided into three classes: obstruents, resonants and semi-vowels. All consonants are classified according to such features as place of articulation (labial, dental, alveolo-palatal,

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[28]Some idiolects of Abzhywa have the additional glottalized fricative f', absent in Standard Abkhaz.

velar, uvular, pharyngal, laryngal), manner of articulation (stops, affricates, fricatives), timbre (neutral, palatalized, labialized), and laryngeal features (glottalized, aspirated, voiced).

　　Obstruents are characterized by a three-fold contrast between voiced, (aspirated) voiceless and (ejective) glottalized correlates. Both aspiration and glottalization are not strong.

　　Plain alveolar (back) sibilants have a retroflex articulation. Given the absence of the simple dento-alveolars, the affricates ʒ° c° c'° in Standard Abkhaz are treated here as labialized counterparts of the simple dental ʒ c c', whereas in Bzyp the same consonants should be aligned, as labialized correlates, with simple dento-alveolars (ǯ ć ć'), thus bringing the system in symmetry with the analogous fricatives (ź ź° ś ś°), also lacking in the literary dialect.

　　Resonants and semi-vowels differ from obstruents in that they do not form any timbre correlations (with the exception of the palatal $j° < *ɦ°$). Semi-vowels can have vocalic allophones: /w/: [w], [u], /j/: [j], [i]. But other consonants too in certain phonetic environment can become syllabic: in principle, any consonant in Abkhaz can be regarded as underlying syllabic (i.e. /C/ = [Ç]).

　　The old uvular stops q, q°, preserved in both Northern dialects, gave pharyngealized uvular fricatives in Bzyp, Ahchypsy and Tsabal and simple uvular fricatives in Sadz and Abzhywa.

　　On the periphery of the system is the glottal stop, the existence of which can however be demonstrated by such minimal pairs as áaj 'yes' vs. ʔaj 'no', ʔaj 'no' vs. haj 'oh' (interj.), ʔáj-ʔáj 'no' vs. háj-háj 'interj. of encouragement', ʔáj-ʔáj 'no' vs. aj-áj [ajéj] 'yes', ʔah 'no' vs. ah 'oh!' (interj.), ʔah 'no' vs. hah 'our prince'. Besides this, the glottal stop is a common allophone of the uvular glottalized q' in many idiolects.[29]

1.1.1. Secondary Features.

Non-glottalized voiceless obstruents are moderately aspirated (unless under emphasis), as contrasted to a much stronger aspiration in some other Caucasian languages. Aspiration is more audible in stops and is least noticeable in fricatives. Though not a distinctive feature, aspiration is inherent in the feature 'voiceless' and underscores the non-glottalized and non-voiced character of the consonant.

　　As elsewhere in the Caucasus, the Abkhaz glottalized consonants are ejective. Glottalization is rather weak (unless under emphasis), as contrasted to a stronger glottalization in some other Caucasian languages. Glottalized consonants are either stops or affricates (the only exception is the glottalized labiodental fricative f', which is found in some dialects).

　　Labialization in Abkhaz is of 4 different articulatory types: (1) [w]-type lip-rounding, which involves velar and uvular stops g^w, k^w, k'^w, q'^w and uvular fricatives $ʁ^w$, χ^w, (2) [ɥ]-type (labial+palatal) lip-rounding, which involves the alveolar (ž°[ʒ̮�], s°[ʃᵓ]), the pharyngeal (h°[ħᵓ]) and the palatal (j°[jᵓ]) fricatives, (3) [v]-type labiodental (more precisely, endo-labiodental) articulation, which involves the dento-alveolar affricates ʒ°[dẑᵛ], ć°[tcᶠ], ć'° [tcᶠ'] and the fricatives ź°[ẑᵛ], ś°[ɕᶠ], and finally (4) [p]-type complete bilabial closure, which involves the dental stops d°[d̪b], t°[p̪ʰ] and t'°[p̪'].

　　Palatalization involves alveolar (back) affricates (ǯ' č' č'') and fricatives (ž' š'), velar (g' k' k'') and uvular (q'') stops, as well as uvular fricatives (γ' x'). Labialized ž°, s° and h° are also phonetically palatalized, this feature being non-distinctive.[30]

1.1.2. Consonant Distribution and Clusters.

The most frequent consonants in Literary Abkhaz are j, r, n, l, w, z, d, m, x and t, the rarest phonemes being f, v, ʒ°, d° and ǯ.

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[29]In some idiolects it is aa which serves as the allophone of the intervocalic q'.

[30]The same is true for the Bzyp middle sibilants ǯ ć ć' ź ź° ś°.

In principle, there is no restriction on the presence of any consonant in any position. On the morpheme level Abkhaz usually tolerates the combination of not more than two consonants. Clusters of three or four consonants are rare. The most popular initial sequences are bi-consonantal units of the type PS, i.e. 'bilabial stop plus fricative'. In medial bi-consonantal clusters one of the members is often a resonant (PR, TR, SR, RP, RT, RS, RR).

On morphemic junctures clusters are numerous and can contain up to five elements, but here too the most usual are bi- and tri-consonant groups, e.g. *a-š-rá* 'to bark', *a-g°ə́+d+pxa+la-ra* 'to shine at X'. Sequences of four or five consonants are rare, cf. *a-h°əh°+pš+t°ə́+la* 'dove-coloured', *a-z+pš-rá* 'waiting for X', *a-xə́+l+c'+š'+t+ra* 'descent', *bəž̌-ps-x°-rá-k'* 'seven funeral repasts'. In the last example the cluster -*psx°r*- can also be realized as -*psx°ər*-. The majority of consonant groups, under certain phonetic conditions, can be split by schwa, the schwa-insertion rule being CC __ C → CVCC, e.g. *a-xš – xəš-c'ás* 'like milk', *a-mš* 'day' – IDF.SG *məš-k'ə́*, etc. The rule does not apply to some close-knit clusters (e.g. *ps*), which behave like single consonants.

Assimilation in Abkhaz is predominantly regressive (e.g. *á-məž+da* 'unhappy' < *á-m(ə)š* 'happy' plus the privative suffix -*da*, *a-lap'+q"á* 'log for shaking off fruit' < *a-labá* 'log' plus the verbal root -*q"a* 'to wave'), though instances of progressive assimilation also occur, cf. *x-pa* 'three', -*š+pa*- 'how?' (interrogative prefix), where *p* results from assimilation with *x* and *š*, respectively.

1.2. Vowels.

Abkhaz has a linear two-member vocalic system /*a* - *ə*/, the main contrast being based on the feature 'open – close'. As to the height distinction, /*ə*/ is high, /*a*/ is low.

high/close	*ə*
low/open	*a*

Despite some claims in the special literature (cf. Allen 1965) about the monovocalic, or even vowel-less character of Abkhaz(-Abaza), minimal pairs like the following prove the relevance of the phonemic contrast /*a*/ vs. /*ə*/:

/a#/ ~ /ə́#/	*a-c'°á* 'apple' vs. *a-c'°ə́* 'little stick';
/ø#/ ~ /a#/ ~ /ə́#/	*as* 'thus' vs. *ása* 'sword' vs. *a-sə́* 'snow';
/ø#/ ~ ̀a#/ ~ /á#/ ~ /ə́#/	*ax* 'wine sediment' vs. *áxa* 'stick used to support plants' vs. *axá* 'but' vs. *a-xə́* 'head'.

1.2.1. The Status of [aa].

The third vocalic element, the so-called 'long *aa*', is best interpreted as the realization of the pharyngeal fricative *ħ* preceded or followed by a vowel. *ħ* as a normal surface-level segmental phoneme is preserved in Tapanta and Ashkharywa, but in Abkhaz proper it was phonetically transformed into *aa*. The sequence [áa] reflects the underlying combination /á/əħ/, [aá] - the sequence /ħá/ə/, and [ā] - the underlying unstressed syllables /a/əħ/ or /ħa/ə/. Several arguments can be adduced in favour of such interpretation. Thus, according to a morphophonemic rule in Abkhaz, the voiceless ergative agreement-marker becomes voiced in contact with the initial voiced root consonant, e.g. *jə-z*(< *s*)-*ga-wá-jt'* 'I am carrying it', where *s* is being replaced by its voiced correlate. The same happens in case of the 1st p. pl. marker *h(a)*-: *j-aa*(< *h*)-*də́r-wa-jt'* 'we know it', where -*aa*- obviously serves as a voiced correlate of *h*, which can only be *ħ*. Cf. a more detailed argumentation in favour of such solution in Chirikba (1996: 29-32).

A 'long' *aa* is also found in a number of loanwords, cf. *á-k'aamet* 'doomsday' < Tu *keyâmet*; *á-maalək'* 'Angel' < Tu *melâik*; *a-paajəmbár* 'prophet' < Tu *peyâmber*, *a-maát* 'rouble' < Geo *manat-i*, Bz *a-lumaát* 'lemonade' < Rus *limonad*, etc.

1.2.2. Other Vowels.

Beside the basic vowel phonemes /*a*/ and /*ə*/, Abkhaz has other vocalic phones symbolized as *o, e, i, u*, which do not have the status of phonemes, being the result of positional colouring of the basic vowels in contact with the adjacent palatalized or labialized consonants or with semi-vowels *j, j°, w*. Thus, [o] is the phonetic realization of the sequences *aw, wa* and *awa*, as well as the allophone of /*a*/ in contact with the labialized consonants. [e] is the allophone of /*a*/ in combinations /*aj*/ = [ej], /*ja*/ = [je], /*j°a*/ = [j°e], /*aj°*/ = [ej°], or in combinations "palatalized consonant + *a*" (/C'a/ = [C'e]). [i] is the allophone of /*ə*/ in sequences /*jə*/, /*əj*/, or in combinations of /*ə*/ with the palatalized consonants. Finally, [u] appears as the realization of phonemic sequences *wə, əw*, and of combinations of labialized consonants with schwa. All diphthongs in Abkhaz are realizations of bi-phonemic sequences.

1.2.3. Vowel Distribution.

The vowel /*a*/ can appear in any position. The other basic vowel, /*ə*/, cannot appear initially, except for some verbal forms, cf. *a-j° né ə́-q'a-wə-p'* 'ART-house it-be-PRES:STAT-FIN = there is a house': the initial *j*- of the personal marker *jə*- is regularly omitted if the verb immediately follows its referent; in the given example schwa is actually the stressed phonetic zero. Final unstressed /*ə*/ is also rare, being found mainly in some verbal forms, like past converb forms in -*nə* (e.g. *d-gə́la-nə* 'he having stood up...'). The sequences /*əh/, /hə*/ are realized phonetically as [ah], [ha]. Besides representing the phoneme /*ə*/, the phone [ə] is used to split inconvenient consonant clusters.

1.3. The Structure of the Root Morpheme.

The most typical structural types of simplex roots are (V)C(V), C(V) and CVC(V), where C stands for both C and CC.

There is a fair number of roots with initial /*a*/, cf. *an* 'mother', *ab* 'father', *až°* 'old', *ač'a* 'quail', *ah°a* 'sword', *ak'ə* 'one', *ana* 'there', *aha* 'to hear'. More complicated structures with initial /*a*/ are either loans or historical compounds: *ajxa* 'axe' (?L), *aγ°ra* 'bridle' (?L), *abž̌'ar* 'weapon' (L), *ardə́na* 'blackbird', *arx'əna* 'thrush'.

Typical simplex root types with initial consonants are CV, CVC(V), where C stands for both C and CC. Examples: CV: *ba* 'to see', *ca* 'to go', *c'°a* 'apple', *čə* 'horse', *č'ə* 'mouth'; CVC: *bax°* 'cliff, rock', *cəγ* 'marten', *γ'əč'* 'thief', *baj°* 'bone'; CCV: *mla* 'hunger', *psə* 'soul', *mxə* 'field', *bna* 'forest, wood', *cg°a* 'cat', *bž̌'ə* 'sound'; CCVC: *mš°n* 'sea', *mg'al* 'bread', *psəʒ* 'fish'; CVCCV: *bəsta* 'millet pap' (?L), *capxa* 'key', *k°ə́ž̌'ma* 'wolf', *k°ə́brə* 'mosquito', *pərγə* 'ember', *q'ərq'ə* 'throat, larynx'.

Historically, many VC(V) and CCV roots derive from CVCV. The rare CVCCV-structure represents either loans or old compounds. The structures CCCV or CCCCV (e.g. *pška* 'young of animals', 'soft, tender', *psth°a* 'cloud') are extremely rare. The latter example might be an old compound (< *psə+th°a*). For *pška* cf. probably PCirc. *šk'°a* 'calf'; both could be derived from Proto-West Caucasian *pšk(')a* 'soft, tender', (>) 'young of animal'.

1.4. Stress.

Abkhaz is characterized by strong dynamic stress, which can fall on any syllable in polysyllabic words. Longer words can have a secondary stress. Less usually, two syllables in a long word can be equally stressed. Stress distinguishes many otherwise homophonic words and word-forms, cf. *áč'a* 'quail' – *a-č'á* 'wheat; bread'; *á-la* 'eye' – *a-lá* 'dog'; *áh°a* 'sword' – *a-h°á* 'pig, swine'; *á-pa-ra* 'to jump' - *a-pára* 'money' – *a-pa-rá* 'to knit'.

According to Dybo (1989) and Spruit (1986: 37-79),[31] every syllable (including monoconsonantal morphemes) in Abkhaz can be assigned a certain prosodic valence (high or

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[31]Cf. also Trigo (1992), Kathman (1996).

low, or in other terminology, dominant or recessive). It is the combinations of syllables each possessing its own valence, which determine the stress pattern of the given word(-form). According to Dybo, this accentual model could be a transformation of an older tonal system.[32]

1.5. Morphophonemics.

One of the morphophonemic rules is the voicing of ergative personal agreement-markers in the position before a voiced initial consonant of a transitive verb stem, cf. the 1[st] p. sg. ergative marker *s(ə)-* in transitive *jə-z-ga-wá-jt'* [ʲiz'gojt] 'it-I-take-PRES:DYN-FIN = I take it' vs. intransitive (inversive) *jə-s-g°+a+pxa-wá-jt'* [ʲisgʷa'pʰχojt] 'it-I-like-PRES:DYN-FIN = I like it'.

Another rule involves the dissimilative shift *r → d* before the causative marker *r*, if the first *r* is the 3[rd] p. pl. (oblique or ergative) marker: *jə-d(< *r)-sə-r-c'a-wá-jt'* [ʲidsər'ts'ojt] 'it-them-I-CAUS-learn-PRES:DYN-FIN = I teach them', *jə-d(< *r)-də(< *r)-r-c'a-wá-jt'* [ʲiddər'ts'ojt] 'it-them-they-CAUS-learn-PRES:DYN-FIN = they teach them'. The rule is purely morphophonemic, as it does not affect other sequences of two rhotics, cf. *jə-rə́-r-ta-wa-jt'* [ʲi'rərtʰojt] 'it/them-them-they-give-PRES:DYN-FIN = they are giving it/them to them'.

Expressive consonant gemination is used to emphasize the intensity of the verbal action (cf. *a-p+ž°a-rá* 'to tear' vs. *a-pə+ž°ž°a-rá* 'to tear in many pieces', *a-p+č-rá* 'to break' vs. *a-p+čč-rá* 'to break in many pieces'), or to emphasize the focus, cf. *zag'ó* [ze'gʲi] 'all' vs. *zag'g'ó* [ze'gʲigʲi] '(absolutely) all'.

Vocalic alternations (ablaut) in preverbs and (more rarely) in verbal roots play an important role in designating the centripetal vs. centrifugal direction of the verb's action, cf. *a-ta-c'a-rá* 'to put inside' vs. *a-tó-c'-ra* 'to get out', *á-la-xa-ra* 'to be stuck in the mass' vs. *á-l(ə)-x-ra* 'to take off from the mass; to choose'.

2. MORPHOLOGY.

Abkhaz is an agglutinative language. A word-form can consist of 10 or even more morphemes. The central part of the morphology is occupied by the verb: Abkhaz can be called a verbocentric language. Verbal roots can be free, or bound, i.e. used only in combination with certain preverbs. Abkhaz makes use of both prefixing and suffixing. Of 16 or so affixal positions in a personal verb-form (see below in **2.9.2.**), 10 are prefixal (including preverbs) and 6 are suffixal slots.

2.1. NOUNS.

2.1.1. Nominal Inflection.

The noun is marked for number, possessor and definiteness. The formal cases are absent, although there are some marginal case-like endings (see **2.1.5.**).

A nominal stem (understood as a part of noun devoid of articles and inflectional affixes) can be simplex (*mra* 'sun'), compound (*la+pš* 'glance', lit. 'eye-look'), or derived (*bγ'ə+c* '(single) leaf', cf. *bγ'ə* 'leaf'). Minimally the noun can be represented by a pure stem (*j°né zac°ó-k'* 'only one house', *ž°laró zag'ó* 'all the people'), or, more usually, by a stem with either the generic (*a-j°né* '(a/the) house'), or the indefinite article (*j°nə-k'* 'a house'). As far as the latter is concerned, the indefinite singular and indefinite plural forms (*j°ən-k°á-k'* 'some houses') can be distinguished. Besides, a number of other pre- and post-stem elements can be added to a noun-form.

2.1.1.1. The Morphological Structure of the Noun.

The scheme of the morphological structure of the noun-form is as follows:

[article]+[inflectional prefixes]+[quantity]+[stem]+[inflectional suffixes]+ [indefinite article]+[clitic]

Pre-stem Elements.

The prefixed article is generic/definite. The inflectional prefixes are the possessive prefixes, which express person and nominal class: *sə-j°né* 'my house', *l-pa* 'her (H:F) son', *a-c'óx°a* 'its (NH) tail'. The quantity slot is reserved for the quantifying prefixes: *sə́-z-nap'ə-k'* 'my-one-hand-IDF'[33], *rə-x-j°ə́-pa-c°a* 'their-three-H-son-PL:H', *pš'-wasá* 'four sheep'.

Post-stem Elements.

The two final post-stem slots are occupied by the indefinite article *-k'*, etymologically connected with the (non-human) numeral *ak'ə́* 'one', and the clitic *-g'ə* 'and'.

The inflectional suffixes are:

a. plural endings (see their distribution below in **2.1.6.**), e.g. *a-j°n-k°á* 'ART-house-PL', *a-wóswə(j°)-c°a* 'ART-worker-PL:H'. The non-productive pluralizer *-ar(a)* is often supplemented by a pleonastic plural suffix: *árp-ar-c°a* 'the youth', *a-c'-ára-k°a* 'birds';

b. the 3[rd] p. sg. NH possessive affix, attached to the locative or directional postposition, which fuses with the stem, cf. *a-š°q'°ó* 'ART-book', *a-š°q'°[ə]-a-č'ó* 'ART-book-its-in = in the book', *a-tə́p* 'place', *a-tə́p-[a-]ax'* 'to the place';

c. postpositions, which are either locative (*a-j°n-a-č'ó* 'ART-house-its-in = in the house') or directional (*a-j°n-a-[a]x'ó* 'ART-house-its(NH)-to = to the house'). The postpositions can be incorporated into the noun-form only if the referent is non-human singular and, usually, if the noun ends in a vowel[34], otherwise they are used separately, e.g. *s-ah°š'á l-č'ó* 'at my sister's', *a-j°ən-k°á r-áx'* 'to the houses';

d. instrumental suffix *-la*: *š'ap'ə́-la* 'by/with the foot';

e. adverbial "case" suffix (see below in **2.1.5.**): *j°nə-s* 'as house';

f. comparative suffix *-c'as*: *j°ən-c'ás* 'as/like a house';

g. privative suffix *-da*: *j°né-da* 'without a house';

h. coordinating suffixes *-j* or *-g'ə*: *s-ánə-j s-ábə-j//s-án-g'ə s-áb-g'ə* 'my parents' (lit. 'my mother and my father').

Not all of these elements can co-occur. Thus, the generic article is mutually exclusive with possessive prefixes, with the adverbial suffix *-s*, while the latter is not compatible with the indefinite article and postpositions. Inflectional suffixes can follow one another, e.g. *á-č'ʷk'°ən-c°a-j a-tə́pha-c°a-j* 'ART-boy-PL:H-and ART-girl-PL:H-and = boys and girls'.

2.1.2. Noun as Adjective.

Nouns can function as adjectives, modifying another noun, in which capacity they precede the head noun: *á-kalak' j°nə* 'city house', *a-mšən ʒə* 'sea water', *ápswa š°ak'* 'Abkhaz rifle'.

2.1.3. The Scope of Definiteness.

Four terms are relevant to describe the definiteness category in Abkhaz:

a. generic reference (stressed or unstressed prefixed *á-/a-*): *a-waj°ó* 'human, person', *á-ž°lar*

'people';

b. specific/definite reference (usually stressed prefixed á-): *wə́j á-waj°ə* 'this human, person', *á-pš'-ba-t'°əj á-mš* 'the fourth day'.

c. non-specific/indefinite reference (postposed article *-k'*): *waj°ə́-k'* 'some person', *ž°laró-k'* 'some people'; one can also distinguish between the indefinite singular *-k'* and indefinite plural *-c°a+(-k°a+)k'//-k°a+k'* (cf. *pa-c°á-k'//pa-c°a-k°á-k'* 'some sons', *j°ən-k°á-k'* 'some houses');

d. zero reference: *waj°ə́* 'person', *ž°laró* 'people', *č'k'°ə́na* 'boy'.

The generic article refers to a noun as a class of referents, or as a representative of such a class. As such, it combines the semantics of both genericness and definiteness (cf. *a-lá* 'the dog', *á-mš* 'the day'), hence it is sometimes termed a "definite-generic article" (e.g. Hewitt 1979: 153 et passim).

The article *a-* in Tapanta Abaza (i.e. the North Caucasian Abkhaz dialect) has only the definite meaning, its indefinite counterpart being the article *-(k°a)-k'*; this system reflects the original situation for Abkhaz proper too. It is noteworthy that in the definite function the article *a-* is often stressed, cf. *a-waj°ə́* 'ART-man' vs. *á-waj°ə* 'the man', *a-marš'án* 'ART-Marshan' (family name) vs. *á-marš'an* 'the Marshan'. Cf. also its presence in ordinal (*á-j°bat'°əj* 'the second', *á-xpat'°əj* 'the third') and completive numerals (*á-j°ba-g'ə* 'both', *á-xpa* 'all three').

An idiosyncratic feature of Abkhaz is the combination of both generic and indefinite articles. It happens when certain referents are meant as a group or a body (e.g. *nártaa á-š°-j°ə-k' r-an* 'the mother of (the single group of) one hundred Narts', *art á-j°ə-mš-k' ró-la* 'within the next couple of days', *á-x-j°ə-k'* '(the) three persons'), and in the meaning of 'one of X' (e.g. *a-č-k°á-k'* 'one of the horses').[35]

The zero article forms are usually used with (universal or scalar) quantifiers: *ž°laró zag'ə́* 'all people'. Besides, in expressions (e.g. sayings or proverbs) containing general wisdom or axioms, the zero article can often be used generically (as in 1a). Furthermore, it is used to emphasize a complete absence of a referent (as in 1b).

(1) a.   *x'acá*   *fə́*   *ø-á-s-wa-m*
         hornbeam   lightning   it-it-hit-PRES:DYN-not
         'The lightning does not strike the hornbeam' (Grammatika 92).

     b.   *waj°ə́ d-sə-m-bá-ø-jt'*
         man   him/her-I-not-see-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'I saw nobody'.

2.1.4. Nominal Classes.

Class assignment in Abkhaz is based on a distinct semantic principle: human vs. non-human. The class of humans is subdivided into feminine and masculine. This class includes not only nouns referring to human beings, but also nouns referring to anthropomorphic supernatural creatures (gods, divinities, angels, devils, etc.), subclassified according to their sex. The opposite 'non-human' class includes everything which is not regarded as belonging to the first class. Anthropomorphic animals in fairy-tales usually remain within their non-human class assignment, as is reflected by the verbal agreement. The sex distinctions in words denoting animals or birds are indicated lexically (if at all).

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[35] Cf. Hewitt (1979: 154, 237).

Abkhaz Nominal Class System

Human (humans and anthropomorphic supernatural beings)	Non-human (everything else)
vs.	

↓

masculine   feminine

The nominal class assignment in Abkhaz is partially a covert system, explicitly expressed on nouns only when they take either 'human' or 'non-human' plural markers, which however do not distinguish the sex of the referent, and by possessive prefixes, which, if in singular, express both class and sex assignment. The class assignment is more regularly expressed on the associated word classes, such as verbs (by means of agreement markers), numerals (by human vs. non-human suffixes), pronouns and postpositions (by means of the appropriate possessive prefixes).

In the majority of cases (e.g. in the pronominal and verbal agreement systems, in possessive prefixes), the marked term is 'feminine', while 'masculine' and 'non-human' show a degree of neutralization (e.g. **2.3.1.** et passim). When in plural, gender distinctions are neutralized in personal pronouns, possessive prefixes and in the verbal agreement system.

From the areal perspective, in possessing the morphologically explicit category of nominal classes (or gender), Abkhaz deviates both from its sister-languages (Circassian and Ubykh) and from the unrelated neighbouring Kartvelian languages, where this category does not exist. At the same time, it resembles the geographically more remote (although distantly related) Nakh and Daghestanian languages.

2.1.5. Declension.

Declension in Abkhaz is practically non-existent. Sometimes the suffix *-s* is adduced as the "adverbial/predicative case" marker (*á-jaš'a* 'brother' vs. *jaš'á-s* 'as a brother'), as opposed to a zero form (cf. Hewitt 1979: 101), though I prefer to regard this suffix outside the declensional framework. The same can be said of the instrumental suffix *-la* (cf. *g°ə́-la* 'by/with heart').

2.1.6. Number.

Abkhaz distinguishes two numbers: singular and plural. There are several plural markers, of which three, *-c°a*, *-aa* and *-r+aa*, are used exclusively for +H (*ába-c°a* 'fathers', *ápsw[a]-aa* 'Abkhazians', *áb-r+aa* 'parents of the sister-in-law'). The plural suf. *-k°a* is used mainly with non-human referents (*a-č-k°á* 'horses', *a-j°n-k°á* 'houses'), but it can also be used for some humans as well (*á-h°sa-k°a* 'women', *a-x°əč'-k°á* 'children', *ágər-k°a//águr-c°a* 'Megrelians'). The archaic plural suf. *-ar(a)* forms (collective) plural of some nouns belonging to both classes (*a-s-ár(a)* 'lambs', *a-c'-ár(a)* 'birds', *árp-ar(a)* 'the youth', *á-ž°l-ar(a)* 'the people'). Of this group, those meaning 'the young of' have in the singular regularly the diminutive suffix *-s* (*a-só-s* 'lamb', *árpə-s* 'boy', cf. also *a-c'ə́-s* 'bird'). The pluralizer *-ar* can be seen in the presumably Abkhaz gloss *aps-ar* 'Abkhazians' recorded in Middle Georgian texts, suggesting that it may have been more productive in the past.

A pleonastic expression of number is seen in such examples as IDF.PL. *č'k'°ə́n-c°a-k°a-k'* 'some guys', *a-c'-ára-k°a* 'birds', etc. In the Sadz dialect (survived in Turkey) the singular form for the word 'eye' is the originally plural form (*á-lak°a*), on which the new plural *á-lak°ə-k°a* is based.

The names of gods, which belong to the class of humans, usually take the plural *-aa*, cf. *ájrg'-aa* 'the divine Ayrg clan'.[36] With the word *a-nc°á* 'god' the number is usually expressed on the associated words, cf. *a-nc°á r-nəs* 'god their-sake = for the sake of gods', *a-nc°á r-áš°a* 'god their-song = the song of the gods'.[37] This can be a reflection of the traditional Abkhaz notion of god as a divine entity consisting of several (usually seven) sub-entities (fractions), each responsible for a separate domain of affairs. The same is true for the name *š'aš°ó* 'the god of the smithy', which, being formally a singular, takes plural agreement when understood as a combination of fractions of the divine entity, cf. *š'aš°ó ró-lax' w-áw-aa+jt'* 'Shashwy their-wrath you(H:M)-get-SUBJ = let Shashwy punish you!' (cf. a singular variant: *š'aš°ó jó-lax'* 'Shashwy his-wrath').

When the word *a-nc°á* 'god' refers to a single indivisible entity, it takes the singular agreement marker: *a-nc°á jə-nós* 'god his-sake = for the sake of god', *a-nc°á d-aȝ°ó-wə-p'* 'god is one', *š'aš°ó wó-ləpxa ø-ha-t* 'Shashwy your(H:M)-blessing it-us-give = Shashwy, give us your blessing!'. The hunting god, *až°ájpš'aa*, is formally deemed to be a plural, though the name can refer either to a single deity, or to a whole clan, as in *až°ájpš'-aa r-təphá* 'Azhweypshaa their-girl = the daughter of the Azhweypshaa clan'. The devil is *áj°əstaa*, the final element of which superficially resembles the human plural suffix, but the word is regarded as singular, unless the plural suffix is added: *áj°əstaa-c°a*.

2.1.7. Vocative.
Abkhaz does not have special vocative forms; it uses instead vocative particles, vocative words, personal names or special suffixes. The vocative particle is *wa*, realized as [wa] or [o] (*wa//o a-nc°á* 'O Lord!'). The vocative expressions *wóra* (< *ó wara* 'O you(H:M)')[38], *ó bara* ('O you(H:F)!') 'hey!' are rather colloquial, whereas *-xac'k'ə*, with the appropriate class/person prefix used to address respected persons (meaning literally 'instead of X') and *ak'ór j-a-psá-w* 'dear, much valued!' are more formal. Cf. also words for relatives (like *s-andów!* '(my) grandmother!'), personal names or surnames (*x'óbla, aráx' báaj!* 'Khibla, come here!') used as vocatives. Besides, the vowel *-a* can be suffixed to personal names or other words ending in consonant, to express both the vocative and endearment, cf. *Zuráb-a* '(dear) Zurab!'.

2.1.8. Nominal Derivation.
The process of word-formation is quite active in connection with the expanding functions of Literary Abkhaz. To produce new words, Abkhaz uses practically limitless resources of both compounding and suffixation, as well as their combination. Another derivational means is conversion, while prefixation is not productive.

2.1.8.1. Compounding.
Noun+Noun:

a. simplex noun+simplex noun: *a-wasá-x'č'a* 'shepherd' (sheep+shepherd), *áž°a-bž'* 'story' (word+voice), *á-mca-bz* 'flame' (fire+tongue).

b. simplex noun+derived noun: *a-kóta-n+xa-mj°a* 'agriculture' (village-work-way), *á-la+pš-t°h°a* 'spell against the evil eye' (eye+look-spell), *a-q'arma-c'ó+s* 'nightingale' (hop-bird [bird+diminutive suffix]).

c. derived noun+derived noun: *a-g°-a+bzója+ra-x'č'a+ra* 'care of public health' (health [heart+its+good+abstract suffix]-protection [protect+abstract suffix])[39].

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[36]The name *ájərg'* 'the god of hunting' is an old loan from Greek *Hagios Georgios* 'Saint George'.
[37]Some analyze the element *-c°a* in *a-nc°á* as the fossilized human plural suffix, and interpret the first part as 'mother', but the word for 'mothers' (*ána-c°a*) has a different stress pattern, and the root-initial *a-*.
[38]B. Dzhonua, p.c.
[39]A calque from Rus *zdravooxranenie*.

Noun+Verb

a. simplex noun+simplex verb: *á-la-pš* 'view' (eye-look), *a-č'-k'ó* 'catching disease' ('mouth/face-catch').

b. simplex noun+derived verb: *a-c'la-r-k°ók°* 'woodpecker' (tree-split [causative prefix+split]), *áž°a-p+q'a* 'proverb' (word-cut [preverb+cut]).

c. derived noun+derived verb: *a-la-[a]x'ə-n+c'á* 'fate' (forehead [eye+locative suffix]-write on [preverb+write]), *a-c°+k°ə-r+pá* 'wave' (top [skin+top]-make jump [causative prefix+jump]).

Noun+Adjective

a. simplex noun+adjective: *á-mza-č'a* 'young moon' (moon-young), *á-mat-apš'* 'red snake' (snake-red), *a-mj°a-dów* 'main road' (road-big).

c. derived noun+adjective: *á-la+pš-xaa* 'tender supervision' (look [eye+look]-sweet), *a-wa+j°-ápš'* 'red-haired man' (man [man+man]-red).

Noun+Numeral

a. noun+numeral: *a-mš-j°ó+n+j°+a+ž'a* 'funeral repast on the fortieth day' (day-forty).

b. numeral+noun: *a-x-š'a+p'ó* 'tripod' (three-foot), *a-j°ó-maa* 'a kind of harp' (two-handle).

Reduplication.
In noun-formation, reduplication does not play such a prominent role as it does in verb- and adverb-formation. The following types of reduplication can be mentioned: (a) deverbal nouns based on reduplicated verbal stems, (b) nouns formed on reduplication of sound-descriptive or movement-descriptive elements, (c) fully reduplicated nominal root.

a. *a-h°a+n-h°á+x* 'rumour' (tell-PIDF=tell-again), *a-na+j-áa+j+ra* 'walk, going to and fro' (thither-go=hither-go-abstract suffix).

b. *a-q'ap+q'áp* 'wooden shoes', *a-k°ó+k°ów* 'cuckoo', *á-də+d* 'thunder', *á-k°at'+k°at'-ra* 'top of the tree'.

c. *a-š+šá* 'fat' (< *šə+ša* < *ša+ša*), *a-k'a+k'á* 'hoop made of thread or vine', *a-g'a+g'á* 'circle'.

Echo Compounds.
A special kind of reduplication are echo compounds. Abkhaz makes an extensive use of echo-compounding, forming words on the basis of reduplication, whereby the onset of the second part of the compound is replaced by another consonant, typically by the resonant *m*, cf.: *a-x°ač''a-máč''a* '(all kinds of) insects' (*a-x°áč''a* 'insect'), etc. Other consonants can also be used, cf. *a-g°am-sám* 'all rubbish' (*a-g°ám* 'rubbish'), *á-rax°-á-š°ax°* 'all kinds of cattle' (*á-rax°* 'cattle'). If *m-* is to be "echoed", another consonant is used to replace it, cf. *a-mat°a-j°ót°a* 'all kinds of clothes' (*á-mat°a* 'clothes'), *a-makár-č'akár-ra* 'all kinds of threats' (*á-makar+ra* 'threat').

Compounds with Connective Elements.
Though asyndetic compounding is more usual, there can also be connective elements involved, usually possessive prefixes or the coordinating clitic, which function as infixes.

a. Possessive prefixes:

-a-   3[rd] p. sg. NH possessive affix 'its': *a-x-a-pó-c* 'tooth' (head-its-front-tooth), *a-x-a-č'ó* 'face' (head-its-mouth), *a-g°[*ə]-a-bzója-ra* 'health' (heart-its-good-abstract suffix').

-j(ə)-   3[rd] p. sg. H:M possessive affix 'his': *a-pa-j-pá* 'grandson' (son-his-son), *áb-j-aš'a* 'paternal uncle' (father-his-brother).

-l(ə)-   3[rd] p. sg. H:F possessive affix 'her': *a-pha-l-pá* 'grandson' (daughter-her-son), *án-l-*

ah°š'a 'maternal aunt' (mother-her-sister).

-r-   3rd p. pl. possessive affix 'their': a-š'xa-r-án 'qeen bee' (bee-their-mother),
a-x°ə-r-bɣác 'plantain' (bot.) (wound-their-leaf).

b. Connectives -j(ə), -j(ə) -j(ə), or -g'ə -g'ə 'and':
ba. a-č'á-j-ȝ'ək'a 'bread-and-salt', a-cǎ-j-ž'body' (skin-and-flesh).
bb. waxə-j=čnə́-j//waxə́-k'ə-j=čná-k'ə-j 'twenty-four hours' (night-and-day-and).
bc. wax(ə+n)-g'ə́=čə+n-g'ə 'twenty-four hours' (night-time-and-day-time-and).

2.1.8.2. Suffixation.

Suffixation is quite a common strategy for deriving nouns from other nouns, verbs and adjectives. The most productive derivational suffixes are:

-ar	abstract nouns: a-mat°[a]-ár 'subject' (á-mat°a 'clothes, things'), až°[a]-ár 'dictionary' (áž°a 'word').
-ga	nouns with instrumental meaning: a-žə́-ga 'shovel' (a-ž-rá 'to dig').
-j°ə	mainly deverbal *nomina agentis*: á-ȝərj°-j°ə 'listener' (á-ȝərj°-ra 'to listen').
-m+ta	'the result of': á-laga-mta 'beginning' (á-laga-ra 'to begin').
-ra	abstract nouns: á-pšȝa-ra 'beauty' (á-pšȝa 'beautiful'); the suffix is etymologically the same as the masdar suffix.
-r+ta	'the place of': a-tə́ž'ə-rta 'publishing house' (cf. a-tə́+ž'-ra 'to publish').
-š'a	'manner of': a-waj°ə́-š'a 'human quality' (a-waj°ə́ 'man, human').
-ta	'location': a-g°-tá 'centre' (a-g°ə́ 'heart').
-t°ə	attributive suffix: a-zc'aa-t°ə́ 'question, problem' (a-z+c'+aa-rá 'to ask about').
-wa	'ethnicity': áps-wa 'Abkhazian', ágər-wa 'Megrelian'.
-x°	'pertaining to the notion expressed by the root': áž°a-x° 'speech' (áž°a 'word').

The following derivational suffixes are less productive:

-c	'single': a-bɣə́-c '(single) leaf' (a-bɣə́ 'leaf'), a-dá-c 'root' (a-dá 'root').
-nə+za	a-mj°a-nə́za 'provisions' (á-mj°a 'road'), a-ma-nə́za 'shield' (*ma 'hand').
-s	'small, little' (especially with words denoting the young of animals: a-sə́-s 'lamb', a-h°ə́-s 'calf', a-ph°ə́+s 'woman', originally – 'little/young woman').
-s+pa//-z+ba	a-ph°ə́-spa//a-ph°ə́-zba 'young woman' (cf. a-phá 'daughter'), áh°ə-spa//áh°ə-zba 'knife' (cf. áh°a 'sword').
-za	a-pə́+za 'leader' (apə- 'in front of') , a-j°ə́+za 'friend' (cf. j°(ə)- 'two'?), a-xə́+za 'blanket' (a-xə́ 'head').

2.1.8.3. Prefixation.

Prefixation is rarely used in nominal derivation, cf. such few examples as á-zə+bža 'half, one of the halves' (-zə- 'one'+ábža 'half'), a-z+q'áza 'master' (z- benefactive prefix+a-q'áza 'master'), a-c°+máč°+ra 'deficiency' (detrimental prefix+small+abstract suffix), etc.

2.1.8.4. Conversion.

Many verbs and adjectives can be made nouns by means of conversion, without undergoing any formal change.

a. (Stative/Dynamic) Masdar → Noun:
áj-la-zaa-ra 'to be intermixed in the mass' → 'composition', áj-ba-š'-ra 'to fight' → 'war', áj-ma-da-ra 'to connect' → 'communication', áj-lə-m-ga-ra 'not to understand' → 'absurdity', áj-n-aa-la-ra 'to reconcile' → 'reconciliation'.

In some cases the derived noun has a different stress position: a-j°-rá 'to write' - a-j°ə́-ra 'writing', a-pxa-rá 'to warm' - a-pxá-ra 'warmth', etc.

b. Pure Verbal Stem → Noun:
a-pə́+š°a 'experience' (a-pə́+š°a-ra 'to try'), a-k°ə́+pš 'young' (á-k°+pš-ra 'to look upon'), a-d+c'á 'task' (á-d+c'a-ra 'to give order'), a-c°axə́ 'store' (á-c°ax-ra 'to hide'), a-lóx 'ingredient' (á-l+x-ra 'to choose, produce').

c. Adjective → Noun:
á-q'apš 'red' → 'a red one'; a-bzə́ja 'good' → 'a good one'; ápx'at°əj 'the first' → 'the first one'.

2.2. ADJECTIVES.

Formally adjectives differ from nouns only by their syntactic function. Often it is difficult to distinguish even basic (non-derived) adjectives from nouns, when they, like nouns, take the generic or the indefinite article (á-šk'°ak'°a 'ART-white', šk'°ák'°a-k' 'white-IDF'), plural marker (a-waá šk'°ák'°a-k°a 'white people'; cf. also šk'°ák'°a-k°a-k' 'white-PL-IDF = some whites'), adverbial suffix (waj°ə́ šk'°ák'°a-s 'as a white man'), etc. When modifying a noun, they fall within the scope of adjective morphology, but when used independently, they behave like nouns.

Adjectives can be used attributively or predicatively. Attributive adjectives usually serve as post-modifiers, following their head noun (j-án rácha 'his(H:M)-mother poor = his poor mother', a-wós dəw 'ART-job big = a great job'). They usually precede their head if derived by suffixation (most commonly, by means of the suffix -t°(ə+j)) from other word classes, such as nouns (a-xáh°+t°j°nə 'stone house', a-ȝór+lə+x k'anát' 'steel cable') or adverbs (jax'a+t°ə́+j a-wós 'today's business'). Attributive nouns modifying other nouns are also preposed: a-bərfən c'k'ə 'the silk frock', a-x'ə psha 'the golden king', a-kə́rt+wa š°q'°ə 'Georgian book'; cf. also such compounds as aps+ádg'əl 'motherland' (Abkhaz-land), x'ə́+bla 'female name' (gold-eye).

Predicative adjectives can be pre-modifiers, cf. the attributive use a-j°ən bzə́ja 'ART-house good' vs. the predicative jə-bzə́ja-w a-j°ə́ 'which-good-PRES:STAT:NFIN ART-house = a good house'. The post-modifier position is equally possible, in which case the predicative adjectives form the base of the stative verb: a-j°ə́ ø-bzə́ja-wə-p' 'ART-house it-good-PRES:STAT-FIN = the house is good'.

In combinations of attributive adjectives with non-human nouns, irrespective of the position of the modifier, the plural marker is usually attached to the final member of the group: á-mj°a bzə́ja-k°a 'ART-road good-PL = good roads', a-tawróxt° xtə́s-k°a 'historical events'. In case of the attributive postposed adjectives referring to human beings, co-reference is more usual: á-č'k'°ən-c°a bzə́ja-k°a 'ART-boy-PL good-PL = good guys' (cf. Grammatika 49), though with preposed adjectives, again, only the last element becomes inflected for number, cf. jax'at°ə́j á-č'k'°ən-c°a 'today's lads'.

2.2.1. The Morphological Structure of the Adjective:

[generic article]+[inflectional prefixes]+[stem]+[inflectional suffixes]+[indefinite article]+[adverbial suffix]

Not all these elements can co-occur, and some are in complementary distribution. E.g. co-occurrences of generic article with indefinite article, the possessive prefix, instrumental and adverbial suffix are not possible.

2.2.2. Adjective Stem and Inflection.

The adjective stem is understood as the part of adjective without articles and inflectional affixes. The stem can be simplex (*až°* 'old'), compound (*la+š'ca* 'dark'), or derived (*mč'+t°ə* 'wooden'). It can be used in a zero-article form (cf. *ajmaá q'apš'ó zac'°ó-k'* 'only one red shoe'), with one of the articles (*a-bərfən c'k'ó* 'the silk dress', *q'apš'ó-k'* 'a red (one)'), or can take various inflectional elements.

A. The inflectional Prefixes:

possessive prefixes: *r-tawróxt°tagólazaaš'a* 'their historical situation'.

B. The inflectional Suffixes:

a. intensive suffix -*ʒa*: *á-q'apš'-ʒa* 'very red'.
b. plural ending -*k°a*: *á-q'apš'-k°a* 'reds'.
c. instrumental suffix -*la*: *q'apš'ó-la* 'by the red'.
d. adverbial suffix -*s*: *q'apš'ó-s* 'as red'.
e. comparative suffix -*c'as*: *q'apš'-c'ás* 'as red'.
f. irreal suffix -*š°a*: *q'apš'-š°á* 'as if red'.
g. privative suffix -*da*: *q'apš'ó-da* 'without the red'.

2.2.3. Degrees of Comparison.

The comparative degree of adjectives is formed by means of the comparative premodifiers *ajhá//jahá* 'more', *ác'k'°əs* 'than', *áasta* 'than' (*ajhá jə-dów-wə(-p')* 'bigger (is)', -*ác'k'°əs ájγ-wə(-p')* '(is) better than', *jacó ø-áasta jax'á šáwra-wə-p'* 'today is hotter than yesterday'), in which case we see a predicate form derived from an adjective. In the comparative degree both attributive and predicative adjectives precede the noun they modify, cf. *a-j°ən bzója* 'ART-house good' vs. *jə-bzója-w a-j°nó* 'REL-good-PRES:STAT:NFIN ART-house' = 'a good house', the comparative degree of both of which will be *ajhá jə-bzója-w a-j°nó* 'more REL-good-PRES:STAT:NFIN ART-house = a better house'. Sometimes the 3rd p. pl. possessive prefix is added to the comparative form: *jə-r-ájγ'ə-w* 'better (of them)', *jə-r-ajc°á-w* 'worse (of them)'. In some cases the comparative degree is formed by means of (partially) suppletive stems: *a-bzója* 'good' – *j-ájγ'ə-w* 'better'; *á-c°g'a* 'bad' - *j-ajc°á-w* 'worse'.

The superlative degree is formed by means of the emphatic suffix -*(ʒ)ʒa*: *a-dów-ʒʒa* '(really) very big one', *jə-q'apš-ʒá* 'very red'.

2.2.4. Intensifiers.

To some adjectives intensifying elements, or intensifiers, can be added:

a. High Intensity:

-*haha+ra*	*ájk°ac'°a* 'black'	–	*ájk°ac'°-háhara* 'very black';
-*haha+ra+ʒa*	*ájk°ac'°a* 'black'	–	*ajk°ac'°-háharaʒa* 'very black';
-*k'ak'a+ra*	*a-q'°áš* 'snow-white'	–	*a-q'°áš-k'ak'ára* 'extremely white';
-*q'°aq'°a+ra*	*á-pšʒa* 'beautiful'	–	*á-pš+ʒa-q'°áq'°ara* 'very beautiful';
-*samsal*	*á-jk°ac'°a* 'black'	–	*á-jk°ac'°a-samsál* 'raven-black';
-*x°c'°a(-ra)*	*á-q'apš'* 'red'	–	*a-q'apš'ó-x°c'°a(ra)* 'deep red, purple';

b. Low Intensity:

ba. prefixes:

aa+zə-	*j-aazó-q'apš'ə-w* 'reddish'.
c°ə-	*a-c°ó-q'apš'* 'reddish'.

bb. suffixes:

-*xə+c*	*a-p'á* 'thin'	–	*a-p'a-xóc* 'thinly';
-*š'š'ə+ra*	*a-q'°ánda* 'lukewarm' –		*a-q'°anda-š'š'óra* 'just a bit warm'.

The low intensity prefix *aa+zə-* is a combination of the directional preverb 'hither' and the benefactive prefix, while the *c°ə-* is the detrimental prefix (see **2.9.11.**). Some of the suffixal intensifiers can be ideophonic in origin.

2.2.5. Adjective Derivation.

The main means of adjective derivation are compounding (including reduplication), affixation and conversion.

2.2.5.1. Compounding.

a. Noun+Adjective:
a-baa+psó 'bad' (rotten-soul), *á-la+ša* 'light' (eye-light).

b. Adjective+Verb:
á-š+la 'grey' (white-verbal root 'be in the mass').

c. Noun+Verb
á-ma+r+ja 'easy' (hand-CAUS-lie), *a-g°ó+m+bəl* 'heartless' (heart-not-burn), *a-g°+k'ó* 'nice' (heart-catch).

2.2.5.1.1. Reduplication.

á-g'a+g'a 'round', *a-k'á+k'a* 'hard, rough', *a-k'az+k'áz* 'transparent and shining', *á-cər-cər* 'shining', *á-la+x=č'ə+x(a)* 'energetic' (eye+?=awake), *a-gaʒá-maʒa* 'foolish' (*a-gaʒá* 'fool', with the dissimilative change of the initial consonant of the second root).

2.2.5.2. Affixation.

a. Prefixation.

a-c°ó+š 'grey, pale' (DETR+white).
a-c°ó+q'apš' 'reddish' (DETR+red).
á-q'[a]+apš' 'red' (*q'a*+red).
a-zó+q'apš' 'reddish' (BENF+red).

b. Suffixation:

-*c'°a*	*á-ja+c'°a* 'green', *á-jk°a+c'°a* 'black'; -*c'°a* is probably originally an intensifying suffix, used also in the derivation of adverbs (cf. -*g°ərγ'a+c'°á* 'gladly', from *a-g°órγ'a* 'joy(ful)').
-*ʒa*	*á-pš+ʒa* 'beautiful' (a superlative suffix, see above).
-*j°ə*	the agentive suffix derived from the "human" suffix (present, in particular, in *a-wa+j°ó* 'man'), cf. *a-γ'óč'+j°ó* 'thief' (*a-γ'óč'-ra* 'to steal').
-*t°(ə)//-t°ə+j*	the most productive adjectivizing suffixes: *a-psabára+t°* 'natural' (*a-psabára* 'nature'), *a-bj°á+t°* '(of) copper' (*a-bj°á* 'copper'), *a-tópa+n+t°ə+j* 'local' (*a-təp* 'place'), *jax'a+t°ó+j* 'contemporary' (*jax'á* 'today'), *c'aq'a+t°ó+j* 'which is below' (*c'aq'á* 'below').
-*x°(ə)*	'possession of feature' (probably from *a-x°ó* 'share, part'), e.g. *a-rócha+x°* 'miserable' (*a-rócha* 'poor').
-*ga*	'bearer of a certain quality' (derived from the verbal root *ga* 'to carry'): *a-k°+na+ga* 'suitable' (*á-k°+na+ga-ra* 'to befit').
-*k'°ak'°a*	*á-š+k'°ak'°a* 'white' (originally an intensifying suffix, see above in **2.2.4.**).

2.2.5.3. Conversion.

Adjectives can be formed by means of simple conversion out of other classes of words.

a. Nouns as adjectives: *ápswa* 'Abkhazian' – *ápswa žºlar* 'Abkhazian people', *a-mšǝ́n* 'sea' – *a-mšǝ́n ʒǝ* 'sea water'.

b. From verbal stems: *a-gºragá* 'reliable' (< *a-gº+ra-ga-rá* 'to trust'), *a-č'ǝ́xa* 'vivid, energetic' (< *a-č'ǝ́+xa-ra* 'to wake up').

c. From verbal adjectives (participles): *a-k'rǝ+z+c'á+z+k'+wa* 'important' (ART-much-which-PREV-which-hold-PRES.PART), *z+cºa+z+tºǝ́+m* 'pregnant' (whose-skin-which-does not belong). Analytical participial constructions are also quite popular, according, for example, to such models as name+participle *ø-z-má-w* 'having' (*a-int'erés ø-z-má-w* 'interesting'), name + *ø-z-lá-w* 'containing' (*á-mč' ø-z-lá-w* 'powerful'), adverb + *jǝ́-q'a-w* 'being' (*aajgºá jǝ́-q'a-w* 'nearby'). Cf. also *ak'ǝ́r j-a-psá-w* 'dear, respected' ('who has much value'), *zǝ́-lax' ajk'ºǝ́-w* 'sad' ('whose forehead is dark'), *hºaá z-má-m* 'endless' ('border which-not-having'), *a-cént'r ø-ax' jǝ-ca-wá* 'centripetal' ('the one who is going to the centre').

2.3. PRONOUNS.

2.3.1. Personal Pronouns.

Singular	Plural
sa+rá 'I'	*ha+rá* 'we'
ba+rá 'thou' (H:F)	
wa+rá 'thou' (H:M)	*šºa+rá* 'you'
wa+rá 'thou' (NH)	
la+rá 'she' (H:F)	
ja+rá 'he' (H:M)	*da+rá* 'they'
ja+rá 'it' (NH)	
(*wǝj* 'it, he, she')	(*wǝrt* 'they')

In the singular, the marked term is 'feminine', which differs from the 2ⁿᵈ and 3ʳᵈ p. sg. human masculine and non-human pronouns sharing the same root.

All personal pronouns can be used without the suffix *-ra* (though the use of the suffixless *da* 'they' and *ja* 'he, it' is less common). Whereas in the 3ʳᵈ p. sg. the human masculine and non-human pronouns coincide, the class assignment is reflected on verb-forms, cf. *jará d-ca-wá-jt'* 'he (s)he(H)-go-PRES:DYN-FIN' vs. *jará ø-ca-wá-jt'* 'it it(NH)-go-PRES:DYN-FIN'.

The demonstrative *wǝj* 'that' is often used in the function of the 3ʳᵈ p. sg., without gender distinctions. Its plural counterpart is *wǝrt* 'they'. Under Russian influence, the 2ⁿᵈ p. pl. is used as a polite address to a single addressee. In villages, such usage is traditionally restricted to situations when the daughter-in-law addresses parents of her husband.

Some authors (cf. Grammatika 35) regard the parallel plural forms for 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ persons (*har-t* and *šºar-t*, respectively) as expressing the inclusive-exclusive distinctions, though others (like K. Lomtatidze) reject this idea. At present, at any rate, the inclusive-exclusive category does not seem to be existent in Abkhaz.

Abkhaz is a pro-drop language: the verbal agreement indicates the participants of the situation sufficiently obvious, which makes the use of pronouns in most cases superfluous.

2.3.2. Possession.

Possession is expressed by possessive prefixes *s(ǝ)-* 'my', *b(ǝ)-* 'thine' (H:F), *w(ǝ)-* 'thine' (H:M), *w(ǝ)-* 'thine' (NH), *l(ǝ)-* 'her' (H:F), *j(ǝ)-* 'his' (H:M), *a-* 'its' (NH), *h(a)-* 'our', *šº(ǝ)-* 'your', *r(ǝ)-* 'their', attached to the possessed nouns (*sǝ-šºqʷǝ́* 'my book', *r-ášta* 'their yard', *l-nap'ǝ́* 'her hand', etc.). The 2ⁿᵈ and 3ʳᵈ person sg. prefixes also express class/gender assignment.

Possession can also be indicated by the combination of the personal pronoun (usually in its shorter form) with the co-referenced (by means of possessive prefixes) substantive *-t'ǝ* 'possession', cf. *sa(-rá) s-t'ºǝ́* 'mine', *wa(-rá) wǝ-t'ºǝ́* 'thine' (H:M//NH), *la(-rá) l-t'ǝ́* 'hers' (H:F), *šºa(-rá) šº-t'ǝ́* 'yours' (PL), etc.

2.3.3. Demonstrative Pronouns.

Three degrees of deixis are distinguished in Abkhaz, expressed by variant forms:

'this' (closely)	*arǝ́j//abrǝ́j*
'that (visible) in the distance'	*anǝ́j//abnǝ́j*
'that over there (invisible)'	*wǝj//wǝbrǝ́j*

Class is not expressed in demonstratives.

2.3.4. Interrogative Pronouns.

The interrogative pronouns *d-árban* 'who?' and *j-árban* 'what?' use the etymologically complex stem *-ar+ba+n*, and differ only in the class prefixes (*d-* human vs. *j-* non-human). In order to say 'who am I, we, you?', etc. the same base is used, to which the appropriate personal prefixes are attached, cf. *s-árban* 'who am I?', *b-árban* 'who are you (H:F)?', *w-árban* 'who are you?' (H/NH), *h-árban* 'who are we?'.

The interrogative stems *-z+wǝs+da//-zwǝ́sta-da* refer to human referents only: (*sará*) *sǝ-zwǝ́s(ta)da* 'who am I?', (*wará*) *wǝ-zwǝ́s(ta)da* 'who are you (H:M)?', (*bará*) *bǝ-zwǝ́s(ta)da* 'who are you (H:F)?', (*lará//jará*) *dǝ-zwǝ́s(ta)da* 'who is she//he (H)?', (*dará*) *jǝ-zwǝ́s-da//jǝ-zwǝ́st(-cº)a-da//jǝ-zwǝ́st-kºa-da* 'who are they?'.

The possessive-interrogative 'whose?' is formed by the appropriate possessive prefix attached to the complex element *-z+t'ºǝ+da* (made up of the relative *-z*, attributive *-t'ºǝ* and the interrogative *-da*). E.g. *sǝ-zt'ºǝ́da* 'whose am I?', *bǝ-zt'ºǝ́da* 'whose are you (H:F)?', *jǝ-zt'ºǝ́da* 'whose is it?', etc.

The existential-interrogative pronouns use the base *-zak'ºǝza/ǝj* or *-zak'ºǝj* (consisting of the relative prefix *-z*, the verbal root *ak'ºǝ* 'to be', and interrogative suffixes *-za/ǝj, -j*), to which the appropriate personal prefixes are attached: (*sará*) *s-zak'ºǝ́(za)j* 'what am I?', (*bará*) *b-zak'ºǝ́(za)j* 'what are you (H:F)?', (*hará*) *h-zak'ºǝ́zaj* 'what are we?', etc.

2.3.5. Intensive Pronouns.

Intensive pronouns, which have also reflexive meaning, emphasize their antecedents: *sará s-xatá* 'I myself', *šºará šº-xatá* 'you yourselves'. One can distinguish also intensive-instrumental (*l-xála* 'she by herself', *a-xála* 'it by itself') and intensive-distributive (*xata-xatála* 'each by oneself') pronouns.

2.3.6. Indefinite Pronouns.

Some indefinite pronouns have different roots for human and non-human referents: *ak'ǝ́* 'something' (NH), *ak'ǝ́+r* 'anything', *aʒºǝ́* 'somebody' (H), *aʒºǝ́+r* 'anybody' (H), *pǝt+k'* 'a bit' (NH), *pǝt+jºǝ́+k'* 'a few' (H), *járbanzaalak'(')* or *jǝzak'ºǝ́zaalak'(')* 'whatever' (NH), *dárbanzaalak'(')* or *dzak'ºǝ́zaalak'(')* 'whoever' (H), (*d)ača+k'ǝ́* (NH), *dač+aʒºǝ́* (H) 'other'.

bit' (NH), *pət+j°ə́+k'* 'a few' (H), *járbanzaalak'(')* or *jəzak'°ózaalak'(')* 'whatever' (NH), *dárbanzaalak'(')* or *dzak'°ózaalak'(')* 'whoever' (H), (d)*ača+k'ə́* (NH), *dač+aʒ°ə́* (H) 'other'.

Other indefinite pronouns do not distinguish class: *da(w)sə́w* 'each', *zag'ə́* 'all', *ag'əj* (sg.) 'other', *ag'ə́rt* 'others'.

2.3.7. Negative Pronouns.

Abkhaz lacks true negative pronouns. Instead it uses pronouns *ak'ə́* 'something', *aʒ°ə́* 'somebody' with the suffixed conjunctional clitic -*g'ə* 'and, even' followed by the negative form of the verb: *ak'+g'ə́ ø-s-taxə́-m* 'one:NH-even it-I-want-not = I don't want anything', *aʒ°+g'ə́ d-sə-m-bá-ø-jt* 'one:H-even him/her-I-not-see-AOR-DYN:FIN = I did not see anybody'.

Other pronouns used in negative expressions are *ak'ə́mzarak'(g'ə)* 'anything', *aʒ°ə́mzarak'(g'ə)*//*aʒ°ə́mzar aʒ°(g')ə́* 'anybody', also followed by a negative verb.

2.4. NUMERALS.

2.4.1. Cardinal.

Unlike ordinal numerals, the cardinals take class agreement markers. 'One' has suppletive forms for humans and non-humans. Starting from 'two', the non-human suffix is -*ba*. In *x-pa* 'three', *p* is from -*b* by assimilation with *x*. The "human" suffix for 'two' is, unlike the following numbers, -*ǯ'a*. The human suffix for cardinals above 'two' is -*j°ə́(-k')*. In numerals from 1 to 10 stress falls on the final syllable, with the exception of the "human" form for 'two', where stress falls on the initial syllable.

	Non-Human	Human
1	*ak'ə́*	*aʒ°ə́*
2	*j°-ba*	*j°ə́-ǯ'a*
3	*x-pa*	*x-j°ə́(-k')*
4	*pš'-ba*	*pš'-j°ə́(-k')*
5	*x°-ba*	*x°-j°ə́(-k')*
6	*f-ba*	*f-j°ə́(-k')*
7	*bəž'-bá*	*bəž'-j°ə́(-k')*
8	*aa-bá*	*aa-j°ə́(-k')*
9	*ž°-ba*	*ž°-j°ə́(-k')*
10	*ž°a-bá*	*ž°a-j°ə́(-k')*

Tens are derived according to the formula '10-(and)-numeral(+suffix -*k'* 'one')'. In numerals from 11 to 19 it is the first syllable that is being stressed.

	Non-Human	Human	
11	*ž°á-j-za*	*ž°á-j-za-j°ə(-k')*	('10-and-1')[40]
12	*ž°á-j°a*	*ž°á-j°a-j°ə(-k')*	('10-2')
13	*ž°á-xa*	*ž°á-xa-j°ə(-k')*	('10-3')
14	*ž°ə́-j-pš'*	*ž°ə́-j-pš'-j°ə(-k')*	('10-and-4')
15	*ž°ə́/á-x°*	*ž°ə́/á-x°-j°ə(-k')*	('10-5')
16	*ž°á-f*	*ž°á-f-j°ə(-k')*	('10-6')
17	*ž°ə́-j-bž'*	*ž°ə́-j-bəž'-j°ə(-k')*	('10-and-7')
18	*ž°-áa*	*ž°-áa-j°ə(-k')*	('10-8')
19	*zá-j-ž°*	*zá-j-ž°-j°ə(-k')*	('10-and-9')[41]

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[40] *za* is the archaic root for 'one'.
[41] *za-j-ž°* is by dissimilation from **ž°a-j-ž°*.

'20' is *j°-a-ž°á* (NH)//*j°-a-ž°a-j°ə́-k'* (H) (2-times-10), '21' is *j°-a-ž°ə́-j ak'ə́* (NH)//*j°-a-ž°ə́-j aʒ°ə́* (H) (2-times-10-and 1), etc. The system between 20 and 100 is vigesimal, i.e. based on '20':

30	*j°-a-ž°ə́-j ž°a-ba*	('20 [2-times-10]-and 10')
31	*j°-a-ž°ə́-j ž°á-j-za*	('20 [2-times-10]-and 11')
40	*j°ə́-n-j°-a-ž°a*	('2-times-20')
41	*j°ə́-n-j°-a-ž°ə́-j ak'ə́*	('40 [2-times-20]-and 1')
50	*j°ə́-n-j°-a-ž°ə́-j ž°a-bá*	('40 [2-times-20]-and 10')
51	*j°ə́-n-j°-a-ž°ə́-j ž°á-j-za*	('40 [2-times-20]-and 11')
60	*xə́-n-j°-a-ž°a*	('3-times-20')
61	*xə-n-j°-a-ž°ə́-j ak'ə́*	('60 [3-times-20]-and 1')
70	*xə-n-j°-a-ž°ə́-j ž°a-bá*	('60 [3-times-20]-and 10')
80	*pš'ə́-n-j°-a-ž°a*	('4-times-20')
90	*pš'ə́-n-j°-a-ž°ə́-j ž°a-bá*	('80 [4-times-20]-and 10')

'One hundred' is *š°-k'ə* for NH, *š°-j°ə(-k')* for H, 'thousand' is *zk'ə* (NH)//*zək'-j°ə́(-k')* (H), 'four thousand' is *pš'-nə́-zk'*. 'Million' is borrowed via Russian: *a-millión*.

2.4.2. Ordinal.

The ordinal numerals, irrespective of the nature of the referent (human or non-human) are made up according to the pattern "the definite article//possessive prefix+numeral root+NH suffix -*ba*+attributive suffix -*t'°ə+j*", cf. *ák'-t'°əj* 'the first', *á-pš'-ba-t'°əj* 'the fourth', *á-ž°a-ba-t'°əj* 'the tenth', *rə́-pš'-ba-t'°əj* 'their fourth', etc. 'The second', in relation to humans, beside a regular form *á-j°-ba-t'°əj*, has a variant form *a-j°ə́-ǯ'a-t'°əj* (cf. Grammatika 1968: 56).

2.4.3. Other Numerals.

Apart from cardinals and ordinals, other numerals are:

distributive	*x-pa=x-pá* 'three each', *x-pa=x-pá-la* 'by threes' (-*la* instrumental suf.);
approximate	*pš'-ba-q'á* 'approximately four';
multiplicative	*j°ə́-n+t'°* 'twice', *x°ə́-n+t'°* 'five times' (numeral root+*n* 'times'+ attributive suf. -*t'°*);
partitive	*ábža* 'half', *á-pš'-ba-r-ak'* 'a quarter' (ART-four-NH-their-one);
completive	*á-x-pa(-g'ə)* 'all three', *á-pš'-ba-g'ə* 'all four', etc.

2.4.4. Syntactic Position of the Numerals.

Oneness is expressed by the suffix -*k'*, thus 'one tree' is *c'la-k'*, 'one man' is *wa+j°ə́-k'*. Starting with 'two' and until 11, the numerals can be preposed to the words they modify, functioning as prefixes: *j°-c'la-k'* 'two trees', *ž°a-mš* 'ten days', *x-j°ə́-h°sa* 'three women'. After 10, the numerals are used separately from the noun: *ž°ájza š°q'°ə́* 'eleven books'. A variant construction allows for the postposing of the numerals: *á-c'la-k°a j°-ba* 'two trees'.

2.5. POSTPOSITIONS.

Adpositions in Abkhaz are exclusively postpositive. They can be directional (-*ax'*, -*š+q'a*, -*q'a* 'towards', -*q'ə+n+t'°* 'from'), terminative (-*n+ʒa*, -*q'ə+n+ʒa* 'until, up to'), locative (-*č'ə*, -*q'+tnə* 'in, at'), instrumental (-*la* 'by, with, by means of'), benefactive (-*zə* 'for'), privative (-*da* 'without').

The postpositions agree with their nouns in person, class/gender and number:

(2)　a.　*s-áb*　　　　*jə-q'né*
　　　　my father　　his(H:M)-at
　　　　'at my father's place'.

　　b.　*h-j°óz-c°a*　　　*r-č'ó*
　　　　our-friend-PL:H　　their-at
　　　　'at our friends' place'.

Some postpositions cliticize to the noun, appearing as suffixes (3a), some are placed separately (3b), still others can be used both as suffixes (c) and as separate units with their own agreement pattern (d):

(3)　a.　*a-c'óx°a-nʒa*
　　　　its-tail-till
　　　　'till the end'

　　b.　*s-án*　　　　　*ló-šq'a*
　　　　my-mother　　her(H:F)-to
　　　　'to my mother'

　　c.　*də-l-ba-ra-[a-]zó*　　　　　　*d-cá-ø-jt'*
　　　　him/her-she-see-MASD-its-for　she-go-AOR-DYN:FIN
　　　　'she went in order to see him/her'

　　d.　*jə-x°əč°-k°a*　　　*r-zó*
　　　　his-child-PL　　them-for
　　　　'for his children'.

2.6. PARTICLES.

2.6.1. There are confirmative (*áaj* 'yes', (<) *ajáj* 'yes') and negative particles (*map'*, *mamáw*, *ʔaj* (orthographic *q'aj*) 'no').

2.6.2. Clitics.
a. Proclitics: *ag'ə-* (confirmation: *d-ag'ó-s-taxə-m* 'I indeed do not want him/her').
b. Enclitics: *-g'ə* 'and, even, too' (*wəj-g'ə* '(s)he too'), *-aj* emphatic (*jə-s-h°á-ø-jt'-aj* 'I did say it!'), *-g°əš'a* regret (*də-ps-g°óš'a-ø-jt'* 'alas, he died'), *-c°q'a* 'precisely, exactly' (*waž°ó-c°q'a* 'this very moment'), *(-)h°a* quotative (*j-áa+j-ø-[j]t'h°a ø-s-ahá-ø-jt'* 'they-come-AOR-DYN:FIN QUOT it-I-hear-AOR-DYN:FIN = I heard that they arrived'), etc.

2.7. INTERJECTIONS.

Interjections express various emotions and feelings: sorrow (*wónan!*), surprise or anger (*haj(t)!, nəx!, aájt'!*), encouragement (*ahaháj!, amárž'a!*), mild request (*abaapsó!*), etc.

2.8. DESCRIPTIVES.

Descriptives are a group of words with lowered categorial status. By their nature they are onomatopoeic, ideophonic, descriptive words or interjections, cf. *á-dəž°* the description of the sound of a strike, *a-č°ərč°ór* the description of birds' chirping, *a-vvó* the description of the

sound produced by bees or a passing car, etc. Descriptives can be used either in pure form with the article (e.g. *á-drəm d-k°aša-wá* '(s)he dancing noisily, energetically…'), or, most commonly, with the quotative clitic *-h°a*. They can easily be included into the paradigm of one or another grammatical class of words, usually in that of adverbs, describing the character of an action, cf. *á-drəm-drəm-h°a d-k°aša-wá-jt'* '(s)he is dancing producing much noise'.

2.9. VERBS.

The verb plays a central role in the Abkhaz morphological system, the finite verbal form serving as a sentence in miniature. The verbs can be dynamic or stative, transitive or intransitive. Within the dynamic verbs there is a subclass of so called 'labile' (or ambitransitive) verbs, whose stems are inherently neutral as to the feature [±transitive], and which can become either transitive or intransitive depending on the context.[42] Another small intermediate class is composed of inversive verbs, which combine both dynamic and stative morphology. Besides, verbs can appear either in finite or non-finite form, and have agreement according to class and person. A typical Abkhaz verb-form consists of a string of prefixes and suffixes, each occupying a rigidly defined position (slot).

2.9.1. Verbal Complex: Masdar Form.
The Abkhaz counterpart of the infinitive is the so-called *masdar*, a non-finite verbal form (also known as the verbal noun, resembling English gerunds like *going, doing*), which combines certain verbal and nominal features. The masdar suffix is *-ra* in the case of dynamic verbs and *-z+aa+ra* (more rarely *-ra*) with stative and inversive verbs. The stem of the masdar form is the part of the verb without the generic article and the masdar suffix. The masdar form lacks some of the slots, which appear in the conjugated (personal) form (see below). The following (not exhaustive) scheme shows the distribution of possible slots in the verbal form (cp. Spruit 1986: 15):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ART/AM	RFL	AM	RECI	PRV	RECI	NEG	CAUS	ROOT	EXT	MASD

The 1st slot can alternatively be filled either by the generic article or by the (oblique) agreement marker (AM). The masdar form can contain up to two agreement markers (slots 1 and 3): *s-ca-rá* 'me-go-MASD = my going', *h-ró-ta-ra* 'us-them-give-MASD = giving us to them'. Not all affixes listed above can co-occur in the masdar form. The minimal structure is represented by the simplex (non-derived) verb stem, e.g. *a-ca-rá* 'to go', with only slots 1, 9 and 11 filled. Slot 5 can contain a simple or a compound preverb: *a-p-q'a-rá* 'to cut' (slots 1-5-9-11), *[a-]áj-d+č'a-h°a-la-ra* 'to tie up to each other' (slots 1-4-5-9-10-11). Reciprocal marker can occupy either slot 4 or 6: *[a-]áj+ba-š'-ra* 'ART-RECI-kill-MASD = killing each other, warring' (slots 1, 4, 9, 11), *a-pə-j+ba-č-ra* 'ART-PREV-RECI-break-MSD = breaking each other' (slots 1, 5, 6, 9, 11).

2.9.2. Verbal Complex: Personal Form.
Taking into account the conjugated (personal) verbal form, the given above scheme of the slots inventory can be expanded, as the following scheme shows. Not all the affixes listed below can co-occur, and some are in complementary distribution. The minimal personal form must have at least slots 1, 11 and 15 filled. The stem of the personal form can be composed either of slot 11 only (thus being equal to the root), or can be added by slots 7, 9, 10 and 12. The present scheme of slots inventory contains 17 positions and is not exhaustive (cf. Spruit 1986: 89).

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[42]Cf. Hewitt (1982: 164).

1	2	3	4	5	6
S/DO/POSS/REL	IO/RECI	RELA/RECI/POT...	IO/POSS	REFL	FPREV

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
SPREV	A/RECI/REL	NEG	CAUS	ROOT	EXT	NUM	ASP	TENSE	NEG	END

Comments on:

slot 1   The left-most element is the Intransitive Subject (S) in the absolute construction (*s-ca-wá-jt'* 'I(S)-go-PRES:DYN-FIN'), Direct Object (DO) in the ergative constructions (*jə-z-ba-wá-jt'* 'it(DO)-I(A)-see-PRES:DYN-FIN'), Possessive prefix (POSS) in the Reflexive construction (*l-čó-l-š'-wa-jt'* 'her(POSS)-REFL-she(A)-kill-PRES:DYN-FIN'), and Relative prefix in non-finite relative form (*jə́-q'a-z* 'REL-be-PAST:STAT:NFIN = the one who was').

slot 2   Indirect Object (IO): *jə-ló-s-ta-ø-jt'* 'it(DO)-to her(IO)-I(A)-give-AOR-DYN-FIN = I gave it to her'; Reciprocal prefix (RECI): *h-aj-c°+áž°a-ø-jt'* 'we(S)-RECI-speak-AOR-DYN-FIN = we spoke with each other', *h-aj+ba-bá-ø-jt'* 'we-RECI-see-AOR-DYN-FIN = we saw each other'.

slot 3   Slot 3 accommodates one of the following prefixes: Relational (RELA): *s-l-á-c°+až°a-ø-jt'* 'I(S)-her(IO)-to(RELA)-talk-AOR-DYN-FIN = I talked to her'; Benefactive (BENF): *jə-l-zó-q'a-j-c'a-ø-jt'* 'it(DO)-her-BENF-PREV-A-ROOT-AOR-DYN-FIN = he did it for her'; Detrimental (DETR): *jə-s-c°ó-l-ga-ø-jt'* 'it-me-DETR-she-take-AOR-DYN-FIN = she took it from me against my will'; Non-volitional (NVOL): *jə-s-ámxa-fa-ø-jt'* 'it-I-NVOL-eat-AOR-DYN-FIN = I ate it involuntarily'; Comitative (COM): *d-ló-c-ca-ø-jt'* '(s)he-she-COM-go-AOR-DYN-FIN = (s)he went with her'; Potential (POT): *jə-sə-z-dór-wa-m* 'it-I-POT-know-PRES-DYN-NEG = I don't know this'; Relative (REL): *jə-šó-q'a-j-c'a-wa* 'it-how-PREV-A-do-PRES:DYN:NFIN = how he is doing it'; Reciprocal (RECI): *h-aj-c-áj+ba-š'-wa+n* 'we-RECI-COM-RECI-kill-IMPRF = we fought together'.

slot 4   The second Indirect Object (IO): *jə-sə-z-ló-j-ta-ø-jt'* 'it(DO)-me(IO)-BENF-her(IO)-he(A)-give-AOR-DYN-FIN = he gave it to her for me'; possessive preverbal prefix: *jə-s-š°ó-s-c'a-ø-jt'* 'it-my-PREV-I-put-AOR-DYN-FIN = I put it on'; possessive prefix in stative verb-forms: *á-bla - a-g°ó j-a-sárk°a-wə-p'* 'ART-eye ART-heart it-its-mirror-PRES:STAT-FIN = the eye is the mirror of the heart'.

slot 5   Reflexive (REFL) prefix: see the example in the comment for slot 1.

slot 6   Free Preverbs (FPREV), in contrast to the Stem Preverbs not forming a part of the verbal stem: *d-na-t°á-ø-jt'* '(s)he-PREV('thither')-sit-AOR-DYN-FIN = (s)he sat down (for a moment)'; local prefixes: *d-ax'-ca-wá* '(s)he-where-go-PRES:DYN:NFIN = to where (s)he goes'.

slot 7   Stem Preverbs (SPREV), which form a part of the stem: *jə-q'a-s-c'a-wá-jt'* 'it-SPREV-I-ROOT-PRES:DYN-FIN = I am doing it'.

slot 8   Agent (= Transitive Subject): *jə-z-ga-wá-jt'* 'it(DO)-I(A)-take-PRES:DYN-FIN'; Reciprocal affix *aj+ba*, which in this case fulfils the role of the agent, cf. *š°-aj+ba-bá-ø-jt'* 'you(DO)-RECI(A)-see-AOR-DYN-FIN = you saw each other';[43] Relative prefix *z(ə)-*: *d-zó-də-z-k'ə-la-z* 'him-REL-SPREV-REL-hold-EXT-PIDF:NFIN = the one who received him'.

slot 9   Negation (NEG) prefix: *jə-q'a-sə-m-c'á-ø-jt'* 'it-SPREV-I-NEG-ROOT-AOR-DYN-FIN = I did not do it'.

slot 10   Causative (CAUS): *jə-s-zó-mə-r-čaj-ø-jt'* 'it-I-POT-NEG-CAUS-good-AOR-DYN-FIN = I did not manage to make it better'.

slot 11   Root (simple or compounded).

[43]Lomtatidze (1960: 280) regards this structure as intransitive. Cf. the discussion in Hewitt (1979a: 218-223).

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slot 12   Extension (EXT): a) introvert *-la-*: *jə-tá-j-ga-la-ø-jt'* 'it-SPREV-he-bring-EXT-AOR-DYN:FIN = he brought it inside'; b) extravert *-aa*[44]: *jə-š'+tó-pr-aa-ø-jt'* 'it-SPREV-fly-EXT-AOR-DYN:FIN = it flew out'.

slot 13   Number marker: *jə-t°a-k°á-z* 'REL-sit-PL-PAST:STAT:NFIN = 'those who were sitting'.

slot 14   One of the Aspectual (ASP) suffixes: Emphatic (EMPH), Iterative (ITER), Excessive (EXC).

slot 15   Tense Marker: (a) finite dynamic: Perfect (PERF): *jə-q'a-s-c'a-x'á-jt'* 'it-SPREV-I-ROOT-PERF-DYN:FIN = I have done it', Future I (FUT1): *s-ca-p'* 'I-go-FUT1 = I shall (shortly) go', etc.; (b) finite stative: *s-t°á-wə-p'* 'I-sit-PRES:STAT-FIN = I am sitting'; (c) non-finite dynamic: *jə-ca-wá* 'REL-go-PRES:DYN:NFIN = who is going', *jə-cá-z* 'REL-go-PIDF:NFIN = who left'; (d) non-finite stative: *jó-q'a-w* 'REL-be-PRES:STAT:NFIN = the one who is', *jó-q'a-z* 'REL-be-PAST:STAT:NFIN = the one who was'.

slot 16   Negation (NEG) suffix: *d-t°a-m* '(s)he-sit-NEG = (s)he is not sitting', *s-ca-ró-m* 'I-go-FUT1-NEG = I don't think I'll go'.

slot 17   Ending slot can accommodate one of the following markers: Dynamic:Finite: *jə-z-bá-ø-jt'* 'it-I-see-AOR-DYN:FIN = I saw it', Stative:Finite: *s-t°á-wə-p'* 'I-sit-PRES:STAT-FIN = I am sitting', Conditional (COND): *s-ca-(wá-za+)r* 'I-go-(PRES)-if = if I go', Emphatic (EMPH): *d-cá-ø-jt'-aj* '(s)he-go-AOR-DYN:FIN-EMPH = (s)he did go!', Interrogative (QU): *š°-ca-wá-ma?* 'you:PL-go-PRES:DYN-QU = are you going?', Subjunctive (SUBJ): *d-cá-aajt'* '(s)he-go-SUBJ = let her/him go!', etc.

2.9.3. Actant Marking.

Agreement is both class/gender and personal, and realized through appropriate class/person markers, which occupy rigidly determined slots in the verb-form (cf. the scheme above). The gender distinction (H:M/F, NH) is relevant for the 2nd and 3rd p. sg. In the 2nd p. the marked term is F(eminine), whereas M(asculine) marker formally coincides with the N(on-)H(uman) one, cf. *wə-ca* 'you (H:M//NH) go!' vs. *b-ca* 'you (H:F) go!'.

The verb-form can encode up to 4 actants, which are referred to by class/person prefixes. A four-person verb is only possible when a three-place verb contains either the benefactive (BENF) (d), or both the benefactive and causative (CAUS) prefixes (e).

(4)   a.   *s-ca-wá-jt'*
           I-go-PRES:DYN-FIN
           'I am going'.

     b.   *wə-z-bá-wa-jt'*
           you (H:M, NH)-I-see-PRES:DYN-FIN
           'I see you'.

     c.   *jə-ló-s-ta-wa-jt'*
           'it-(to)her-I-give-PRES:DYN-FIN
           'I am giving it to her'.

     d.   *á-salam*   *ø-sə-z-ló-š°-t*
           greeting   it-I-BENF-(to)her-you:PL-give
           'give her my greetings!'.

     e.   *wə-lə-z-j-á-sə-r-c°až°a-wa-jt'*
           you-her-BENF-him-RELA-I-CAUS-speak-PRES:DYN-FIN
           'I shall make you speak with him about (it) for her'.

[44]Cf. the terminology in Spruit (1983: 17).

There are three series of agreement markers, which can be called Absolutive, Oblique and Ergative (in Hewitt's terminology, column I, II and III markers). Etymologically they (with the exception of *d(ə)-* and *na-*)[45] represent the same material as the nominal possessive prefixes and the roots of the class and personal pronouns, from which latter the first two obviously derive.

Table of Agreement Markers

Person	Gender		Absolutive		Oblique		Ergative	
			Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl	Sg	Pl
1st			*s(ə)-*	*h(a)-*	*s(ə)-*	*h(a)-*	*s(ə)-//z(ə)-*	*h(a)-//aa-*
2nd	H	M	*w(ə)-*	*š°(ə)-*	*w(ə)-*	*š°(ə)-*	*w(ə)-*	*š°(ə)-//ž°(ə)-*
		F	*b(ə)-*		*b(ə)-*		*b(ə)-*	
	NH		*w(ə)-*		*w(ə)-*		*w(ə)-*	
3rd	H	M	*d(ə)-*	*j(ə)-*	*j(ə)-*	*r(ə)-//d(ə)-*	*j(ə)-*	*r(ə)-//d(ə)-*
		F			*l(ə)-*		*l(ə)-*	
	NH		*j(ə)-*		*a-*		*(n)a-*	

Comments to the table:

1. If the verb immediately follows its referent, the 3rd p. sg. and pl. agreement prefix *j(ə)-* is either zero - if it is unstressed, or schwa - if stressed, cf. *a-lá//dará ø-ca-wá-jt'* 'the dog//they is/are going', *a-ž'á//dará ə́-pa-wa-jt'* 'the hare//they is/are jumping'.
2. If the verb contains a causative prefix, the 3rd p. pl. personal marker *r(ə)-* of the oblique and ergative series becomes *d(ə)-*, cf. examples in **1.5.** above.
3. In the ergative series, the 2nd p. sg., 1st and 2nd p. pl. fricative prefix becomes voiced if it immediately precedes the initial voiced consonant of the verb, cf. *jə-s-k'-wá-jt'* 'it-I-catch' vs. *jə-z-ga-wá-jt'* 'it-I-carry'.
4. In the ergative series, the NH 3rd p. sg. is *na-* if the verb contains a preverb (cf. *j-a-də́r-wa-jt'* 'it-it-knows' vs. *jə-p-na-q'a-wá-jt'* 'it-PREV-it-cuts'), or if the verb is tri-personal[46] (cf. the verb *á-ta-ra* 'to give': *j-á-na-ta-wa-jt'* 'it-to it-it-gives').

The distinction between transitive vs. intransitive verbs is important. Stative verbs are intransitive, dynamic verbs can be either transitive or intransitive. The agreement of transitive verbs follows the ergative pattern, the ergative construction being expressed by place and (partially) form of (class/person) agreement markers. Compare examples a. and b. in (5)

(5)　　a.　　*s-jə́-s(ə)-ø-(j)t'*
　　　　　　I(S)-him(O)-hit-AOR-DYN:FIN　　　　　vs.
　　　　　　'I hit him'.

[45]*na-* represents another exception in that its vowel is *a*, as opposed to *ə* in all other agreement prefixes. Note that *h(a)-* and *aa-* in the 2nd p. pl. are underlying **h*ə-*.
[46]Cf. Hewitt (1979: 103).

(5)　　a.　　*s-jə́-s(ə)-ø-(j)t'*
　　　　　　I(S)-him(O)-hit-AOR-DYN:FIN　　　　　vs.
　　　　　　'I hit him'.

　　　　b.　　*də-z-bá-ø-jt'*
　　　　　　him/her(O)-I(A)-see-AOR-DYN:FIN
　　　　　　'I saw him/her'.

2.9.4. Stative ~ Dynamic.

The two major verb classes are stative vs. dynamic. Stative verbs express a state (cf. *s-gə́la-wə-p* 'I am standing', *də́-c°a-wə-p* '(s)he is sleeping') and lack a number of categories found in dynamic verbs. Any nominal root, adverb, or even some preverbs can be used as a basis for a stative verb, cf. *a-x°əč'ə́* 'child' – *d-x°əč'ə́-wə-p* '(s)he is a child', *á-pšʒa* 'beautiful' – *də-pšʒá-wə-p* '(s)he is beautiful', *c°ə́k°a* 'early' – *(jə-)c°ə́k°a-wə-p* 'it is early', PREV *ta-* 'inside' – *d-tá-wə-p* '(s)he is inside'.

Stative verbs can be made dynamic by adding certain suffixes, like the transformative suffix *-xa* 'become' (cf. STAT *jə-q'apš'ə́-wə-p* 'it is red' – DYN *jə-q'apš'-xa-wá-jt'* 'it becomes red') or the causative prefix *r(ə)-* (cf. STAT *jə-k°áč'ə-wə-p* 'it is short' – DYN *jə-sə-r-k°áč'-wa-jt'* 'I am making it short'). Typically, all non-derived stative verbs have their dynamic counterparts: *s-gə́la-wə-p* 'I am standing' vs. *s-gə́la-wa-jt'* 'I am standing up', *də́-c°a-wə-p* '(s)he is sleeping' vs. *də́-c°a-wa-jt'* '(s)he is falling asleep', *s-t°á-wə-p* 'I am sitting' vs. *s-t°a-wá-jt'* 'I am sitting down', etc.

Dynamic verbs express action or process and possess a full range of aspect, mood and tense-forms (see below).

2.9.5. Finite ~ Non-finite.

A salient feature of the Abkhaz verb is the distinction between the finite forms (expressing the finiteness of an action) and non-finite forms (expressing non-finiteness), cf. *də-z-bá-ø-jt'* 'I saw him/her' vs. *jə́-z-ba-z* 'whom I saw', *jə-z-gá-š-t'* 'I shall take it' vs. *jə́-z-ga-ša* 'the one which I will have to take'. The verbs have parallel finite and non-finite forms in all tenses. The finite verbs can constitute an independent sentence, while the non-finite verb-forms usually form a dependent clause.

2.9.6. Inversive.

A small group of verbs is called "inversive": they combine morphological characteristics of dynamic and stative verbs. They can further be subdivided under such rubrics as *verba sentiendi* (verbs of feelings, affections) and *verba habendi* (verbs of possession). Cf. the following forms, which combine the superficially ergative prefixing with the stative suffixing:

(6)　　a.　　*jə-s-taxə́-wə-p*
　　　　　　it-I-want-PRES:STAT-FIN
　　　　　　'I want it'

　　　　b.　　*də-s-c°ə́-mɣa-wə-p*
　　　　　　(s)he-I-DETR-hateful-PRES:STAT-FIN
　　　　　　'I hate him/her'

　　　　c.　　*jə-sə́-ma-wə-p*
　　　　　　it-I-have-PRES:STAT-FIN
　　　　　　'I have it'

opposite is the rule when the verb is transitive, cf. the inversive verb *a-g°+a-pxa-rá* 'to like' vs. the transitive *a-g°+á-ta-ra* 'to notice':

(7)   a.   *jə-s-g°+a-pxa-wá-jt'*
          it-I-PREV-warm-PRES:DYN-FIN
          'I like it'.

     b.   *jə-g°+á-s-ta-wa-jt'*
          it-PREV-I-give-PRES:DYN-FIN
          'I notice it'.

2.9.7. Number Agreement within VP.
Beside the agreement for number as expressed on the verb by class and person prefixes, optionally number can also be expressed by the nominal plural suffix *-k°a* added to the verbal stem, cf. *š°-t'°a-k°á* 'you:PL-sit down-PL!', *jə-ca-k°a-wá-jt'* 'they-go-PL-PRES:DYN-FIN = they are going'.

2.9.8. Argument Dropping.
Certain verbal forms omit (in)transitive subject arguments.

2.9.8.1. Obligatory Omission of Arguments.
a. The deletion of the 3rd p. sg. non-human and 3rd p. pl. intransitive subject markers is obligatory if the verb immediately follows its referent: *a-lá ø-ca-wá-jt'* 'ART-dog it-go-PRES:DYN-FIN = the dog is going', *dará ø-ca-wá-jt'* 'they they-go-PRES:DYN-FIN = they are going', *aréj a-š°q'°á ø-só-ma-wə-p'* 'this ART-book it-I-have-PRES:STAT-FIN = I have this book'. The preceding referent in this case is understood as an external argument, which renders its internal marking redundant. This phenomenon is however limited to the above-mentioned markers. The argument is restored when another word is inserted between the verb and its referent: *a-waá jacə́ jə-cá-ø-jt'* 'the people left yesterday'.
b. The omission of the ergative marker is obligatory in positive (but less so in negated) present and past converbs: *jə-h°a-wá* 'it-speaking', *jə-q'a-c'a-nó* 'it-PREV-do-PCONV = having done this'. In word combinations *áš°a ø-h°a-wá* 'song it-singing', *s-nap'ó ø-ʒ°ʒ°a-nó* 'having washed my hands' both direct object and ergative subject markers are deleted, thus presenting superficially an argument-less verb-form.
c. The absolute subject argument is missing in the inverted forms, as well as in potential (8a) and non-volitional (8b) forms:

(8)   a.   *jə-sə-z-jə́-ta-wa-m*
          it(IO)-I(IO)-POT-to him(IO)-give-PRES:DYN-NEG
          'I cannot give it to him' (lit. 'it is not possible for me to give it to him')

     b.   *jə-s-ámxa-fa-ø-jt'*
          it(IO)-I(IO)-NVOL-eat-AOR-DYN:FIN
          'I ate it involuntarily'.

d. The singular ergative subject marker is omitted in positive imperatives, cf. *wə-jə-cxraa* 'you-him-help!' (intransitive verb) vs. *jə-q'a+c'á* 'it-do!' (transitive), as opposed to the plural form *jə-q'a-š°-c'á* 'it-you(PL)-do!'
e. In relativized forms any argument can be deleted and replaced by a relative prefix.
f. Certain verb-forms denoting the time of the day or the season obligatorily drop the subject argument thus resulting in subject-less and argument-less forms, cf. *š'əž'ó-wə-p'* 'morning-PRES:STAT-FIN = it is the morning-time' (the simple past form of which is *š'əž'ó-n*),

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š'əbž'áwnə-wə-p' 'it is midday-time' (the simple past form: *š'əbž'áwnə-n*), *pxənrá-wə-p'* 'it is summer-time', *mšapə́-n* 'it was Easter(-time)'.

2.9.8.2. Free Omission of Arguments.
Aristava (1982: 103-4) mentions cases with omitted arguments: *tónč'ra-xa-ø-jt'* 'it became still', *báhč'ara-wə-p'* 'it is (all) gardens', etc. In these examples, which represent general impersonal statements, the argument-less variant is preferred to the one with the (dummy) 3rd p. NH sg. argument *jə-*.

In some cases, which also represent general statements, arguments belonging to persons other than 3rd p. sg. NH or the class-neutral pl., can also optionally be dropped:

(9)   a.   *raš'ə́t   nxə́c't'°ə-n*
          Rashit   North-Caucasus-PAST:STAT:FIN
          'Rashit was from the North Caucasus' (DG 184)

     b.   *sará   evróp'a-waj°ə-wə-p'*
          I   European-PRES:STAT-FIN
          'I am European' (BSh)

Cf. equally acceptable variants: *raš'ə́t də-nxə́c't'°ə-n*, *sará s-evróp'a-waj°ə-wə-p'*.

2.9.9. Preverbs.
Preverbs are verbal prefixes, which specify the direction (directional) or location (locational or spatial preverbs) of an action. Many of them, especially the locational ones, are obviously derived from independent words, like *xə-* 'above' < *a-xə́* 'head', *k°(ə)-* 'on top' < *a-k°* 'top', *pə-* 'front' < *pə-* 'nose', etc. Preverbs which do not make up a part of the verbal stem can be called 'free preverbs' (FPREV), cf. *d-aa-x°ə́cə-ø-jt'* '(s)he thought a bit' vs. *d-x°ə́cə-ø-jt'* '(s)he thought' (stem *x°əc(ə)* 'to think'). The preverbs, which are a part of the stem (*a-p+q'a-rá* 'to cut', the stem *p+q'a*), can be called 'stem (or bound) preverbs' (SPREV).

Verbs like *a-xə́+s-ra* 'to shoot' (*xə* 'bullet', *s* 'hit'), *áč'a+š°a-ra* 'to hunt quails' (*áč'a* 'quail', *š°a* 'to hunt'), which superficially resemble verbs with preverbs by virtue of their structure and means of derivation (noun incorporation), are better regarded as compound verbs with incorporated nominal roots.

2.9.10. Tense.
The tense paradigm of dynamic verbs is much richer than that of the statives. The dynamic verbs have two symmetrical tense groups, called 1st and 2nd. Both groups have a system of 8 tenses, presented in the following scheme[47]:

1st Tense Group	2nd Tense Group
Present (Present Progressive)	Imperfect (Past Progressive)
Aorist (Simple Past)	Past Indefinite
Future I	Future Conditional I
Future II	Future Conditional II
Perfect	Plu-perfect

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[47]The terminology is adapted mainly from Hewitt (1979: 6) with one difference that the future tenses in the second tense group are called by Hewitt the Conditional I and II.

DYNAMIC VERB *a-ga-ra* 'to carry, bring'

First Tense Group (Finite)

	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE
Present	də-r-ga-wá-jt'	'him/her-they-are taking'	də-r-ga-wá-m
Aorist	də-r-gá-ø-jt'	'him/her-they-took'	d-rə-m-gá-ø-jt'
Future I	də-r-gá-p'	'him/her-they-will take'	də-r-ga-rə́-m
Future II	də-r-gá-š-t'	'him/her-they-will (probably) take'	də-r-gá-ša-m
Perfect	də-r-ga-x'á-jt'	'him/her-they-have taken'	də-rə-m-gá-c(-t')

Second Tense Group (Finite)

	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE
Imperfect	də-r-ga-wá-n	'him/her-they-were taking'	də-r-ga-wá-mə-z+t'
Past Indefinite	də-r-gá-n	'him/her-they-took and...'	d-rə-m-gá-z+t'
Future Conditional I	də-r-ga-rə́-n	'him/her-they-would take'	də-r-ga-rə́-mə-z+t'
Future Conditional II	də-r-gá-ša-n	'him/her-they-had to take'	də-r-gá-ša-mə-z+t'
Plu-perfect:	də-r-ga-x'á-n	'him/her-they-had taken'	d-rə-m-gá-cə-z+t'

First Tense Group (Non-Finite)

	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE
Present	jə́-r-ga-wa	'whom they are taking'	jə́-rə-m-ga-wa
Aorist	jə́-r-ga-ø	'whom they took'	jə́rə-m-ga-ø
Future I	jə́-r-ga-ra	'whom they will take'	jə́-rə-m-ga-ra
Future II	jə́-r-ga-ša	'whom they will have to take'	jə́-rə-m-ga-ša
Perfect	jə́-r-ga-x'a-w	'whom they have been taking'	jə́-rə-m-ga-c

Second Tense Group (Non-Finite)

	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE
Imperfect	jə́-r-ga-wa-z	'whom they were taking'	jə́-rə-m-ga-wa-z
Past Indefinite	jə́-r-ga-z	'whom they took'	jə́-rə-m-ga-z
Future Conditional I	jə́-r-ga-rə-z	'whom they would take'	jə́-rə-m-ga-rə-z
Future Conditional II	jə́-r-ga-ša-z	'whom they had to take'	jə́-rə-m-ga-ša-z
Plu-perfect:	jə́-r-ga-x'a-z	'whom they had taken'	jə́-rə-m-ga-cə-z

STATIVE VERB *á-c°a-ra* 'to be sleeping'

Finite

	POSITIVE		NEGATIVE
Present:	də́-c°a-w+p'	'(s)he is sleeping'	də́-c°a-m
Past	də́-c°a-n	'(s)he was sleeping'	də́-c°a-mə-z-t'

Non-Finite

Present:	jə́-c°a-w 'who is sleeping'		jə́-c°a-m
Past	jə́-c°a-z 'who was sleeping'		jə́-c°a-mə-z

Comments.

1. The present tense of dynamic verbs is often used to express (definite) future actions: *s-ca-wá-jt'* 'I am going'//'I shall (definitely) go'.

2. The finite and non-finite Future II forms have, respectively, strong epistemic and deontic semantic components: *s-ca-š-t'* 'I shall (probably) go', *jə́-q'a-w-c'a-ša* 'what you will have to do'.

3. Past Indefinite denotes a past action immediately followed by another past action usually expressed by the finite verb-form.

2.9.10.1. 'Derived' Future Tenses of Statives.

Stative verbs can form future tenses by means of the suffix *-zaa-* (cf. Hewitt 1979: 204), in which case they become formally dynamic verbs:

Finite

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Derived Definite Future	də́-c°a-zaa-wa-jt' '(s)he will be sleeping'	də́-c°a-zaa-wa-m
Derived Future I[48]	də́-c°a-zaa-p'	də́-c°a-zaa-rə-m
Derived Future II	də́-c°a-zaa-š-t'	də́-c°a-zaa-ša-m

Non-Finite

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Derived Definite Future	jə́-c°a-zaa-wa 'who will be sleeping'	jə́-c°a-m-zaa-wa
Derived Future I	jə́-c°a-zaa-ra	jə́-c°a-m-zaa-ra
Derived Future II	jə́-c°a-zaa-ša	jə́-c°a-m-zaa-ša

2.9.11. Moods.

The moods system is quite complex, including such formations as indicative, interrogative, imperative, potential, optative, detrimental, conditional, subjunctive, non-volitional, inferential (evidential), obligative, etc.

     Indicative does not have special markers: *s-ca-wá-jt'* 'I am going'.

     Interrogative, see 6.10. below.

     Imperative, see 6.8. below.

     Potential expresses the capacity or ability of the referent to accomplish a certain action. It is formed by means of the potential prefix *zə-* (etymologically connected with the benefactive affix *-zə* 'for (the sake of)') and mainly used in negative or interrogative forms:

(10)   a.   *sə-z-nə́q'°a-wa-m*
                me-POT-walk-PRES:DYN-NEG
                'I am not able to walk'

       b.   *wə-z-ca-wá-ma*
                you(H:M//NH)-POT-go-PRES:DYN-QU

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[48]The meaning of this tense is future+inferential.

'are you able to go?'

The excessive suffix *-cʷa-* can also sometimes be used to produce an emphatic-confirmative potential as a response to a question with the normal potential marker *-z-*[49]:

(11) *aréj*   *a-xʷšʷ*   *zagʼó* *ø-s-zó-žʷ-rə-w?*
      this   ART-medicine   all   it-I-POT-drink-FUT1-QU

      bə-bzéja-xa-r+c   *b-taxé-za+r,*   *jə-bə-žʷ-cʷá-pʼ.*
      you (H:F)-good-become-PURP   you (H:F)-want-COND   it-you (H:F)-drink-EXC-
                                                                              FUT1

      'Will I be able to drink all this medicine?'
      'If you want to get well, you'll certainly be able to drink it!'

Optative expresses a wish or desire and is expressed by the suffix *-n+da(+z)*:

(12) *s-cá-n+da(+z)*
      I-go-OPT
      'if only I had left!'//'I wish I left!'.

Detrimental is formed by means of the prefix *cʷ(ə)-* and expresses either an unintentional action (*a-jʷné jə-s-cʷə-n+xá-ø-jt'* 'it-I-DETR-leave-AOR-DYN:FIN = unintentionally, I left it at home'), or an action carried out against somebody's will (*d-ha-cʷ-cá-ø-jt'* '(s)he-us-DETR-go-AOR-DYN:FIN = (s)he left against our will//ran away from us').

Conditional is formed by the suffixes *-r*, *-za+r* or *-z+t+gʼə*, of which the first one is added to the pure stem of the dynamic verbs (*d-ca-r* 'if (s)he goes'), and the other two – to the dynamic verb stem with the appropriate tense suffix: *d-ca-wá-za+r* 'if (s)he goes', *d-ca-x'á-za+r* 'if (s)he has gone', etc. The statives form their conditional forms by means of suffixes *-za+r* or *-z+t+gʼə* added to the pure stem: *dó-cʷa-za+r* 'if (s)he is sleeping', *dó-qʼa-z+t+gʼə* '(even) if (s)he were'. Though the immediate temporal meaning of the form in *-r* is future action which realization is contingent on a certain condition, it can also be used in the contexts which refer to the past. The same applies to the suffix *-za+r*, when attached to the pure stem: *d-cá-za+r* 'if (s)he goes/went', *dó-qʼa-za+r* 'if (s)he is', *wá dó-qʼa-z+tgʼə* '(even) if (s)he had been there'.

Subjunctive of dynamic verbs exploits the compound suffix *-aa+jt'* (*jə-r-áw-aa+jt'* 'let them get it!') or, with a slightly different meaning ('let it be so that…')[50], the suffix *-z+aa+jt',* or its shorter form *-z* (*jə-wə-dór-wa-z(+aa+jt')* 'let it be so that you know this!'). The subjunctive of stative and inverted verbs is formed by means of the suffixes *-z+aa+jt',* or *-z*: *dó-qʼa-z(+aa+jt')!* 'let him/her be!', *jə-wó-ma-z(+aa+jt')!* '(you-H:M, NH) have it!'.

Non-volitional expresses actions occurring without the intention of the actor. It is expressed by the prefix *amxa-*: *s-ámxa-ca-ø-jt'* 'I left involuntarily'. In case of dynamic verbs with stem preverbs, the agent marker usually occupying the position between the stem preverb and the root (*jə-qʼa-s-cʼá-ø-jt'* 'I did it') moves to the indirect object slot: *jə-s-ámxa-qʼa+cʼa-ø-jt'* 'I did it involuntarily'.

Inferential (Evidential) – see **2.9.12**.

Obligative expresses an action which is necessary to be performed. It is formed by a combination of the conditional form of the verb with the copular verb *a(kʷə)* 'to be' in the appropriate tense form. Cf. obligatives from a dynamic verb:

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(13) a. *šʷ-cá-r-a-wə-pʼ*
          you:PL-go-COND-be-PRES:STAT-FIN
          'you must go'.

      b. *šʷ-cá-r*   *ø-ák'ʷə-n*
          you:PL-go-COND   it-be-PAST:STAT:FIN
          'you had to go//you should have gone'.

Obligatives from stative verbs have an additional element *za-*:

(14) a. *šʷə́-qʼa-za+r-a-wə-pʼ*
          you:PL-be-COND-be-PRES:STAT-FIN
          'you have to be'.

      b. *šʷə́-qʼa-za+r*   *ø-ák'ʷə-n*
          you:PL-go-COND   it-be-PAST:STAT:FIN
          'you had to be'.

Another means to form obligative is the combination of the attributive suffix *-t'ʷə* with the stative ending: *də-šʼ-t'ʷə́-wə-pʼ* 'him/her-kill-OBL-PRES:STAT-FIN = (s)he has to be killed'.

2.9.12. Evidentiality.

The Inferentiality (Evidentiality) category denotes actions which occur(red) outside of the direct observation of the speaker. The inferential suffixes are *-zaapʼ* (Inferential 1) and *-zaarən* (Inferential 2). Three main meanings of Abkhaz inferentials are:

A. Unwitnessed (Reported):

(15) *á-lašara-[a-a]x',*   *á-mca-[a-a]x'* *d-an-áa+j-ø,*
      ART-light-DIR   ART-fire-DIR   she-when-come-AOR:NFIN

      ló-la-kʷa   *ø-qʼapš'-zá*   *jó-qʼa-n,*   *d-cʷówa-zaarən.*
      her-eye-PL   it-red-ADV   it-be-PAST   she-cry-INFER2
      'When she came up to the light, to the fire, her eyes were very red; apparently, she had been crying' (DG).

B. Commentative:

When used in the "commentative" function, the inferential forms serve to accentuate the listener's attention to certain focal points of the unfolding intrigue or to give background-information known to the narrator, but not to the listener.

(16) A giant observes the battle of two protagonists and then makes a tentative conclusion:

      "art   *ø-ná-(a)j+ba-r-cʷa-wa-zaapʼ",*   *ø-jə-hʼá-n,*
      these   they-PREV-RECI-CAUS-perish-PRES:DYN-INFER1   it-he-say-PIDF

      azʷ   *d-aá-šʼtə-j-xə-n*   *j-árɣʼa*
      one:H   him-hither-from ground-he-take-PIDF   his-right

      magʷ   *d-ta-jə-r-t'ʷá-ø-jt'.*
      boot   him-inside-he-CAUS-sit-AOR-DYN:FIN
      '"They are apparently killing each other", having said, he picked up one of them and put him into his right boot'.

Although in (16) the inference (assumption) is based on a direct observation by the protagonist, he, until a certain moment, was not a direct participant, but an outside observer of the action.

C. Mirative:

Inferential can, depending on the context, acquire mirative overtones, which imply a sudden realization or a surprise discovery, a surprise confirmation of a certain knowledge or reputation. In the following example the inferential form, combined with the emphatic interjection *ǯ'əm*, is meant to expresses the person's surprise:

(17) *arsána,*   *wə-xǿ*   *ø-šlá-zaap',*   *ǯ'əm*
     Arsana   your-head   it-grey-INFER1   INTERJ
     'Arsana, your hair (lit. head) is apparently grey, man!' (Arstaa & Ch'k'adua 1966: 154).

2.9.13. Ergativity.

The striking feature of Abkhaz, which distinguishes it even from its sister-languages, is that it operates its ergative strategy without the use of overt case-marking. Despite this fact, in Abkhaz ergativity is expressed by virtue of the relative position and (partially) the form of its class/person indices. In the absolute construction, based on the intransitive verb, the order of the personal indices on the verb is S-IO-V, which copies exactly the actual order of the corresponding NPs in the given sentence (example a). In the ergative construction, based on the transitive verb, the order of the class and personal indices on the verb is the reverse (a mirror image[51]) of that of the corresponding NPs (example b):

a. Absolutive construction:

(18) *(sará   jará)   s-jǿ-x°a+pš-wa-jt'*
     (I   he)   I(S)-him(IO)-SPREV-look-PRES:DYN-FIN
     'I am looking at him'.

b. Ergative construction:

(19) *(sará   jará)   də-z-ba-wá-jt'*
     (I   he)   him(DO)-I(A)-see-PRES:DYN-FIN
     'I see him'.

There is no split ergativity phenomenon in Abkhaz (as, for example, in Georgian), tense being irrelevant for the ergative strategy. As to the distinction between the morphologically ergative and syntactically accusative vs. both morphologically and syntactically ergative languages, Abkhaz can be regarded as morphologically ergative, but syntactically neutral (or at least ambiguous). This can be seen from the following tests involving coordinated clauses. One should bear in mind that in Abkhaz the presence of nominal classes markers (H vs. NH) helps to identify the Agent and the Patient:

(20) a.   *á-mat*   *a-təphá*   *jə-lǿ-cha-n,*
          ART-snake   ART-girl   it(NH)-her(H:F)-bite-PIDF

          jə-psǿ-ø-jt'.
          it(NH)-die-AOR-DYN:FIN

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[51]Cf. Allen (1956: 155).

'The snake bit the girl and it (the snake) died'.

b.   *á-mat*   *a-təphá*   *jə-lǿ-cha-n*   *də-psǿ-ø-jt'.*
     ART-snake   ART-girl   it(NH)-her(H:F)-bite-PIDF   she(H)-die-AOR-
                                                          DYN:FIN

'The snake bit the girl and she (the girl) died'.

More ambiguous are the examples when both Agent and Patient belong to the same nominal class:

(21) a.   *á-mat*   *a-lá*   *j-á-cha-n*   *jə-psǿ-ø-jt'.*
          ART-snake   ART-dog   it(NH)-it(NH)-bite-PIDF   it(NH)-die-AOR-
                                                          DYN:FIN

'The snake bit the dog and it (snake/dog) died'.

b.   *jará*   *a-ph°ǿs*   *d-anǿ-j-ba-ø*
     he   ART-woman   her(H)-when-he(H:M)-see-AOR:NFIN

     d-cá-ø-jt'.
     (s)he(H)-go-AOR-DYN:FIN
     'When he saw the woman, (s)he left'.

c.   *há-č"k'°ən*   *a-g°óla*   *č"k'°ən*   *d-j-á-cha-n,*
     our-boy   ART-neighbour   boy   he-him-to-quarrel-PIDF

     də-j-p'q'á-ø-jt'.
     him-he-beat-AOR-DYN:FIN
     'Our boy quarrelled with the neighbouring boy and he beat him'.

On purely grammatical grounds, it is impossible to say, in 21 (a), whether it was snake or dog, which died. Likewise, in 21 (b), the identity of the person who left remains obscure (it can be either the one who saw the woman, or the woman). In 21 (c), either of the boys could be beaten. In all cases it is the context which makes the situation clear. This would suggest that Abkhaz, though morphologically ergative, is syntactically neutral (like Chukchi, in which the omitted Subject of an intransitive verb in coordinate constructions can be regarded as coreferential either with the Agent or the Patient of the preceding verb[52]). Yet, there is a distinct tendency in Abkhaz to identify the omitted NP in the main clause with the Agent, not Patient, which to a great degree disambiguates the situation, even if the context is not clear (though this does not preclude a second possible reading either, which identifies the omitted NP with the Patient). In general, the situation in Abkhaz is somewhat in between the situation in Chukchi and in Dyirbal (which is both morphologically and syntactically ergative).

2.9.14. Valency.

2.9.14.1. Number of Actants.

Normally, the verb must minimally take one actant, the maximum being four actants explicitly marked on the verb.

a. (Intransitive) Subject:

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[52]Cf. Comrie, B. Language Universals and Linguistic Typology. Syntax and Morphology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 106-107.

(22)   s-ca-wá-jt'
        I-go-PRES:DYN-FIN
        'I am going'

b. Direct Object and Agent:

(23)   də-z-ba-wá-jt'
        him/her-I-see-PRES:DYN-FIN
        'I see him/her'

c. (Intransitive) Subject and Indirect Object (Experiencer):

(24)   də-s-cʿə́-mɣə-wə-p'
        (s)he-me-DETR-hateful-PRES:STAT-FIN
        'I hate him/her'

d. Direct Object, Indirect Object and Agent:

(25)   jə-wə́-s-ta-wa-jt'
        it-to you-I-give-PRES:DYN-FIN
        'I am giving it to you'

e. Direct Object, Indirect Object, Indirect Object, Agent:

(26)   jə-sə-z-ló-šʿ-t
        it-me-BENF-to her-you:PL-give
        'You (PL) give it to her for me!'

2.9.14.2. Valency Changing Mechanisms.
Though the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs in Abkhaz is rather sharp, it possesses morphological means to shift along the transitivity hierarchy in both directions, increasing or, alternatively, decreasing the valency of the verb. Thus, transitive verbs can be made intransitive, and vice versa. Besides, a (small) group of verbs, traditionally called labile, are bi-directional as to the feature [±transitive]. On the other hand, unlike some other Caucasian languages, Abkhaz does not have such mechanisms as antipassive or anticausative derivation.

A. Non-directional: Labile.
Unlike verbs which are basically either transitive, or intransitive, the so-called "labile" (or ambitransitive) verbs can function both transitively and intransitively. Cf. s-ʒax-wá-jt' 'I am (busy with) sewing' vs. jə-z-ʒax-wá-jt' 'I am sewing it',[53] s-pa-wá-jt' 'I am (busy with) knitting' vs. jə-s-pa-wá-jt' 'I am knitting it'. In the first of each pair, the action is seen as a process in itself, without attention to its impact on an object; in the second we have forms which indicate an action directed at a concrete object.
        Labile verbs can be subdivided into two types: a) agentive ambitransitives, whereby the A argument of the transitive construction is identified with the S argument of the intransitive one, and b) patientive ambitransitives, whereby the O argument of the transitive

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[53]Note the voicing of the ergative marker in the transitive construction as it precedes a voiced root consonant.

construction is identified with the S argument of the intransitive.[54] The examples above represent agentive ambitransitives, whereas an example of the patientive ambitransitive is jə-p+čə́-ə-jt' 'it broke' as opposed to the transitive jə-pə́-s-čə-ə-jt' 'I broke it'.
        If we regard the transitive construction as the primary one, then the corresponding intransitive constructions of the type s-ʒax-wá-jt' 'I am (busy with) sewing' would resemble the de-transitivizing mechanism with O-demotion known as anti-passive derivation[55], whereas the de-transitivizing process with obligatory A-deletion would resemble anticausative (or decausative) derivation. However, as it is difficult to say, which of the constructions (transitive or intransitive) should be seen as basic, the agentive and patientive ambitransitive forms cited above should not be regarded as antipassive or anticausative derivations.

B. Valency Increasing Mechanisms.
BA. Causative Alternation.
Causative derivation is produced by prefixing of the Causative marker r(ə)- to the verb stem, which increases the valency of the verb by an additional actant.

Intransitive → Transitive.
An intransitive verb can take the causative marker put before the stem to become a transitive verb. Mono-actantial intransitives become thus bi-actantial transitives (a), and bi-actantial ones become three-actantial (b):

a. One-place intransitive dynamic verb a-gʿáa-ra 'to feel angry' → derived causativized transitive two-place verb a-r-gʿáa-ra 'to make X angry':

(27)   a.   d-gʿáa-ə-jt'
              (s)he-feel angry-AOR-DYN:FIN
              '(s)he felt angry'.

        b.   d-jə-r-gʿáa-ə-jt'
              him/her-he-make angry-AOR-DYN:FIN
              'he made him/her angry'.

b. Two-place intransitive dynamic verb á-l+ga-ra 'to finish' → derived causativized three-place transitive verb á-lə-r-ga-ra 'to make X finish Y':

(28)   a.   d-á-l+ga-ə-jt'
              (s)he-it-finish-AOR-DYN:FIN
              '(s)he finished it'.

        b.   d-á-l-jə-r-ga-ə-jt'
              him/her-it-SPREV-he-CAUS-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN
              'he made him/her finish it//he cured him/her'.

c. Intransitive stative verb á-cʿa-ra 'to be sleeping' → derived causativized two-place transitive verb á-r-cʿa-ra 'to make X sleep':

(29)   a.   də́-cʿa-wə-p'
              (s)he-sleep-PRES:STAT-FIN

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[54]Cf. R.M.W. Dixon & A.Y. Aikhenvald (Eds), Changing valency. Case studies in transitivity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 4.
[55]Proceeding from strict application of Dixon's formulation of antipassive derivation, Hewitt (1982: 165) argues that even in this case the resemblance with the anti-passivization mechanism would be only superficial, in view of the impossibility of an optional retention of the demoted Object NP.

'(s)he is sleeping'.[56]

b.   *d-jə́-r-c°a-ø-jt'*
    him/her-he-CAUS-sleep-AOR-DYN:FIN
    'he made him/her sleep'.

Non-Causative Transitive → Causativized Transitive.

a. Two-place predicate *a-ba-rá* 'to see' → three-place predicate *a-r+ba-rá* 'to show':

(30) a.   *də-l-bá-ø-jt'*
        him/her-she-see-AOR-DYN:FIN
        'She saw him/her'.

      b.   *də-l-sə-r-bá-ø-jt'*
        him/her-to her-I-CAUS-see-AOR-DYN:FIN
        'I showed him/her to her'.

b. two-place predicate *á-ʒax-ra* 'to sew sth' → four-place predicate *á-r-ʒax-ra* 'to make X sew sth'. This is possible in combination of causative with benefactive:

(31) a.   *jə-z-ʒax-wá-jt'*
        it-I-sew-PRES:DYN-FIN
        'I am sewing it'.

      b.   *jə-wə-zə-l-só-r-ʒax-wa-jt'*
        it-you(H:M)-BENF-her-I-CAUS-sew-PRES:DYN-FIN
        'I make her sew it for you'.[57]

Note that the preferred alternative construction for 31(b) makes use of the syntactic causative (with the verb *á-q'a+c'a-ra* 'to make, do') instead of the morphological one:

(32) *jə-wə-zó-l-ʒaxə-r+t'°*   *jə-q'a-s-c'a-wá-jt'*
      it-you(H:M)-BENF-her(H:F)-sew-PURP   it-SPREV-I-ROOT-PRES:DYN-FIN

Cf. also the tri-valent verb *á-ta-ra* 'to give', of which 'I shall make them give him to you(H:F)' will be formed by the resultative verb-form (with suf. *-r+t'°*) in combination with the verb *á-q'a+c'a-ra* 'to do, make': *d-bə́-r-ta-r+t'° ø-q'a-s-c'á-p'*.

A nominal or adjectival stem, when added a causative prefix, becomes a bivalent transitive dynamic verb, cf. *a-gaʒá* 'idiot' – *d-sə-r-gaʒá-ø-jt'* 'I made him a fool', *a-pxá* 'warm' – *jə-sə-r-pxa-wá-jt'* 'I make it warm', *á-q'apš'* 'red' – *jə-sə́-r-q'apš'ə-ø-jt'* 'I made it red', etc.

C. Valency Reducing Mechanisms.
Abkhaz possesses various means to decrease the valency of the transitive verb, exploiting various de-transitivizing mechanisms.
    CA. One of such means is to add the suffix *-xa* 'to become' to the stem of the transitive verb: *a-wə́s á-d+wə+la-xa-wa-jt'* 'work will be(come) applied to it', *jə-q'a+c'a-xa-wá-jt'* 'it will be(come) made'. Both Lomtatidze (1956: 207-8, 213-4) and Hewitt & Khiba

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[56]This verb has also a dynamic counterpart *á-c°a-ra* 'to fall asleep'.
[57]Cf. Grammatika 129.

(1998: 62) regard these constructions as (kinds of) passive. Though these forms are not quite natural for colloquial speech (first recorded in the early translations of the Gospels as reflecting the Russian passives), and appear mainly in the literary language, they are becoming increasingly used in modern literary texts. Grammatically, they represent the process of deletion of the agent and the raising of the (direct) object to the (intransitive) subject position.
    Curiously, even causative formations can be de-causativized, with the preservation of the causative marker and the dissimilative character of the 3[rd] p. pl., as demonstrated by an example like *jə-də-r-c'a-xa-wá-jt'* 'they will be taught X' (cited by Lomtatidze 1956: 208), derived from *jə-d-də-r-c'a-wá-jt'* 'they are teaching them X', itself a causative formation from the simplex verb *a-c'a-rá* 'to learn', which, by adding of the causative marker *r(ə)-*, acquires the meaning 'to teach'. The resulting construction is a dynamic passive.
    CB. Other instances of de-transitivizing processes involve (a) deontic constructions like *d-š'ə́-za+r-[a-]a-wə-p'* 'him/her-kill-COND-[it-]be-PRES:STAT-FIN = (s)he has to be killed' (actually, 'X should be in a state of having been killed'), *jə-q'a+c'a-t'°ə́-wə-p'* 'it must be done', or (b) passivized stative forms like *d-š'ə́-wə-p'* '(s)he is killed', *jə-q'a+c'á-wə-p'* 'it is made', in which the elimination of the ergative agent is accompanied by the raising of the patient to the subject position.
    CC. Similar processes involve such modal forms as potential and non-volitional (see above, in **2.9.8.1.** (c)).

2.9.15. Voice.
Though Abkhaz is not usually regarded as having a passive construction, it certainly has stative passives, e.g. *jə-q'a+c'á-wə-p'* 'it is made', *d-š'ə́-wə-p'* '(s)he is killed', *d-gá-wə-p'* '(s)he is taken', derived from the transitive constructions with two-place verbs *á-q'a+c'a-ra* 'to do, make', *a-š'-rá* 'to kill', *a-ga-rá* 'to take'. Here belong also deontic constructions, in which the verb has a stative meaning and the agent (causer) is not expressed, cf. *d-š'ə́-za+r-[a-]a-wə-p'* 'him/her-kill-COND-[it-]be-PRES:STAT-FIN = X should be in a state of having been killed' ('(s)he has to be killed'). Cf. also the Obligative form (made up of the attributive suffix plus the finite stative ending) *də-š'-t'°ə́-wə-p'* 'him/her-kill-OBL-PRES:STAT-FIN = (s)he has to be killed', which too, like the previous examples, has the original transitive object moved to the intransitive subject position. Furthermore, Abkhaz seems to have also dynamic passives (see above, in **2.9.14.2.** (CA)).

2.9.16. Aspect.
The following aspectual meanings can be mentioned:
    Indefinite (neutral) aspect does not specify the nature of an action and is expressed by such tense forms as Aorist (*s-ca-ø-jt'* 'I went'), Future I (*s-ca-p'* 'I shall go'), derived Future (*só-q'a-z+aa-wa-jt'* 'I shall be'), etc.
    Progressive, which marker is the suffix *-wa*, denotes continuous actions in progress: *s-ca-wá-jt'* 'I am going', *s-ca-wá* 'I, while going, ...', *s-ca-wá-n* 'I was going', *s-an-ca-wá-z* 'when I was going'. Progressive can also be expressed lexically, cf. *á-px'ara s-a-č'ə́-wə-p'* 'ART-reading I-it-(on)face-PRES:STAT-FIN = I am busy with reading'.
    Perfective aspect denotes finished actions with an obvious result and is expressed by such tense forms as Perfect (*s-ca-x'á-jt'* 'I have gone') and Plu-perfect (*s-ca-x'á-n* 'I had gone').
    Excessive denotes a high degree or intensity of an action and is expressed by means of the suffix *-c°a*, etymologically connected with the human plural suffix: *jə-r-fa-c°á-ø-jt'* 'it-they-eat-EXC-AOR-DYN:FIN = they ate too much'.
    Iterative (Habitual) denotes regularly or often occurring actions and is marked by the suffix *-la*: *jə-ca-la-wá+n* 'they-go-ITER-IMPRF = they were regularly going'.

Repetitive, which denotes the repetition of an action, is expressed by the suffix -*x*- 'again' (often with a nuance of disapproval): *d-ca-x-t*'(s)he again left!'.

Emphatic or **Expressive** accentuates the intensity of the action: *d-sə-z-dór-ʒa-wa-mə-z+t*' 'him/her-I-POT-know-EMPH-PRES:DYN-NEG-IMPRF = I did not know him/her at all'. Because of its frequent use, the emphatic meaning of this suffix is somewhat weakened. The emphasis can also be expressed by the iterative suffix: *wə-ca-lá* 'do go!'//'do go regularly!'.

Other Aspectual Nuances.

The directional preverbs *aa*- 'hither' and *na*- 'thither' can convey the idea of momentous, quick actions, cf. *š°-aa-t'°á(j-š')*//*š°-na-t'°á(j-š')* 'you (PL) sit down for a minute, will you?' vs. a neutral *š°-t'°a* 'you (PL) sit down!'.

The suffix -*aa* brings in the meaning of a complete action, cf. *jó-k°-z-blə-ø-jt*'I burnt it on the surface' vs. *jó-k°-z-bl-aa-ø-jt*'I burnt it completely on the surface'. The combination of both preverb *aa*- and the suffix -*aa* is also possible: *j-aá-k°-z-bl-aa-ø-jt*' 'I burnt it momentarily completely on the surface' (cf. Aristava 1986: 9).

The plu-perfect can be used with the meaning of a nearly happened event: *s-k'áha-x'a+n* 'I nearly fell', *sə-ps-x'á+n* 'I nearly died' (cf. Grammatika 110).

2.9.17. Reflexive.

The reflexive prefix is *č(ə)*-: *l-čə-l-ró-ck'a-ø-jt*' 'her-self-she-CAUS-clean-AOR-DYN:FIN = she cleaned herself'. With the verbs like 'to eat', 'to see' and some others, reflexive is formed by means of the noun *a-xə* 'head' functioning as a pseudo-reflexive pronoun, added by the appropriate possessive marker: *l-xó ø-l-ba-wá-jt*' 'she sees herself' (lit. 'her-head it-she-sees').

2.9.18. Reciprocal.

The reciprocal prefixes are *aj*- (used with intransitive verbs) and *aj+ba*- (used with transitive verbs) (Hewitt 1979: 88): *j-aj-só-ø-jt*' 'they-RECI-hit-AOR-DYN:FIN = they beat each other', *j-aj+ba-bá-ø-jt*' 'they-RECI-see-AOR-DYN:FIN = they saw each other'. In the verbal complex, the reciprocal *aj*- can occupy slot 2, reserved for the indirect object, while *aj+ba*- can occupy slots reserved either for the indirect object or for the transitive subject (agent). A combination of the reciprocal preverb *aj*- plus the comitative prefix *c*- with the reciprocal *aj+ba*- is also possible: *h-aj-c-áj+ba-š'-wa+n* 'we-RECI-COM-RECI-kill-IMPRF = we fought together'.

2.9.19. Verbal Derivation.

Verbal structure is represented by the following models: simple base, compound base, preverb+base+extension, base+extension. The base is usually represented by one phoneme or by a biphonemic combination (*k'(ə)* 'to catch', *š'(ə)* 'to kill', *ba* 'to see', *ga* 'to carry'), though more complex structures are also possible. In verbal derivation, compounding is somewhat less common (with the exception of reduplication), cf. such examples as 'nominal base+verbal base' (*a-t'°a-r+x-rá* to 'mow', lit. 'hey-mow'), 'verbal base+verbal base' (*a-na+j-áa+j-ra* 'to walk', lit. 'go-coming').

Reduplication, on the contrary, is quite popular (e.g. *a-k'aléš'-maləš'-ra* 'to walk carelessly', *á-bar-bar-ra* 'to chatter', *á-k'°ər-k'°ər-ra* 'to neigh', *á-cər-cər-ra* 'to shine'). Cf. also the gemination of the root consonant: *a-h°a-rá* 'to speak' vs. *á-h°h°a-ra* 'to cry'.

More usual is the verbal derivation by means of preverbs which express directional or spatial parameters ('up', 'down', 'thither', 'hither', 'on top', 'inside', 'outside', etc.). Cf. the verb *gəla* 'to be standing', 'to stand up': *á-d-gəla-ra* 'to stand beside', *á-va-gəla-ra* 'to stand by side', *á-c'a-gəla-ra* 'to stand under', *á-k'°-gəla-ra* 'to stand on top', etc. As said before, some verbs cannot function without preverbs, as, for instance, the verb *la* 'to enter': *á-la-la-ra* 'to enter into the mass', *a-tá-la-ra* 'to enter inside', *á-c'a-la-ra* 'to enter underneath', *a-j°ná-la-ra* 'to enter inside the building', etc. The combination of two or more preverbs to form new verbs are not uncommon: *a-n-aá-la-ra* 'to pass, fit' (preverbs *na* 'thither', *aa* 'hither', the verb

la 'to go'), *áj-d-č'a-h°a-la-ra* 'to tie up to each other' (preverbs *aj* 'reciprocal', *d* 'by', *č'a* 'mouth, face', plus the verb root *h°a* 'to tie' with the extension *la*).

Of the two extensions -*aa*- and -*la*-, the first expresses centrifugal movement (*a-t-pr-aa-rá* 'to fly (hither) from inside'), while the second – centripetal (*á-la-ga-la-ra* 'to bring into the mass'). These suffixes are often used in derivation of new verbs.

In addition, Abkhaz employs incorporation as a means of verbal derivation: a noun or adjective can be incorporated into a verb-form to form a verbal stem: *a-waj°ó* 'man' – *d-waj°ə+xá-jt*' 'he became a man', *a-xára* 'guilt' – *jə-xára-j-t'°ə-ø-jt*' 'he accused him', *á-q'apš'* 'red' – *jə-q'apš'ó-zaap*' 'apparently it is/they are red'.

3. VERBALS.

Among the non-finite verbal formations are participles, converbs and masdar.

3.1. Participles.

In participles (verbal adjectives) formed from transitive verbs the relative prefix *z*- serves to express the subject or indirect object: *jə-z-ba-wá* 'the one who sees it' (the confusion with the homograph *jó-z-ba-wa* 'that/who I see' is avoided by a different stress position), *jə-zə-l-ta-wá* 'the one to whom she gives X'. In participles formed from intransitives, *zə*- serves to express the indirect object (*d-zó-h°a-wa* 'whom (s)he is asking'). The prefix *jə*- in participles formed from transitive verbs expresses the direct object (*jó-r-ba-wa* 'what/whom they see'), and in participles formed from intransitives – the subject (*jə-ca-wá* 'the one who is going').

3.2. Converbs.

Converbs (absolutes, verbal adverbs) are formed either from the pure stem (*á-rax° ø-ró-ma* 'they having the cattle'), or employ suffixes -*wa*, -*nə*, -*(m-)k'°a* (*s-ca-wá* 'I going', *s-góla-nə* 'I having stood up', *s-rə-m-ba-ʒá-k'°a* 'they not having seen me'). As much as verbs, converbs are marked for person, number and class. The present converbs convey simultaneity, the past - anteriority (cf. Chkadua 1970: 240). Cf. also **2.9.8.1.** (b).

3.3. Masdar.

The masdar (verbal noun) of dynamic verbs is formed by adding the suffix -*ra* (used also for forming abstract nouns) to the pure stem: *a-ca-rá* 'to go//going', *á-px'a-ra* 'to read//reading'. Stative verbs form their masdars by means of the suffix -*zaa+ra*, or, more rarely, -*ra*: *á-q'a-zaa+ra* 'to be, exist//being', *á-š'ta-zaa+ra* 'to be lying prostrate', *á-c°a-ra* 'to sleep'. The masdar of the inversive verbs can also be either -*ra* or -*zaa-ra*: *a-tax-rá*//*a-taxó-zaa+ra* 'to want/wanting', *á-ma-zaa+ra* 'to have/having'. Among the verbal features of the masdar are: the causative derivation, version, comitative, reciprocal, non-volitional, etc. Its nominal features are: the presence of the generic article, a possibility to form an indefinite form (*a-ca-rá* 'to go' – *ca-rá-k'* 'a go(ing)'), the category of number (*x-ca-rá-k'* 'three goings')[58], of possession (*s-ca-rá* 'my going'), etc.

4. ADVERBS.

Adverbs can be qualitative (*bzéja* 'well', *ck'a* 'clean'), of degree (*zənʒá* 'wholly', *ak'ór* 'much'), of manner (*tənč'* 'calmly'), temporal (*jaráznak*' 'at once', *jax'á* 'today', *sənt'°á* 'this year'), spatial (*a-d°ax'ó* 'outside', *a-g°tanó* 'in the centre'), etc.

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[58] These forms can alternatively be interpreted as representing abstract nouns.

4.1. Adverb derivation.

Most adverbs are derived from nouns, adjectives or verbal forms by means of affixation or conversion, more rarely by compounding. Among the compounding patterns reduplication is the most popular (*lassó-lassə* 'quickly'). Examples of non-reduplicated compounding derivation are not numerous: *jax'a+n+t'°á+ra+k'* 'today-LOC-sit-abstract suf.-IDF = the whole day', *wac'°[ə]+á+š'tax'* 'tomorrow-its-after = day after tomorrow'. Adverbs formed from adjectives by conversion usually differ from the former by the absence of the generic article (see below in **d**). Adverbs are often formed from onomatopoeic and other descriptives with the help of the quotative suffix *-h°a* (derived from the verb *h°a* 'to say'). This suffix can form adverbs from non-descriptives as well, cf. *cás-h°a* 'deliberately, purportedly'.

a. Derivational Suffixes:

-ʒa superlative:	*ak'ə́r-ʒa* 'very', *naʒá-ʒa* 'forever'.
-h°a of manner:	*aárla-h°a* 'hardly, scarcely', *á-fər-h°a* 'instantaneously'.
-k'°a of manner (in negative formations):	*č'ə́mt-k'°a* 'silently'.
-la instrumental:	*bzə́ja-la* 'well', *maʒa-la* 'secretly'.
-da privative:	*x°ə́-da=psá-da* 'gratis', *xə́mpa-da* 'certainly'.
-nə :	*z-nə* 'once' (*z < *za* 'one'), *tə́nč'-nə* 'quietly'.
-šak° :	*x°máar-šak°* 'jokingly'.
-š°a 'as if, like':	*wama-š°á* 'surprisingly'.
-xa of manner:	*-aapsa-xá* 'tired', *šáma-xa* 'rarely'.

b. Circumfixion:

jə- ... -w:	*j-anáamta-w* 'in time'.
jə- ... (-m-)-k'°a:	*jə-taxə́-m-k'°a* 'unwillingly'.
jə- ... -nə:	*jə-bzə́ja-nə* 'well', *jə-manš°ála-nə* 'successfully'.
jə-š- ... -w:	*jə-š-jáša-w* 'directly'.
jə- ... -š°a:	*jə-nə́k'°ərs-š°a* 'slightly touching'.
jə- ... -wa:	*jə-k'°ajcáj-wa* 'glittering'.

c. Reduplication of the Same (ca, cb) or of Different Stems (cd):

ca. *lassó-lassə* 'often', *waž°ə́-waž°ə* 'often', *xaz-xazó* 'separately', *aárla-aárla* 'with difficulty', *ak'-ák'a* 'one by one', *x°əč'°(ə)-x°əč'°ə́* 'little by little', *mač'°-máč'°* 'little by little'.
cb. Echo-compounds: *á-k'°ša-mək'°ša* 'all around' (< *á-k'°+ša-ra* 'to go around'), *aa+j+g°á-sə́+j+g°a* 'nearby' (< *áa+j+g°a* 'near').
cd. *xara-by'ára* 'dispersedly', *waxə́nla-čə́nla* 'twenty-four hours',

d. Conversion:

Adjective > Adverb: *á-las* 'quick' > *lassó* 'quickly', *á-ck'a* 'clean' > *ck'a* 'clearly', *[a-]áajg°a* 'near' > *aajg°á* 'nearby; recently';
Postposition > Adverb: *á-c'aq'a* 'under' > *c'aq'á* 'below'.

5. QUANTIFIERS.

5.1. The universal quantifiers
are *zag'ó* 'all', *jə-zak'°ə́zaalak'(')* 'whatever', *d-zak'°ə́zaalak'(')* 'whoever'.

5.2. The scalar quantifiers
are *pət+k'//pət+j°ə́+k'* 'a bit (NH)//a few (H)', *mač'°+k'// máč'°+j°ə+k'* 'little (NH)//a few (H)', *za+c'°ə́-k'* 'only one (NH)', *z+aʒ°ə́-k'* 'only one (H)', etc.

5.3. See **Numerals** in **2.4.**

6. SYNTAX.

6.1. Structure of the NP.

The order of constituents within the Abkhaz noun phrase depends on the nature of the modifier, which agrees with the head in number and grammatical class.

6.1.1. Head Precedes its Modifier:

a. head noun+(simple, compound or reflexive) adjective: *á-mj°a dów* 'ART-road big = a big road', *a-x°ócra baa+ps* 'ART-thought bad = a bad thought', *a-ʒə́ x'+š°áš°a* 'ART-water cold = cold water', *ádg°ər jə-xatá* 'Adgur his-self = Adgur himself', *lará l-x+á+la* 'she her-head-its-with = she herself'.
b. head noun+cardinal or completive numeral, or another quantifier: *a-wóswə(j°)-c°a pš'+j°ə(-k')* 'ART-worker-PL:H four-H(-IDF) = four workers', *r-áh°š'-c°a á-x-j°ə-k'* 'their-sister-PL:H ART-three-H-IDF = all three of their sisters', *phá za+c'°ə-k'* 'daughter only-IDF = the only daughter', *á-ž°lar zag'ó* 'ART-people all = all the people'. Alternatively, cardinal numerals can be preposed to the head noun (see below in **6.1.2.** (e)).

6.1.1.1. Genitive Constructions.

In genitive constructions the possessor constituent precedes the possessed one.
a. possessor noun or pronoun+possessed noun: *a-ph°ə́s/lará ló-č''k'°ən* 'ART-woman/she her-child = woman's/her child', *sará sə-š°q'°ə́* 'my book', *wərt ró-mat°a-k°a* 'their clothes, possessions'.
b. possessor noun or pronoun +possessed masdar: *a-ph°ə́s/lará l-ca-rá* 'woman/she her-going = the woman's/her going'.
c. possessor pronoun+possessed pronoun: *lará l-t'°ə́* 'she her-possession = her (own)'.

6.1.2. Modifier Precedes its Head:

a. demonstrative pronoun+head noun: *arə́j a-j°né* 'this house', *ant a-tópha-c°a* 'those girls'.
b. attributive noun+head noun: *a-mə́t'k'°ma bž'ə* 'ART-lament sound', *q'amč'(ə) š'təbž'ə́-k'* 'a whip's sound', *ápswa š°ak'* 'Abkhaz rifle'.
c. adjective+noun; adjective usually precedes its head if it is derived by suffixation: *a-bj°á+t'° cha* 'copper bridge', *a-t'°ə́+m bəzš°á* 'foreign language', *a-ʒ́ór+lə+x k'anát'* 'steel cable'.
d. participle or participial relative clause+head noun: *jə-l-j°ə-z a-š°q'°-k'á* 'which-she-write-PIDF:NFIN ART-book-PL = the books that she has written', *jə-há-ma-w a-mál* 'which-we-have-PRES:STAT:NFIN ART-property = the property we possess', *jə-l-ahá-z [a-]áž'ə* 'which-she-hear-PIDF:NFIN ART-word = the word she heard', *s-x-a-č'ə́ j-áa+j-wa a-x°ócra* 'my head-its-in which-come-PRES:DYN:NFIN ART-thought = a thought (which is) coming to my head'.
e. (cardinal, ordinal) numeral+noun: *x-j°ə-k' ájš'-c°a* 'three brothers', *j°až°ájž°aba šək°sá* 'thirty years', *á-j°bat'°əj a-dáq''a* 'the second page' (cf. an alternative order in **6.1.1.** (b)).

6.1.3. Noun Phrase with Various Modifiers.

a. pronominal+adverbial+noun+adjective: [*abrój ájpš*] [*á-mš c°g'a*] 'this like ART-day bad = a bad day like this'.
b. possessor noun+possessed noun+adjective: [*a-dawə-c°á*] [*r-aš'á ajc'bə*] 'ART-giant-PL their-brother younger = the younger brother of the giants'.
c. pronominal+possessed noun+possessor noun: [*abnój a-wáda*] [*a-š'*] 'that ART-room its-door = the door of that room', [*sará s-áb*] [*j-aš'á*] 'I my-father his-brother = my uncle'.
d. possessor noun+adjective+possessed noun: [*š'xa dów-ʒʒa-k*] [*a-š'ap'-a-č'ə́*] 'mountain great-IDF its-foot-its-at = at the foot of a great mountain', [*á-xra xara-k°á*] [*ró-c-k°a*] 'ART-

rock far-PL their-tooth-PL = the peaks of distant rocks'.
e. possessor noun+possessed noun+possessed noun+adjective: [s-án l-ahºšʼá] [lə-jºnə čʼóc]
'my-mother her-sister her-house new = the new house of my maternal aunt'.

6.1.4. Coordination of Noun Phrases.

6.1.4.1. Conjunction.

Noun phrases are conjoined by means of the repeated coordinating postclitics -j or -gʼə 'and':

      a. gºónda-j sasróqºa-j 'Gunda and Sasryqwa'.
      b. b-án-gʼə b-áb-gʼə 'your mother and your father'.

      Other coordinating conjunctions are ma 'or': a-ʒéjas-kºa, a-ʒéja-kºa ma a-mšón-kºa ró-cʼa 'on the bottom of rivers, lakes or seas' (Bgazhba 1964a: 252-3), znə: znó sə-m-dór-wə-pʼ, znó kʼrə-z-dór-wa-jt'once I am ignorant, once I am all-knowing' (Grammatika 196).

6.1.4.2. Disjunction.

Disjunction is expressed by means of the conjunction ma 'or', or correlative conjunction ma ... ma 'either ... or':

      a. qºəbéjna ma bzəp 'the Kubina or the Bzyp (rivers)'.
      b. ma sará, ma wará 'either I, or you'.

      Other disjunctive conjunctions are axá 'but', mámzar, ákºəmzar 'if not, or'.

6.1.4.3. Apposition.

Two juxtaposed nouns, one of which defines the other, and both refer to the same referent, can be conjoined by means of an appositive construction: h-ášʼ-cºa a-daw+ápš-kºa 'our-brother-PL ART-giant+great-PL = our brothers great giants', a-kóta žºandºrópšʼ 'the Zhwandrypsh village', apshá Lewán 'king Leon'.

      A more expanded appositive construction, involving juxtaposition of two NPs, can be illustrated by the following sentence:

(33) [nárt-aa   r-ašʼá]   [xácʼa γʸγʸá-kʼ]   dó-qʼa-n,   dód   hºa
     Nart-PL   their-brother man strong   he-be-PAST Dyd QUOT
     'There was a strong man, the brother of the Narts, called Dyd'.

6.1.5. Number, Class/gender and Article Agreement within NP.

If the head noun belongs to the class of non-humans, it is only the second member of the NP that takes the plural marker, irrespective of the position of the head: á-mjºa dów-kºa 'big roads', a-tºóm bəzšºa-kºá 'foreign languages'. If the head noun is human, both adjective and the head are usually marked for number: a-cʼajº-cºá bzója-kºa 'ART-pupil-PL good-PL = good pupils' (cf. Grammatika 49).

      The modifier agrees in class/gender with the head noun: a-phºós lə-šºqºó 'woman her(H:F)-book', á(-)rbaγ a-cʼóxºa 'rooster its(NH)-tail'.[59]

      In combinations involving nouns and adjectives, irrespective of the relative position of the modifier and the head, it is usually only the first constituent that takes the generic article. Likewise, the indefinite article -kʼ attaches only to the last member of the noun phrase

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[59]The initial root vowel in á(-)rbaγ 'rooster', as in some other words, is often being reinterpreted by the speakers as the generic article, hence the hyphen in brackets.

irrespective of the class of its constituents: labá kʷáčʼ-kʼ 'a short stick', čʷkʷən bzója-kʼ 'a good boy'.

6.2. Structure of the AdP.

Adpositions are predominantly postposed to the words they govern, so that we have exclusively postpositional phrases:
a. locative: j-áb jə-čʼə 'his-father his-at = at his father's place'.
b. directional: s-án l-ax//ló-š+qʼa 'my-mother her-DIR = to my mother'.
c. terminative: a-bjºá+tº cha a-qʼó+n+ʒa 'ART-copper bridge its-till = as far as the copper bridge'.
d. benefactive: sara s-zó 'I me-for = for me'.

      In case of the non-human single referent, the postpositions often cliticize to the host noun: a-kóta-[a-]čʼə//a-kóta-[a-]qʼ+nə 'ART-village-its-LOC = in the village', a-kóta-[a-a]xʼ 'ART-village-its-DIR = to the village'.

6.3. Clause Structure.

A clause can be finite or non-finite. A finite clause contains a finite verb and can function as (a) a fully-fledged sentence, (b) as one of the finite clauses in a compound sentence, (c) as a main clause in a complex sentence, (d) as an embedded clause in the reported speech construction.

(34) a.   a-phºós   a-xºó   ø-qʼa-l-cʼá-ø-jt'
         ART-woman ART-food it-PREV-she-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'The woman cooked the dinner'.

    b.   a-phºós   a-xºó   ø-qʼa-l-cʼá-ø-jt',   wəj
         ART-woman ART-food it-PREV-she-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN   then

         áaməšʼtaxʼ   ló-čʷkʷən   kʼrə-j-čʼá-l-cʼa-ø-jt'
         after   her-boy   PREV-him-PREV-she-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'The woman cooked the dinner, after that (she) gave food to her son'.

    c.   a-xácʼa   d-an-áa+j-ø   á-šʼtaxʼ,   jə-phºós
         ART-man   he-when-come-AOR:NFIN its-after   his-wife

         jə-xºó   ø-qʼa-l-cʼá-ø-jt'
         his-food   it-PREV-she-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'After the husband came, his wife cooked his dinner'.

    d.   "a-phºós   a-xºó   ø-qʼa-l-cʼá-ø-jt' "   hºa
         ART-woman ART-food it-PREV-she-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN   QUOT

         ø-j-á-r-hºa-ø-jt'
         it-him-to-they-tell-AOR-DYN:FIN
         '"The woman cooked the dinner", they told him'.

      A minimal finite clause consists of a single VP, e.g. d-áa-ø-jt' '(s)he-come-AOR-DYN:FIN = (s)he arrived', šʼəžʼ-wó-p' 'morning-PRES:STAT-FIN = it is the morning-time'. The basic structure of an expanded finite indicative clause can contain several constituents.

6.4. Word Order.

6.4.1. The word order in declarative sentences is usually regarded as free, though the general principle is that the Agent usually precedes the objects, while the verb (whether finite or non-finite) holds the final position, i.e. A – O – V. The second preferred order is A – V – O. Alternative orders can be conditioned by a different position of the focus.

　　Constraints on the free position of NPs are determined mostly by semantic parameters, for example, should both A and O belong to the same nominal class, cf. the phrase 'The hunter killed the giant':

(35)　a.　*á-š°aracaj°ə*　*a-dawó*　　*də-j-š'ó-ø-jt'*
　　　　　ART-hunter　　ART-giant　　him-he-kill-AOR-DYN:FIN

　　　b.　*á-š°aracaj°ə*　*də-j-š'ó-ø-jt'*　　　　　　*a-dawó*
　　　　　ART-hunter　　him-he-kill-AOR-DYN:FIN　　ART-giant

If the NPs interchange their positions, then the identity of the killer and the victim will be reversed:

(36)　*a-dawó*　　*á-š°aracaj°ə*　　*də-j-š'ó-ø-jt'*
　　　ART-giant　　ART-hunter　　him-he-kill-AOR-DYN:FIN
　　　'The giant killed the hunter'.

Furthermore, in transitive constructions, there is a strong tendency to regard the Agent as higher in the animacy hierarchy, and as possessing a higher degree of control, which, from the point of view of natural information flow, determines the preference for the word order Agent – Patient, rather than otherwise. Consider the phrase 'The boy saw the girl':

(37)　a.　*á-č"k'°ən*　*a-təphá*　　*də-j-bá-ø-jt'*
　　　　　ART-boy　　ART-girl　　her-he-see-AOR-DYN:FIN

　　　b.　*á-č"k'°ən*　*də-j-bá-ø-jt'*　　　*a-təphá*
　　　　　ART-boy　　her-he-see-AOR-DYN:FIN　　ART-girl

Though the alternative order of NPs is possible without any change of sense, it is regarded as less preferable, unless a need to put the patient in the focus/emphasis position is especially required:

(38)　a.　*a-təphá*　　*á-č"k'°ən*　*də-j-bá-ø-jt'*
　　　　　ART-girl　　ART-boy　　her-he-see-AOR-DYN:FIN

　　　b.　*a-təphá*　　*də-j-bá-ø-jt'*　　　*á-č"k'°ən*
　　　　　ART-girl　　her-he-see-AOR-DYN:FIN　　ART-boy

With intransitive verbs, the word order is freer, cf. examples from Arstaa & Ch'k'adua (1983: 177):

(39)　*temór zína*　*d-l-á-c°až°a-wa-jt'*
　　　Temyr Zina　he-her-to-talk-PRES:DYN-FIN
　　　'Temyr is talking to Zina'.

and without changing the sense:

(40)　*zína temór d-l-á-c°až°a-wa-jt'*

6.4.2. Beside the main constituents, a sentence can contain other elements which can occupy the pre-Agent position, and/or the position between the Agent and the verb: their place is not rigidly fixed. From the point of view of information flow, the given (older) information precedes the newer one.

1	2	3	4	5	6
(PRE-AGENT ELEMENTS) –	AGENT/EXPERIENCER –	(ADDRESSEE) –	PATIENT –	(ADVERB) –	VERB

　　The initial slot in the sentence ('Pre-Agent position') can contain one of the following elements: conjunctions (e.g. *nas* 'then', *axá* 'but', *ma* 'either, or'), interjections (e.g. *haj* 'emphatic exclamation'), vocatives (e.g. *wa*), locatives (e.g. *jə-kóta-č'ə* 'in his village'), adverbs (e.g. *jax'á* 'today', *áx°əlpazə* 'in the evening', *až°á+k'+a+la* 'word-IDF-it-by = in a word').

(41)　*až°ák'ala,*　　(*sará*) (*wará wə-zó*)　*arój*　*a-š°q'°ó*
　　　in a word　　I　　you you-BENF　　this　ART-book

　　　jacó　　*jə-wə-z-ró-mə-s-xə-ø-jt'*
　　　yesterday　　it-you-BENF-them-PREV-I-take off-AOR-DYN:FIN
　　　'In a word, yesterday I took this book from them for you'.

A non-finite clause containing non-finite verbs usually cannot constitute a sentence:

(42)　a.　*axá*　*á-č"k'°ən*　　*x°əč"ó jə-m-wó-k'°a*
　　　　　but　ART-boy　　　small　it-not-do-PART
　　　　　'but the small boy, having not done much at all …'.

　　　b.　*á-x°əlbəčxa*　*l-aš'á*　　*d-an-áa+j-ø*
　　　　　ART-evening　her-brother　he-when-come-AOR:NFIN
　　　　　'when her brother came in the evening…'.

6.5. Major Sentence Types.

6.5.1. Simple Sentences.

Simple sentences normally contain only one finite predicate. The structure of a stylistically neutral simple indicative sentence is as follows: S (S, A or ADDR) – IO – DO – V:

(43)　a. S – V: *sará s-c-wá-jt'* 'I am going'.
　　　b. S – IO – V: *sará a-š°q'°ó s-á-px'a-wa-jt'* 'I am reading a book'.
　　　c. S (EXP) – IO – V: *sará lə-bž'ó ø-s-aha-wá-jt'* 'I hear her voice'.
　　　d. A – DO – V: *sará lará də-z-ba-wá-jt'* 'I see her'.
　　　e. A – IO – DO – V: *a-rc'aj°ó a-c'aj°-c°á a-dc'a-k°á ø-ró-j-ta-ø-jt'* 'the teacher gave instructions to the pupils'.

　　In **b**, **c**, **d** and **e** a regular alternative order of the constituents will place the verb in the penultimate position.

6.5.2. Multiple Sentences.

Multiple sentences are comprised of more than one clause, each containing a predicate, which can be finite (as in compound sentences or in the main clause of the complex sentences), or non-finite (as in the subordinate clause of the complex sentences).

6.5.2.1. Compound Sentences.

Compound sentences contain two or more coordinate clauses and are conjoined either asyndetically (a, b, c), or by means of conjunctions (d, e, f):

(44) a. a-cg°ó   ø-x°már-wa+n,   a-h°ónap   ø-ps-wá+n
         ART-cat   it-play-IMPRF   ART-mouse   it-die-IMPRF
         'The cat was playing, (while) the mouse was dying'.

     b. nás   a-póza   d-ná+jə-n,   k°ən   d-aa-jə́-px'a-n,   wós
         then ART-leader   he-go-PIDF   Kun   he-hither-him-call-PIDF thus

         ø-j-á-j-h°a-ø-jt'
         it-him-to-he-say-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'Then the leader went there, called for Kun and told him thus'.

     c. waxə́-k'   dará   r-č'ə́   d-ná+j-nə,   r-taac°á
         night-IDF   they   their-at   he-go-PCONV   their-family

         zag'ə́ ø-jə-bá-ø-jt'
         all   it-he-see-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'One night he went to their place and saw the whole family'.

     d. wəj   bará   jə-b-wós-ʒa-m,   axá   wajzg'ə́
         it   you(H:F) it-your(H:F)-business-EMPH-not but   anyway

         jə-b-á-s-h°a-wa-jt'
         it-you(H:F)-to-I-tell-PRES:DYN-FIN
         'It is not your business, but I shall tell it to you anyway'.

     e. ma   wará   wə-cá,   ma   sará   s-ca-wá-jt'
         either you(H:M) you(H:M)-go   either I   I-go-PRES:DYN-FIN
         'Either you go, or else I shall go'.

     f. lará á-salam+šʷq°ʷə   ø-l-jʷə́-ø-jt'//ø-l-jʷə́-n,
         she   ART-letter   it-she-write-AOR-DYN:FIN//it-she-write-PIDF

         nas   a-d°ax'ə́   d-d°ə́+l-c'ə-ø-jt'
         then ART-outside   she-PREV-exit-AOR-DYN:FIN
         'She wrote a letter and then went out'.

The Past Indefinite forms can only conditionally be listed among the finite forms, because, like the non-finite ones, they cannot constitute an independent sentence, their meaning being 'X did and…'. Therefore in **b** we can speak only of a semantic/functional, but not grammatical equality of the first two clauses (which contain the Past Indefinite forms), with the final clause containing the finite predicate in the Aorist.

6.5.2.2. Complex Sentences.

Complex sentences include a main and at least one subordinate clause:

(45) áapənra   ø-an-áa+j-ø,   á-mra   jahá
     springtime   it-when-come-AOR:NFIN   ART-sun   more

     jə-pxa-wá   j-á-laga-ø-jt'
     it-shine-PRES:DYN:NFIN it-it-begin-AOR-DYN:FIN
     'When springtime came, the sun began shining more'.

6.5.2.2.1. Clause Chaining in Complex Sentences.

Abkhaz lacks subordinating conjunctions. The subordinating clauses are chained to each other and to the main clause by means of non-finite verb-forms. Sometimes the quotative particle *h°a* can be used as a virtual subordinating conjunction 'that', cf. *d-aa-wá-jt' h°a só-q'a-wə-p'* 'I think **that** (s)he is coming' (cf. Hewitt & Khiba 1998: xxv).

6.5.2.3. Types of Subordinate Clauses.

6.5.2.3.1. Noun Clauses.

An example of such a clause is the reported speech constructions formed by means either of the introductory verb or the quotative particle *h°a* (the archaic past converb of the verb *a-h°a-rá* 'to say'):

(46) "jará   mak"ána   də-m-aa-ʒá-c(-t')"   (h°a)   ø-l-h°á-ø-jt'
     he   so far   he-not-come-EMPH-PERF   QUOT   it-she-say-AOR-DYN:FIN
     "He hasn't come yet", she said'.

A regular variant sentence will put the author of the statement (*lará* 'she'), omitted in the first sentence (because its marker is coded in the verb-form), in initial position:

(47) lará   "jará   mak"ána   də-m-aa-ʒá-c(-t')"   (h°a)   ø-l-h°á-ø-jt'
     she   he   so far   he-not-come-EMPH-PERF   QUOT   it-she-say-AOR-
                                                                    DYN:FIN

6.5.2.3.2. Relative (Adjective) Clauses.

Relative clauses are formed by means of relativized non-finite verb-forms. Any argument (including instrumental) can be relativized. Abkhaz relative clauses are usually prenominal, i.e., they precede their nominal heads.

(48) a. á-rax°   bzə́ja jə-z-ba-wá   a-waá
         ART-cattle   well   it-who-see-PRES:DYN:NFIN ART-people
         'The people who love cattle'.

     b. s-an   jə-l-ahá-z   ø-áž°abž'
         my-mother   which-she-hear-PIDF:NFIN ART-story
         'The story which my mother heard'.

     c. sə-z+la-ca-wá   á-mj°a
         I-which+with-go-PRES:DYN:NFIN   ART-road
         'The road by which I go'.

6.5.2.3.3. Adverbial Clauses.

Adverbial (circumstantial) clauses normally precede the main clause they modify, though the opposite order also occurs.

a. Adverbial Clauses with the Present Converb can either precede or follow the main clause:

(49)   *torq'án*   *d-aa-jə́-d-gəl-ə-t'*   *jə-k°əmž°+k°áč'*   *x°əč°ə́*
        Torqan   he-hither-him-beside-stay-AOR-DYN:FIN   his-cherkesska+short small

        a-h°ənc°ra-k°á   *ø-aj+ba-r-k'-wá*
        ART-button-PL   them-RECI-CAUS-hold-PRES:DYN:NFIN
        'Torqan came up to him, buttoning up his small short cherkesska-coat'.

b. Adverbial Clauses with the Past Converb:

(50)   *s-ab*   *ájzar[a-a]-ax'+t°*   *d-xə+n-h°-nə́*   *a-j°nə́*   *d-áa+j-ø-jt'*
        my-father   meeting-it-from   he-PREV-turn-PCONV   ART-home   he-come-
                                                               AOR-DYN:FIN
        'My father, having returned from the meeting, came home'.

c. Temporal Clauses:

'when':

(51)   *jə-psə́*   *ø-anə́-j-š'a-ø,*   *j-áž°abž'*   *d-á-laga-ø-jt'*
        his-soul   it-when-he-rest-AOR:NFIN   his-story   he-it-begin-AOR-DYN:FIN
        'After/when he had some rest, he started his story'.

'after':

(52)   *d-an-áa+j-ø*   *á-š'ta+[a+]ax',*   *a-x°ə́*
        she-when-come-AOR-NFIN   its-after   ART-food

        ø-q'a-l-c'a-wá   *d-á-laga-ø-jt'*
        it-PREV-she-ROOT-PRES:DYN:NFIN   she-it-begin-AOR-DYN:FIN
        'After she arrived, she started cooking'.

'until':

(53)   *lará*   *d-áa-n+ʒa*   *ǯ'arg'ə́*   *h-ca-ʒa-wá-m*
        she   she-arrive-until   anywhere   we-go-EMPH-PRES:DYN-NEG
        'We shall not go anywhere until she comes'.

d. Locational Clauses:

(54)   *á-kalak'*   *a-č'ə́*   *d-ax'-áa+jə-z,*   *jə-jə-dər-wa+z*
        ART-city   its-in   he-where-come-PIDF:NFIN   whom-he-know-IMPRF:NFIN

        aʒ°ə́   *d-j-á-z+c'+aa-ø-jt'*
        somebody   he-him-to-ask-AOR-DYN:FIN
        'In the city to which he arrived, he asked somebody whom he knew'.

e. Causal Clauses are formed by means of the postpositions *-zə* 'for', *-q'+nə+t°* 'from', or the locative prefix *a+x'(ə)-* 'where':

(55) a.   *lará*   *bzə́ja*   *d-ax'ə́-z-ba-wa+z*   *(a-zə́),*   *lassə́-lassə*
            her   well   her-because-I-see-IMPRF:NFIN   it-for   often

            sə-l-z-á-s-wa+n
            I-her-BENF-it-beat-IMPRF

       b.   *lará*   *bzə́ja*   *də-z-ba-wá+n*   *a-zə́//a-q'+nə́+t°,*   *lassə́-lassə*
            her   well   her-I-see-IMPRF   it-for//it-from   often

            sə-l-z-á-s-wa+n
            I-her-BENF-it-beat-IMPRF
            'Because I liked her, I phoned her often'.

f. Purposive Clauses are formed by means of the purposive suffixes *-r+c(ə)* (Conditional suffix plus *-c(ə)*) or *-ra+zə* (masdar suffix plus *-zə* 'for'). Another purposive construction is based on the masdar form followed by the quotative particle (the latter regularly dropping if the verb is one of motion).

(56) a.   *tatlastán*   *á-lada-waa*   *ø-aj-zə́-j-ga-r+c*
           Tatlastan   ART-south-people   them-RECI-BENF-he-bring-PURP

           á-lada   *d-cá-ø-jt',*   *álma*   *á-j°ada-waa*
           ART-south   he-go-AOR-DYN:FIN   Alma   ART-north-people

           r-áj-z-ga-ra+zə   *j°adá*   *d-cá-ø-jt'*
           them-RECI-BENF-bring-PURP   ART-north   he-go-AOR-DYN:FIN
           'Tatlastan went to the south to collect the southerners, Alma went to the north to collect the northerners' (DG 286).

       b.   *jə́-mah°ə-j*   *jə-phá-j*   *r-ba-rá*   *h°a*
           his-son-in-law-and   his-daughter-and   their-see-MASD   QUOT

           apsnə́-q'a   *d-aa-r+cə́*   *ø-jə-ʒbə́-ø-jt'*
           Abkhazia-DIR   he-come-PURP   it-he-decide-AOR-DYN:FIN
           'He decided to go to Abkhazia in order to visit his daughter and his son-in-law' (DG 184).

g. Conditional Clauses are formed by the non-finite conditional predicates in the protasis, formed by the stem plus the conditional suffixes *-r*, *-za+r* 'if':

(57) a.   *wasá-k'*   *a-t'ə́ša*   *jə-tá-pa-la-r,*   *a-g°árta*   *zag'ə́*
           sheep-IDF   ART-hole   it-inside-jump-EXT-COND   ART-herd   all

           wax'   *jə-tá-pa-la-wa-jt'*
           there   they-inside-jump-EXT-PRES:DYN-FIN
           'If one sheep springs into the hole, then the rest of the herd follows it'.

       b.   *wəj*   *wac°ə́*   *d-q'ala-wá-za+r*   *jə-l-á-s-h°a-wa-jt'*
           she   tomorrow   she-become-PRES:DYN-COND   it-her-to-I-tell-
                                                            PRES:DYN-FIN

           'If she appears tomorrow, I shall tell her'.

h. Counterfactual Conditional constructions denote not-fulfilled actions which are

imagined as having been possible at a certain period of time, provided some condition was met, but in reality did not (or will not) happen:

(58) aréj   ø-z-dór-wa-za+r//ø-z-dór-wa-za+r+g'ə//ø-z-dór-wa-z+t+g'ə//,
      this   it-I-know-PRES:DYN-COND

      jə-q'a-s-c'a-wá+n
      it-PREV-I-ROOT-IMPRF
      '(Even) if I knew this, I would have done it'.

Here the conditional verb in the protasis corresponds to the imperfect verb-form in the apodosis. Similar unreal conditional constructions can be formed with Future I (of the Second Tense Group) in the apodosis (jə-q'a-s-c'a-ró-n 'I would have done it').[60] Note that the conditional forms with the suffixes -za+r+g'ə and -z+t+g'ə have the meaning 'even if'.

i. Concessive Clauses are formed by means of the suffixes -z+t+g'ə and -za+r+g'ə 'even if':

(59) aréj   ø-wə-dór-wa-z+t+g'ə//ø-wə-dór-wa-za+r+g'ə,
      this   it-you(H:M)-know-even if

      jə-wə-zó-q'a+c'a-wa+mə+z+t'
      it-you(H:M)-POT-do-NEG.IMPRF
      'Even if you had known this, you could not have done it'.

6.5.2.4. Complement Clauses.

A typical example of a complement clause is the direct speech construction:

(60) a-bna+k°t'ó   [a-]aták'   ø-q'a-na-c'á-ø-jt':   "wax'
      ART-woodcock   ART-answer   it-PREV-it-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN   there

      sə-lbaá-r,   a-d°ó   s-nó+k°+la-r   s-š°a-wá-jt'".
      I-descend-COND   ART-field   I-step down-COND   I-afraid-PRES:DYN-FIN
      'The woodcock gave the answer: "I am afraid to descend there, to step down on the field".

6.5.2.5. Headless Clauses.

a. Coordinate Clauses.

(61) jə-r-gá-n   ʒ'ará   jə-k'a-ró-ž'ə-ø-jt'
      it-they-carry-PIDF   somewhere   it-SPREV-they-throw-AOR-DYN:FIN
      'They took it and (then) threw it away'.

b. Subordinate Clauses.

(62) jó-jə-k'ə-z   ø-l-k'a-jó-ž'-ø-jt'
      which-he-hold-PAST:STAT:NFIN   it-down-SPREV-he-throw-AOR-DYN:FIN
      'He threw down what he was holding in his hands'.

[60]Cf. Hewitt (1979: 186-7).

6.5.2.6. Copular Sentences.

(63) a. Identification:

      aréj   sə-j°n-á-wə-p'
      it   my-house-be-PRES:STAT-FIN
      'this is my house'.

      b. Classification:

      wəj   də-rc'aj°ó-wə-p'
      (s)he   (s)he-teacher-PRES:STAT-FIN
      '(s)he is a teacher'.

      c. Existence:

      a-j°nó   dó-q'a-wə-p'
      ART-house   (s)he-be-PRES:STAT-FIN
      '(s)he is at home'.

6.5.2.7. Pseudo-Cleft.

In constructions comparable to English pseudo-cleft constructions, the relative clause moves to the focus (initial) position:

(64) jə-z-j°ó-z   sará   s-á-wə-p'
      it-who-write-PIDF:NFIN   I   I-be-PRES:STAT-FIN
      'The one who wrote this is I'.

6.6. Negation.

Negation is expressed by the negative affix m(ə)-, which can be, depending on the tense and the nature (dynamic or stative) of the verb, (a) prefixed, (b) suffixed, or (c) infixed (in case of the preverb-bound verbs) to the appropriate verb-form.

Examples:
(65) a.   jə-š°ə-m-ba-ʒa-wá-j?
            it-you:PL-not-see-EMPH-PRES:DYN-QU
            'Don't you see it?'

      b.   bará   h-an   b-ák'°-ʒa-m
            you(H:F)   our-mother   you(H:F)-be-EMPH-not
            'You are not our mother!'

      c.   j-á-xa-ø-jt',   axá   jə-r-zó-c'ə-m-xə-ø-jt'
            they-it-pull-AOR-DYN:FIN   but   it-them-POT-PREV-not-take off-AOR-
                                                 DYN:FIN
      'They pulled it, but they couldn't take it out from under'.

Words like aʒ°+g'ó//aʒ°ó+m+za+r aʒ°+g'ó//aʒ°ó+m+za+ra+k' 'anybody', ak'+g'ó// ak'ó+m+za+ra+k'(ə) 'anything' are not real negative pronouns, as they alone cannot form a negative sentence, negation being expressed on the verb:

(66) a. *aʒ°+g'ǝ́//aʒ°ǝ́+m+za+r*   *aʒ°ǝ́*   *d-m-áa-ø-jt'*
one:H-and//one:H-not-if   one:H   (s)he-not-arrive-AOR-DYN:FIN
'nobody came'.

b. *ak'+g'ǝ́//ak'ǝ́+m+za+r+ak'*   *ø-s-m-áwǝ-ø-jt'*
one-and//one-not-if-one   it-I-not-get-AOR-DYN:FIN
'I did not get anything'.

6.7. Verb Serialization.

Verb phrases expressing simultaneous actions, possessing the same grammatical form and having a single grammatical subject can follow each other within a clause, cf. *wój m+á+w a-c'ára-g'ǝ ø-lǝ́-ma-wǝ-p', a-š°q'°ǝ́ d-á-px'a-wa-jt', jǝ-l-j°-wá-jt'* 'this not-be-PRES:STAT:NFIN ART-education-and it-she-have-PRES:STAT-FIN ART-book she-it-read-PRES:DYN-FIN it-she-write-PRES:DYN-FIN = besides, she is also educated: she reads, writes' (DG 287).

6.8. Imperatives.

6.8.1. Positive Imperatives
of dynamic verbs are expressed by the pure stem of the verb and the appropriate agreement markers. As to the presence of the latter, three possibilities obtain:

a. S+Stem in one-place intransitive verbs: *š°-ca* 'you:PL-go!';
b. S+IO+Stem in two-place intransitives: *š°-jǝ́-x°a+pš* 'you:PL-him-look = look at him!';
c. DO+Stem in transitive verbs with singular agent: *jǝ-gá* 'it-take = (you:SG) take it!';
d. DO+A:PL-Stem in transitive verbs with plural agent: *jǝ-ž°-gá* 'it-you:PL-take = (you:PL) take it!'.

The stative verbs form their imperatives by means of the durative suffix *-z* added to the root (= pure stem): *wǝ́-q'a-z* 'be!'.

When used in the 1st and 3rd person, the usual form of the imperative is Subjunctive: *jǝ-q'a-s-c'[a]-áa+jt'* 'let me do it!', *jǝ-q'a-r-c'[a]-áa+jt'* 'let them do it!', *h-c[a]-áa+jt'* 'let us go!', *d-c[a]-áa+jt'* 'let him/her go!'.

Categorical imperatives are formed by adding the emphatic suffix *-j* to the pure stem: *š°-ca-j* 'you(PL) do go!'. Mild orders or requests employ the suffix *-j+š*: *š°-t'°a-j+š'* 'you(PL) sit down, will you?'.

6.8.2. Prohibitions
(negative imperatives) are formed by the circumfix *m - n*: *jǝ-q'a-wǝ-m-c'á-n* 'it-PREV-you(H:M)-not-ROOT-IMPER = do not do it!', *š°-ǝ-m-cá-n* 'you(PL)-not-go-IMPER!'. Unlike positive imperatives, in prohibitions formed from transitive verbs the 2nd p. sg. marker is not deleted. In the 1st and 3rd person, the usual form of the prohibition is Subjunctive: *jǝ-q'a-sǝ-m-c'[a]-áa+jt'* 'let me not do it!', *ha-m-c[a]-áa+jt'* 'let us not go!', *dǝ-m-c[a]-áa+jt'* 'let him/her not go!'.

Stative prohibitions employ the negative form of the subjunctive: *wǝ́-q'a-m-z+aa+jt'* 'let you not be!'

Categorical prohibitions also add the emphatic suffix *-j*: *š°ǝ-m-cá-nǝ-j* 'you (PL) do not go!'. And in order to soften the order, the suffix *-j+š'* is employed: *š°ǝ-m-t'°á-nǝ-j+š'* 'do not sit down, will you (PL)?'.

6.9. Direct and Indirect (Reported) Speech.

6.9.1. Direct Speech.
The introductory verb indicating the author of the quotation can stand in all forms and tenses of the dynamic verbs.

(67) *"s-an*   *d-áa-ø-jt'*,   *á-p'at'ǝw*
my-mother   she-come-AOR-DYN:FIN   ART-respect

ø-lǝ́-k°-s-c'a-r-a-wǝ-p'",   *ø-jǝ-h°á-ø-jt'.*
it-her-PREV-I-put-COND-be-PRES:STAT-FIN   it-he-say-AOR-DYN:FIN
"My mother came, I have to show my respect for her", - he said' (Anshba 1995: 239).

6.9.2. Indirect (Reported) Speech.
In the absence of complementizers in Abkhaz, for the purpose of Indirect speech reporting the non-finite forms with the conjunctional prefix *-š(ǝ)-* 'how' are used. Alternatively, Indirect speech can be expressed by the combination of a finite verb with the quotative particle and the introductory verb. The reported speech is usually put at the beginning of the sentence.

(68) *jará*   *wax'*   *dǝ-š-ca-wá+z*   *(sará)*   *(jǝ-)s-á-j-h°a-ø-jt'.*
he   there   he-how-go-IMPRF:NFIN   me   it-me-to-he-tell-AOR-DYN:FIN
'He told me that he was going there'.

(69) *d-aa-ʒa-wá-m*   *h°a*   *ø-j-á-s-h°a-ø-jt'.*
(s)he-come-EMPH-PRES:DYN-NEG   QUOT   it-him-to-I-say-AOR-DYN:FIN
'I told him that (s)he will not come'.

6.9.3. Reportative Verb.
When used as a reportative device, in narratives, stories, fairly-tales, etc., the verb *a-h°a-ra* is always in Aorist, usually in 3rd p. sg. H:M (*jǝ-j-h°a-ø-jt'* lit. 'it-he-said'), but sometimes in the 3rd p. pl., which does not distinguish gender or grammatical class (*jǝ-r-h°a-ø-jt'* 'it-they-said'). Its chief meaning is to indicate the reported nature of the described event. In narrations, the introductory and reportative verbs often co-occur within one clause, the introductory verb, which refers to the author of the quote, coming first, and the reportative verb following it. Cf. the following examples:

(70) *dǝ́-q'a-n,*   *ø-jǝ-h°á-ø-jt',*   *č'k°ǝ́na*   *x°ǝč''ǝ́-k'.*
he-be-PAST   it-he-say-AOR-DYN:FIN   boy   little-IDF
'There was, they say (lit. 'he said'), a little boy'.

(71) *"sará*   *jǝ́-s-taxǝ-w*   *wará*   *w-á-wǝ-p'"*
I   what-I-want-PRES:STAT:NFIN   you(H:M)   you(H:M)-be-PRES:STAT-FIN

ø-l-h°á-ø-jt',   *ø-jǝ-h°á-ø-jt'.*
it-she-say-AOR-DYN:FIN   it-he-say-AOR-DYN:FIN
"The one I want is you", she reportedly said (Anshba 1995: 246).

6.9.4. Quotative Particle *h°a.*
The origin of the quotative particle *h°a* can be seen as the fossilization of the past converb form of the verb *a-h°a-rá* 'to speak' in an objectless post-referent form (*ø-h°a*). The grammaticalized character of this particle is even more obvious in the Bzyp dialect, where it is often used in the delabialized form (*ha*). The quotative particle is always VP or NP-final.

The quotative particle serves (a) to mark the reported speech (both direct and indirect), and (b) to mark the indirect statement.

(72) Direct quotation:

"á-sas-c°a   ø-áa+j-ø-[j]t'"   h°a   jə-r-áj-g°ərɣ'a-n
ART-guest-PL they-come-AOR-DYN:FIN   QUOT   they-them-RECI-glad-PIDF

jə-r-pə́+la-ø-jt'.
they-them-meet-AOR-DYN:FIN
'With the words "The guests arrived!" they gladly met them' (Anshba 1995: 239).

(73) Embedded indirect statement:

jə́-q'a-n   aʒə́r-jə-pa-c°a   h°a   j°ə́+ʒ'a   ø-ájš'-c°a.
they-be-PAST:FIN Adzhyr-his-son-PL QUOT   two-H   ART-brother-PL
'There lived two brothers (known as) Sons of Adzhyr'.

6.10. Interrogation.

Questions are formed by means of interrogative words and special interrogative affixes. The position of interrogative words in the sentence is relatively free.

a. Prefixes:

a+ba- 'where to?':   š°-a+bá-ca-wa 'you:PL-QU-go-PRES:DYN:NFIN = where are you
                          going?';
a+ba+n+ʒa- 'up to where?': š°-a+bá+n+ʒa-ca-wa 'you:PL-QU-go-PRES:DYN:NFIN = up to
                          where do you go?';
a+ba+n+t°- 'from where?': š°-a+bá+n+t°-aa-wa 'you:PL-QU-arrive-PRES:DYN:NFIN = where
                          are you coming from?';
an+ba- 'when?':   d-an+bá-ca-wa '(s)he-QU-go-PRES:DYN:NFIN = when is (s)he
                          going?';
š+pa- (< -š-ba-) 'how?': də-š+pá-q'a-w '(s)he-QU-be-PRES:STAT:NFIN = how is (s)he?'.

b. Circumfixes:

š+pa-...j 'how?':   də-š+pá-ca-ø-j '(s)he-QU-go-AOR-QU = how did (s)he go?',
z...-da 'who?:   jə-z-h°á-ø-da 'it-QU-say-AOR-QU:H = who said it?';
z(ə)-...j 'why?':   š°-zə́-m-ca-ø-j 'you:PL-QU-not-go-AOR-QU = why did not
                          you(PL) go?'.

c. Suffixes:

-da   jə-k'á+ha-ø-da 'REL-fall-AOR-QU:H = who has fallen?';
-j: š°ə-m-ca-wá-j 'you:PL-NEG-go-PRES:DYN-QU = you (PL) are going, aren't
               you?';
-ma: d-cá-ø-ma '(s)he-go-AOR-QU = did (s)he go?'; dó-c°a-w-ma '(s)he-sleep-
               PRES:STAT-QU = is (s)he sleeping?'.
-za+j: jə-k'á+ha-ø-za+j 'REL-fall-AOR-QU = what has fallen?';
-w: dó-c°a-wə-w '(s)he-sleep-PRES:STAT-QU = is (s)he sleeping?', d-ca-wá-w
               '(s)he-go-PRES:DYN-QU = is (s)he going or not?'.

The suffixes -da and -zə/a+j refer to the human vs. non-human referents, respectively.

The interrogative words are dárban 'who?' (H:SG), dəzwə́s(t)da//dəzwə́stada 'who?' (H:SG), jəzwə́stk°ada//jəzwə́stc°ada//jəzwə́stada 'who?' (H:PL), járban 'what?', jəzak°ə́j// jəzak°ə́zaj 'what?', jəzbán 'why?', jəzt°ə́da 'whose?', etc.

6.10.1. Echo-questions are formed by means of the interrogative particle ba:

(74) sará   a-j°nə́-q'a   s-ca-wá-jt'.
     I   ART-home-DIR   I-go-PRES:DYN-FIN
     'I am going home'.

     a-j°nə́-q'a   ba?
     ART-home-DIR   ECHO
     '(You said:) 'Home?'

6.11. Coreference.

6.11.1. Pronominal Anaphora:
Personal or deictic pronouns can serve as anaphora:

(75) aljás-r+aa   jə-r-zó-m-dər-wa-j?   -   wərt   mak°ána
     Alyas-his+PL   it-they-POT-not-know-PRES:DYN-QU   they   not yet

     jə-rə-z-də́r-ʒa-wa-m
     it-they-POT-know-EMPH-PRES:DYN-not
     'Don't the family of Alyas know this? – They don't know this yet'.

6.11.2. Coreferential Omission.
Given that grammatical relations are expressed on the verb, the use of pronouns in Abkhaz is often optional. Cf. a typical example:

(76) há-ʒyab   d-abá-q'a-w?   -   [lará]   xác'a
     our-girl   she-where?-be-PRES:STAT:NFIN   [she]   man

     d-ca-ø-jt'...   tatlastán   [lará]   də-j-gá-ø-jt' (DG 325)
     she-go-AOR-DYN:FIN   Tatlastan   [her]   her-he-take-AOR-DYN:FIN
     'Where is our girl? – She got married... Tatlastan married her'.

6.11.2.1. Shared Argument:

(77) x'ə́bla d-áa+j-ø-t',   nas   [*x'ə́bla]   a-x°ə́   q'a+tc'a-rá
     Khibla she-come-AOR-DYN:FIN   then   [*Khibla]   ART-food   make-MASD

     d-á-laga-ø-jt'
     she-it-begin-AOR-DYN:FIN
     'Khibla came and then [Khibla] started preparing the food'.

6.11.2.2. Shared Predicate:

(78) s-á-laga-ø-jt'   [a-]ajxá,   [a-]ajg°ə́š°,   a-čága,
     I-it-start-AOR-DYN:FIN   ART-axe   ART-small axe   ART-mattock

a-bába wəh°á r-č'əbaa+ra, rə-ʒrəž°+ra
ART-spade etc. their-welding their-chilling

'I started the forging and tempering of the axe, the small axe, the mattock, the spade, etc.' (BSh).

7. DISCOURSE RELATED PHENOMENA.

7.1. Focus Markers.

7.1.1. Verbal and Nominal Clitics.
7.1.1.1. The verbal proclitic *ag'ə-* with the meaning 'even, also, too' can be used as a focus marker, cf.:

(79) á-sas d-ag'ə́-m-t°a-ə-jt', d-ag'ə́-m-pšə-ø-jt'
ART-guest (s)he-even-not-sit-AOR-DYN:FIN (s)he-even-not-wait-AOR-DYN:FIN
'The guest neither sat down, nor even waited'.

7.1.1.2. The nominal conjunctional enclitic *-g'ə* 'and', apart from its direct function, can also be used as a focus marker with the meaning 'even, also, too'. It can mark any constituent under focus, cf. the following examples:

a. The noun in focus:

(80) šarátx°a j-áb+g'ə aréj dáara d-áj+la+ha-ø-jt'
Sharytkhwa his-father-too this very he-want-AOR-DYN:FIN
'The father of Sharytkhwa, too, wanted it very much'.

b. The pronoun in focus:

(81) lar-g'ə́ aréj jə-l-z-áj+lə-m-k'+aa-ø-jt'
she-too this it-her-POT-SPREV-not-ROOT-AOR-DYN:FIN
'She too did not understand this'.

7.1.2. Inferential Suffixes *-zaap'*, *-zaarən*.
Inferential forms are characterized by a high degree of focality: they are more usual in the focus/comment part of the sentence than in its topical part. As an example a story can be cited about a person who gained power over a mermaid by cutting off and hiding a lock of her hair. The verb forms used are non-inferential until the narrator comes to an important remark that the person's little daughter saw where her father hid the mermaid's hair:

(82) a-x°əč'°ə́ jə-l-bá-zaap'.
ART-child it-she-see-INFER1
'The child, as it turned out, saw it' (Anshba 1995: 79).

The choice of this particular verb to be marked by the inferential marker is strategically important, as this knowledge led to a dramatic consequence: cunningly, the mermaid makes the naïve child tell her the whereabouts of her hair, takes possession of it, kills the child and disappears.

7.1.3. Quotative Particle/Clitic *-h°a*.
The postposed quotative particle *-h°a*, which is used to mark indirect statements, often acquires an additional meaning of 'a certain', 'one' and, being put after the word in focus (which can be any constituent), accentuates or explicitly marks the latter's focus status.

(83) jə-g°ólara də-n+xa-wá+n ǯ'g°ə́na h°a aʒ°ə́
his neighbourhood he-live-IMPRF Dzhguna QUOT one:H
'In his neighbourhood there lived a certain Dzhguna' (DG 175).

7.2. Topic.
The given (old) information usually precedes the new one. Cf. a following paragraph containing a topicalization chain (topic is underlined, the comment is put in bold):

(84) jə-š-j°á+j-wa+z rj°áš də́w-k' jə-n-xə́-k°-gəla-ø-jt'. abrá jə-xə́-n á-cha+c°rə. á-cha+c°rə j-an-xə́-k°-gəla-wa+z jə́-lapš jə́-c'a+š°a-ø-jt'. á-k'ap'anga. abrój á-k'ap'anga ø-ax'-gə́la-w á-ləm ə́-q'a-wə-p'
'As they were going up, they came up to **a big stream**. There there was a **narrow bridge** (over the stream). When they were standing at the narrow bridge, his gaze fell upon a pair of **scales**. At the place where these scales stand, there is a **lion**....'.

Each sentence in this paragraph contains a new (comment) information portion placed at the end of the sentence, which in the next sentence, as already an old information, is consequently moved to the beginning of the sentence, and so on.

8. LEXICON.

The Abkhaz lexicon contains a certain amount of borrowed items, though their total number is relatively modest as compared to the lexicon of the sister-languages. The native lexicon is quite rich, and the process of creation of new words to cater for growing cultural needs is presently being intensified.

8.1. Loan Words.
The main layers of loan words comprise items borrowed from Turkish (including many Arabic and Persian words), the Kartvelian languages (Megrelian, Georgian) and Abkhaz's sister-language Circassian. There is also a small group of old Alanic (Proto-Ossetian) and (non-Turkish) Turkic borrowings. The majority of Kartvelian loans, as indicated by Diaspora Abkhaz, entered the language quite late, after the Exodus, i.e. after the 1860s. The number of Kartvelian loans in Proto-Abkhaz (dated approximately to the 10[th] century) is ca. 30 lexemes. The process of borrowing from Kartvelian languages has been effectively stopped since the 1950s. Turkish lexemes started to enter Abkhaz from the 16[th] century. The Russian loans are the most recent, but they form a significant layer in the Abkhaz lexicon. Among the Russian loans there is a small group of early borrowings, some of which have already become obsolete, like *a-stársən* 'head of the community' < Rus *staršina*, *a-vérs* 'versta (3500 feet)' < Rus *versta*, *a-p'asélk'a* 'a district in a village' < Rus *poselok* 'settlement', etc.

8.1.1. Phonetics of Loanwords.
Old(er) loans are modified to meet the patterns of the Abkhaz phonological system. As far as vowels are concerned, in older loans the vowel timbre of the source-language was either split to produce diphthongs (e.g. *a-wáps* 'Ossete' < Megr *opsi*, *a-wárba* 'eagle' < Geo *orb-i* [61]),

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[61] The presence of the final *-a* in the Abkhaz form is not clear.

gave their timbre over to the adjoining consonants (Bz *a-k'arp'óžˣ°* 'water-melon' < Tu *karpuz*) or were stripped of their timbre altogether (cf. *á-dəš'man* 'enemy' < Tu *düşman*). In new loans, which are coming predominantly from or via Russian, the vowels tend to be kept unchanged (*a-k'inó* 'cinema', *a-t'elefón* 'telephone', etc.).

The glottalized and aspirated consonants in words borrowed from the surrounding Caucasian languages were, naturally, left unchanged if they had exact matches in Abkhaz. In borrowings from Circassian the latter's obstruent laterals are rendered in Abkhaz as clusters *tl, kl* (< Circ *ł*), *dl* (< Circ *ɫ*), the velar fricatives as palatalized (*g'* < *ĝ*, *k'* < *x̂*) and labialized (*k°* < *x̂°*) velar stops. In words borrowed from Turkish, the phonetic aspiration of Turkish voiceless consonants in many cases was also preserved (cf. *a-tʰatʰón* < Tu *tʰütʰün* 'tobacco'). The Turkish velar voiceless stops are rendered in Abkhaz as *kʰ, kʰ', k', k''* or *q'*, depending on their (older) pronunciation in Turkish (cf. Dzhonua 2002: 97-99). In older Russian loans there is a tendency to render the Russian voiceless (unaspirated) stops as voiceless aspirated, cf. *a-minút* 'minute', *a-ftíl* 'wick; slow-match' (< Rus *fitil'*), *a-káš'* 'pap' (< Rus *kaša*; cf. also Geo *kaša*, Svan *kaš*), *a-fúnt* 'pound' (< Rus *funt*; cf. Geo *punt'-í*). But in other instances they are rendered by glottalized stops, cf. *a-k'anwéj* 'escort' < Rus *konvoj* (cf. Geo *k'onvoi*). Such cases include, in particular, words borrowed orally via Georgian/Megrelian as intermediary, cf. the 19th century Abkhaz loanword *a-k'art'óɣ(a)* 'penal servitude', from Russian *katorga* via Megrelian *k'art'oɣa* (cf. Georgian *k'at'orɣa*; the Kartvelian forms reflect the South Russian pronunciation of this word, with voiced velar spirant *ĝ* instead of the Standard Russian stop *g*). In later Russian loans the same consonants are consistently rendered by the glottalized ones, most likely in conformity with the Literary Georgian borrowing practice (cf. *a-p'árt'ia*, Geo *p'art'ia* 'party' vs. Abaza *pártija*, Circassian *partie* 'party'), or simply in order to match the Russian orthography, as suggested by Hewitt (p.c.).

In most recent loans of foreign words containing the sound 'h' there is a tendency to render it by its close Abkhaz counterpart *'h'*, in breach of the tradition (which followed the Literary Russian practice) to replace it with the voiced stop 'g', cf. the new forms *a-harmónia* 'harmony', *a-hip'ót'eza* 'hypothesis', *a-hip'nóz* 'hypnosis' (cf. Labakhua 2000: 24-5), as contrasted with earlier *a-garmónia*, *a-gip'ót'eza*, *a-gip'nóz* (cf. Bgazhba 1964a: 146, 149), borrowed via Russian.

8.2. Neologisms.

The natural process of creating new words was accelerated during work on the first translations of Christian literature into Abkhaz in the last decades of the 19th c. During Soviet times, a mass of neologisms were created (cf. Khetsija 1988), often coined according to their Russian (and in early Soviet times, probably sometimes also according to Georgian) models, cf. *á-kˣ°gəlara* 'speech', lit. 'standing on top', resembling Russian *vystuplenie*. In other cases the derivation was original, cf. *a-fómca* 'electricity', made up of *a-fó* 'lightning' and *á-mca* 'fire', *a-nap'lak'ó* 'enterprise', made up of *a-nap'ó* 'hand', the instrumental *-la* and the root of the verb *a-k'ó-zaa-ra* 'to be held in hands'.

During the post-Soviet period the process of direct borrowing slowed, and many late (mostly Russian) loanwords, including the names for the months, are being replaced. Preference in creating new words is given either to archaic or dialectal words (like the re-introduced old names of the months, e.g. *a-mšapómza* 'April' (lit. 'Easter month'), *nánhˣ°a* 'August', etc.), or to older borrowings, well assimilated and regarded as native (cf. *a-dˣ°k'án* 'shop' < Tu *dükkân*, replacing the Russian *a-magazín*). Some existing words receive an additional meaning, e.g. *a-tacˣ°óra* 'vacuum' < 'emptiness'. There are, finally, entirely new creations, such as *a-póza-minist'r* 'Prime Minister' (*a-póza* 'chief, leader'), *apsnó žˣ°lár rájzara* 'Abkhazia's National Assembly' (*žˣ°lár* 'people', *r-áj+za+ra* 'their-assembly'), *a-tˣ°ólawajˣ°* 'citizen' (*a-tˣ°óla* 'country', *a-wajˣ°ó* 'man'), *a-tc'aáradərra* 'science' (*a-tc'aára* 'investigation', *a-dórra* 'knowledge'), which replaced the Russian loan *a-naúk'a*, *a-mzár* 'calendar' (*á-mza* 'month', plus the productive nominal suffix *-ar*), which replaced the Russian *a-k'alendár*.

9. TEXT

The following short story was written by the classical Abkhaz writer Dmitry Gulia (*dərméjt' gˣ°léja*) (1874-1968).

jə-j-z-ájɣ'ə-w   ø-h-hˣ°a-wá-jt'   ø-r-hˣ°á-n,
which-him-BENF-better-PRES:STAT:NFIN   it-we-say-PRES:DYN-FIN   it-they-say-PIDF

jə-j-z-ajcˣ°á-z   ø-r-wə́-ø-jt'.
which-him-BENF-worse-PAST:STAT:NFIN   it-they-do-AOR-DYN:FIN

'We shall do what is better for him', they said, but they did what was worse for him.

1. bát'a   a-láw   raš'ót jə-phá   d-aa-j-gá-ø-jt'.
 Bata   ART-Law   Rashit his-daughter   her-hither-he-bring-AOR-DYN:FIN
 Bata Alaw married Rashit's daughter.

2. raš'ót   nxɛ́c't'ˣ°ə-n.
 Rashit   North-Caucasus-PAST
 Rashit was from the North Caucasus.

3. zeg'   ájcərdərwa wajˣ° dów-k'   j-ákˣ°ə-n.
 all   well-known man big-IDF   he-be-PAST
 He was a great man known to everybody.

4. šəkˣ°só-k'   ø-áq'ara   ø-c'-x'a-nó   ájpš-aa-nə   raš'ót
 year-IDF   it-about   it-pass-PPERF-PCONV   like-time-ADV   Rashit

 jə́-mahˣ°ə-j   jə-phá-j   r-ba-rá   hˣ°a   apsnó-q'a
 his-son-in-law-and his-daughter-and   their-see-MASD   QUOT   Abkhazia-DIR

 d-aa-r+có   ø-jə-ʒbó-ø-jt'.
 he-come-PURP   it-he-decide-AOR-DYN:FIN
 After having waited for about a year, Rashit decided to go to Abkhazia to visit his daughter and his son-in-law.

5. a-jˣ°óz-cˣ°a   ø-aá-š'tə+x-nə   á-mjˣ°a   d-nó-kˣ°ə+l-ø-t'.
 ART-friend-PL:H   them-hither-lift-PCONV   ART-road   he-PREV-depart-AOR-FIN:DYN
 He took his friends and departed.

6. jará   wəbrój   álamtala   bát'a jə-š'amxó   c'ósxa-k'
 that   very   time   Bata his-knee   swelling-IDF

 ø-á-l-na-x-zaap',   d-a-r-gˣ°áq'-wa   də-š'tá-n.
 it-it-PREV-it-ROOT-INFER1 him-it-CAUS-disturb-PRES:CONV   he-lie prostrate-PAST
 At this very time it turned out that Bata's knee developed a swelling, and he was in bed, being troubled by it.

7. a-hak'óm-cˣ°a   ø-á-də-j-ga+l-ø-t'   j-aʒˣ°-m-kˣ°a,
 ART-doctor-PL:H   them-it-PREV-he-fetch-AOR-DYN:FIN   they-one:H-not-CONV

jə-j°ɔ́+ǯ'a-m-k°a,   axá   ak'+g'ɔ́   ø-jə-mɔ́-x°a-ø-jt'.
they-two:H-not-CONV   but   anything   it-him-not-help-AOR-DYN:FIN
He fetched the doctors, not a one or two, but nothing was helping him.

8. wəs bát'a   j-ábx°a   raš'ɔ́t   jə-j°ɔ́z-c°a   ø-ajcrəx°x°-wá
   thus Bata   his-father-in-law Rashit   his-friend-PL:H   they-one after another-
                                                                       PRES:DYN:NFIN

   r-č'áarxa-n,   jə-š-áa+j-wa+z   x°əlpazɔ́-k'   áxəwh°a
   they-heading-PIDF   they-how-come-IMPRF:NFIN evening-IDF   in a sudden mass

   bát'a   j-ášta   j-aa-tá+l-ø-t'.
   Bata   his-yard   they-hither-enter-AOR-DYN:FIN
   Thus Bata's father-in-law Rashit's friends, one after another, entered one evening
   unexpectedly Bata's yard.

9. wa   x°lə-bzɔ́ja-k°a,   - h°a.
   VOC   evening-good-PL   QUOT
   'Hey, good evening!', - said they.

10. wa   bzɔ́ja   ø-ž°-b-áa+jt',   bzɔ́jala   š°-aa-bá-ø-jt', -
    VOC   well   it-you(PL)-see-SUBJ well   you(PL)-we-see-AOR-DYN:FIN

   ø-r-h°a-n,   r-čɔ́š'k'əl-k°a   ø-k'-nɔ́,   j-aa-čɔ́+ž°ə-r-xə-ø-jt',
   it-they-say-PIDF their-stirrup-PL   them-hold-PCONV them-hither-PREV-they-take
                                                              off-AOR-DYN:FIN
   j-á-k°+š°a-z   a-waá.
   which-(on) it-happen-PIDF:NFIN   ART-people
   'Hey, hallo, welcome!', - having said, the people who were by chance at the yard, holding
   their stirrups, helped them to descend from the horses.

11. ǯ'aw+k'ɔ́ á-sas-c°a   ø-rɔ́-ma-nə,   a-j°ən   dɔ́w
    some-IDF ART-guest-PL:H   them-they-have-PCONV ART-house big

   a-bárc'a-[a-a]x'   jə-j°-xá+l-ø-t',   dača-ǯ'aw+k'-g'ɔ́
   ART-verandah-its-DIR they-up-climb-AOR-DYN:FIN other-some-and

   a-č-k°á   a-čxarpárta-[a-]č'ə   jə-ná-ga-nə
   ART-horse-PL   ART-tethering rail-its-LOC them-thither-bring-PCONV

   r-áɣ°ra-k°a   ø-na-xa-dɔ́-r+š°ə-ø-jt'.
   their-bridle-PL   them-thither-above-they-CAUS+fall-AOR-DYN:FIN
   Some of them took the guests and went up onto the verandah, still others took the horses
   to the tethering rail and wrapped their bridle-straps around it.

12. raš'ɔ́t   d-na-pš-áa-pš-nə,   bát'a   d-anɔ́-jə-m-ba-ø:
    Rashit   he-thither-look-hither-look-PCONV Bata him-when-he-not-see-AOR:NFIN
   Rashit looked around, but when he didn't see Bata,

13. 'dad,   sɔ́-mah°   d-abá-q'a-w?'   ø-jə-h°á-n
    VOC   my-son-in-law he-where-be-QU it-he-say-PIDF

---

   d-r-á-z+c'+aa-ø-jt'.
   he-them-to-ask-AOR-DYN:FIN
   'My dear, where is my son-in-law?', - he asked them.

14. c'ɔ́sxa-k'   jɔ́-l-na-xə-n   də-š'tá-wə-p'   h°a
   swelling-IDF   it-PREV-it-ROOT-PIDF   he-lie-PRES:STAT-FIN   QUOT

   j-á-h-h°a-r   ø-pxaš'ará-wə-p'   ø-r-g°+á+x°ə-n:
   it-him-to-say-COND   it-shame-PRES:STAT-FIN it-they-regard-PIDF
   'If we tell him that he is in bed because of his swelling, it'll be shameful', - they thought.

15. jə-š'ap'ɔ́   xɔ́-k'   ø-á-k°+š°a-n   də-š'tá-wə-p',   ø-r-h°á-ø-jt'
    his-foot   bullet-IDF   it-it-fall-PIDF he-lie-PRES:STAT-FIN it-they-say-AOR-DYN:FIN

   arɔ́j   aták'-s.
   this   answer-as
   'He was wounded by a bullet in his foot, that is why he is in bed', - they answered.

16. š°rá-k'=c'ɔ́sxa-k'   jə-š'ap'ɔ́   j-á-l-c'ə-r   wəj
    ulcer-IDF=swelling-IDF his-foot   it-it-PREV-get out-COND this

   dača+k'ɔ́-n,   wəs   ø-á-k°ə-m-k°a   s-š'ap'ɔ́   xə-k'
   another-PAST thus   it-be-not-PRES:CONV   my-foot   bullet-IDF

   ø-á-k°+š°a-ø-jt'   h°a   sará   mah°ɔ́-s   d-s-átʷa-m, -   ø-jə-h°á-n
   it-it-fall-AOR-DYN:FIN QUOT I   son-in-law-as he-me-worthy-not   it-he-say-
                                                                                            PIDF

   də-n-čɔ́+ž°+la-n,   jə-j°ɔ́z-c°a   ø-jɔ́-ma-ø   d-cá-ø-jt'.
   he-LOC-ascend horseback-PIDF his-friend-PL:H them-he-have-PCONV he-go-AOR-
                                                                                     DYN:FIN

   'If an ulcer or swelling had erupted on his foot, that would have been one thing, but, that
   apart, he's not worthy to be my son-in-law with his excuse of being hit in the foot by a
   bullet,' - having said, he got on his horse and together with his friends left.

Dmit'ri Gulia. Ialk'aau. Aq°a: Alašara, 1973, p. 184.

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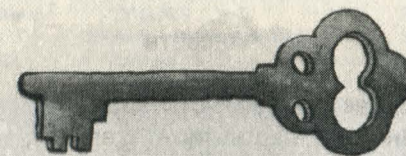
ILLUSTRATIONS

Types of Abkhazians (photos from the 1920s).

Table of various Abkhaz alphabets: designed by, respectively, P. Uslar, M. Zavadskij, the Translation Committee, N. Marr, N. Yakovlev, the Georgian-based alphabet, the modern Cyrillic-based alphabet, and the phonemic transcription (from Bgazhba 1967: 66-67).

The Initial Page of the Abkhaz Translation of St John's Gospel in the Older Version of the Cyrillic-based script (Tiflis, 1912).

А Х Ѵ́ 1.

1. Аханȧ̀т дѵ́qан Аѫ҄ка, ѵ̀і Аѫ҄ка Анц̆а̀ і̆ӗѵ́ дѵ́qан; ѵ̀і Аѫ҄ка дѵ́'-Нц̆а̀н.

2. Ѵ̀і Аѫ҄ка Анц̆а̀ і̆ӗѵ́ аханȧ̀т дѵ́qан.

3. Зеі̆ѵ́ Ѵ̀і і̆ла іqалвѐіт, Ѵ̀і і̀да акі̆ѵ́ азѵ́qамлвѐіт і̀qалаз.

4. Ѵ̀і абѫ҄азара і̀лан, Ѵ̀і і̀бѫ҄азара ауаȧ̀ рѫ҄в лашȧ̀ран.

5. А̀лашара а̀лашц̆ара ӑӗѵ́ і̀лашѵꙋ̀ѵ̆іт,— а̀лашц̆ара Іарȧ̀ ізвіхȧ̀мц̆еіт.

6. Дѵ́qан Анц̆а̀ іqнѵ̀т іаа̀шꙅꙋ̆вз аѫ҄ѵ́; ѵ̀і Іоа̀нн іх̆ꙅꙋн.

7. Ѵ̀і даȧ̀іт шаха̀ꙅꙋс Алашара дѵ̀ізѵ̆шаха̀ꙅразꙋ,—іарȧ̀ і̀ла зеі̆ѵ́ дхȧ̀ртаразꙋ.

8. Іарȧ̀ длашȧ̀рамѵꙅт, ахȧ̀ (даашꙅꙋ̆вн) а̀лашара зхѵ̀лтцꙋуа дѵ̀іꙅꙋшаха̀ꙅхаразꙋ.

9. Дѵ́qан Алашара іȧ̀ша, дȧ̀рбанзаалаꙅ҄ апꙅсаба̀ра ӑӗѵ́ іаȧ̀іуа а̀оѳѵ дзѵ́рлашуа.

10. Апꙅсаба̀раѵ̆ѵ́ дѵ́qан, апꙅсаба̀ра Іарȧ̀ і̀ла іqалвѐіт, ахȧ̀ апꙅсаба̀ра Іарȧ̀ дазѵ́мдрѵіт.

11. Даȧ̀іт і̀і̆вз рѵ̆ѵ, ахȧ̀ і̀і̆вз Іарȧ̀ дрѵ́друмкꙋлт.

The Cover of the Abkhaz Primer Written in Latin-based Script Designed by Mustafa Butba (Istanbul, 1919).

CERQES EELFIB

APSIFSELE

Yizviz :

ABITP–M

Aēiqsə 1

a rıy a fšeki, a tsɛre zimov
yirbeyt, yirguepxeyt.

An Abkhaz Text in the Current Cyrillic-based Alphabet. From the Children's Poetry Book by Gunda Kutsnia-pha "Airəȝ škʷakʷa" ("The White Jug"), Aqʷa (Sukhum), 2000.

Лакә - лакә...

Лакә-лакә... лакәырҭаца,
Хьыркәа-мыркәа жәаҩа цыҧха.
Жәаҩа-шә ҿахыуп ахан хьыцәца,
Лакәырҭаца уа дыҩнахыуп
Дыҩнашькьыруа, дыҩнакаччо,
Жәаҩа цыҧха лџьыба иҭахыуп,
Жәеиза аалыртын, шәык лзаартуам,
Лцыҧхақәа зегь лцәеилагахит.
Уа илзыҩнада уи ауада хәыҷ?
Иҵәахыда?- Ла лхьырҧыс иоуп,
Маҳәра иуама?- Иуеит рымҳәеи,
Лакәырҭаца иара димгеи.
Аҧныш иакәзаап ирыцашьыц,
Ахан хьыцәца дыҩназцәахыз
Иара арҧыс - Хьыркәа-мыркәа.
Лара лакәзар - Лакәырҭаца.
Ашәык рыбжьоуп, ирзаартуам,
Маалыҟьк днеины иааимыртыкәа.
Уара, сычкәын, хахәы-бырфын,
Уара уакәхап уи амаалыҟь,
Ахан хьыцәца уҧырны уазца,
Лакәырҭаца уцыҧха лызга.

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Map of Abkhazia

(from "Abkhazija priglashaet na otdykh". Moscow: Interreklama, 1995).

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12 **Even** (Tungusic) A.L. Malchukov
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20 **Maori** R. Harlow
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22 **(Modern Eastern) Armenian** N.A. Kozintseva
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28 **Rural Palestinian Arabic** (Abu Shusha dial.) K.N. Shahin
30 **Northern Sotho** L.J. Louwrens, I.M. Kosch & A.E. Kotzé
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