

Chapter 4

Mehweb verb morphology

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The paper describes the morphology of the verb in Mehweb, a Dargwa lect of central Daghestan, Russia. The description is partly based on previous research (Magometov 1982, Sumbatova unpublished) and partly on the field data the author has been collecting from 2009 to the present. Mostly, formal morphology of synthetic verb forms and complex verbs are discussed.

Keywords: East Caucasian, Dargwa, Mehweb, verb, inflection, perfective, imperfective, transitivity, complex verbs.

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the verb morphology of Mehweb, a lect of the Dargwa branch of East Caucasian languages, spoken in the village of the same name in the Gunib district of the Republic of Daghestan. The paper is mostly focused on formal and synthetic morphology. Periphrastic forms are treated only peripherally, and the semantics of the verbal categories is not discussed at all. As a result, labels provided for different inflectional categories are conventional and to a large extent based on previous research. While formation of deverbal nominal forms – nominalizations and participles – is covered, their further inflection as nominals is also left out. The previous treatment of the Mehweb morphology, Magometov (1982), provided the basis for many analytical solutions.

Mehweb verbs agree in gender (noun class) with their nominative argument, distinguishing three primary genders – masculine (M), feminine (F) and neuter (N) in the singular, human plural (HPL) and non-human plural (NPL) in the plural. There is an additional gender for unmarried girls and women. Agreement marking is largely similar to agreement in adjectives, spatial forms, numerals



etc., which are not treated in this chapter. Agreement morphology is discussed in §2. Additionally, and unlike other parts of speech, some verbal forms show special inflection with first or second person subjects, depending on the illocutionary force (with first person in affirmative utterances and with second person in interrogative ones). These are discussed in §3.

The whole inflectional paradigm of the verb is divided into two parallel sets of forms, based on perfective and imperfective stems, whose relation to each other is complex and follows several different formal patterns with most verbs. The relation between the stems of a few verbs is irregular. Many forms are formed from both stems. This is discussed in §4.

In Mehweb, there are three distinct verbal inflectional classes, distinguished by the suffix they take in the perfective past (aorist), *-ib* (*-ub*), *-ur* or *-un*. The aorist stem is used in the participle and the forms derived from it. Other forms, including all forms in the imperfective, are however formed in the same way for the verbs of all three classes. This is discussed in §5, which also provides a table showing all inflectional forms known so far.

Verbal negation is discussed in §6. The structure of the verbal paradigm as a whole is discussed in §7. Some of the forms follow specific rules, independent from the classification into three inflectional classes. These include imperatives and infinitives and are described in §8. Inflection of the auxiliary is discussed in §9. Verbs with irregular morphology, including verbs of motion, are discussed in §10. §11 presents data on transitivity, including regular morphological causativization and lexically constrained phenomena such as lability. §12 explains the morphological makeup of complex verbs, including verbs with vestigial prefixes, light verbs and verbalizers and bound verbal roots.

2 Gender agreement

Mehweb nouns belong to one of the three primary genders – masculine, feminine and neuter, glossed as M, F and N, respectively. Animate non-human nouns belong to the neuter gender. In the plural, all human nouns behave the same, so that only human plural (HPL) and non-human plural (NPL) are distinguished. Additionally, nouns and pronouns referring to girls or unmarried women (glossed as F1) show a special pattern of agreement – in the singular, they require the same marker as non-human plurals. Many mass nouns and some abstract nouns, in the singular, control NPL agreement.

The morphology of gender markers is shown in the following table and is common to all targets of agreement – adjectives and verbs having a prefix agreement

slot, locative nominal forms – a suffix slot, etc. Verbs may only have gender markers in the prefix position, and not all verbs have this slot (though most do).

Table 1: Gender agreement marking

	SG	PL	
M	w		
F	r	b	HPL
F1	d-r		
N	b	d-r	NPL

The marker of the masculine *w-* is lost in forms where it is preceded by a prefix, either grammatical (negation) or derivational. There is some evidence that this process is optional, at least with the prefix of negation. Cf.:

- (1) *w-aχ-un* vs. *ħa-χ-un* (< *ħa-w-aχ-un*)
 M-foster:PFV-AOR NEG-M.foster:PFV-AOR

For more information on the morphology of negation see §6.

- (2) *w-ik-ib* vs. *ar-ik-ib* (< *ar-w-ik-ib*)
 M-fall:PFV-AOR PV-M.fall:PFV-AOR

Note that, synchronically, most combinations of preverbs with the root are not compositional. Thus, the preverb *ar-* etymologically means ‘away’, while the verb *-ik-* synchronically means ‘happen’ (etymologically most probably ‘fall’).

The masculine marker is also lost in stems with initial *u-*, such as:

- (3) *d-uq-un* vs. *uq-un* (< *w-uq-un*)
 F1-enter:PFV-AOR M.enter:PFV-AOR

For more on preverbs, see §12.

3 Egophoric forms

Some categories of the verb vary depending on whether they have a subject in the first or second person or not. The forms signaling that their subjects are speech act participants will be called egophoric forms below. Unlike gender agreement, subject agreement shows an accusative pattern and is controlled by S/A arguments. The peculiar property of subject agreement in Mehweb as compared to

other Dargwa languages is that it is sensitive to the illocutionary type of the utterance. The subject suffix appears with first person subjects in declarative utterances but with second person subjects in interrogative utterances. This distribution, known in typological studies as egophoric, is sometimes dubbed disjunct vs. conjunct forms and in East Caucasian languages is so far only attested in Akhvakh (Creissels 2008; 2018) and Zakatala Avar (Forker 2018). Below, this inflection will be glossed as EGO.

All TAME categories that have egophoric forms are shown in Table 2, in both egophoric (EGO) and unmarked (3) forms:

Table 2: Egophoric forms and their unmarked counterparts

		‘come’		‘put on’	
		perfective	imperfective	perfective	imperfective
PST	3	=ak'-ib	=ik'-ib	ik'-ub	irk' ^w -ib
	EGO	=ak'-i-ra	=ik'-i-ra	ik'-ub-ra	irk' ^w -i-ra
HAB	3	–	=ik'-an	–	irk' ^w -an
	EGO	–	=ik'-as	–	irk' ^w -as
FUT	3	=ak'-as	=ik'-es	ik' ^w -es	irk' ^w -es
	EGO	=ak'-iša	=ik'-iša	ik' ^w -iša	irk' ^w -iša
		‘fly’		‘read’	
PST	3	arc-ur	urc-ib	=elč'-un	luč'-ib
	EGO	arc-ur-ra	urc-i-ra	=elč'-un-na	luč'-i-ra
HAB	3	–	urc-an	–	luč'-an
	EGO	–	urc-as	–	luč'-as
FUT	3	arc-es	urc-es	=elč'-es	luč'-es
	EGO	arc-iša	urc-iša	=elč'-iša	luč'-iša

In the past, the egophoric forms are marked with the suffix *-ra*, assimilated to *-na* after the nasal auslaut in the aorist. In the imperfective past, the tense suffix *-ib* irregularly drops its final *-b*. In the future, non-egophoric forms are identical to the infinitive, while the egophoric forms use a special suffix *-iša*. In the present habitual (which also serves as synthetic present for some stative verbs), there is an opposition of two special affixes, *-an* for non-egophoric and *-as* for egophoric forms. Following the idea that the basic distinction is between egophoric forms that are marked and non-egophoric unmarked forms, I gloss *-an* simply as HAB and *-as* as HAB.EGO (similarly with other forms). Egophoric forms are also present

with the present form of the auxiliary *lewra* (M), *lella* (< *ler-ra*, F and NPL), *lebra* (N and HPL) and the negative copula *ahinna* (< *ahin-ra*) – see §9 on inflection of auxiliaries.

4 Aspectual stems

In Mehweb, the vast majority of the verbal categories are formed from two different stems, perfective and imperfective. I will consider verbal inflection as divided into perfective and imperfective paradigms. The two paradigms are largely parallel. Most categories attested both in the perfective and the imperfective paradigms use the same affixes. The exceptions are listed in the following table:

Table 3: Asymmetries between perfective and imperfective paradigms

	perfective	imperfective
past	<i>-ib(-ub)/-ur/-un</i>	<i>-ib</i>
participle	<i>past+ -i(l)</i>	<i>-ul</i>
converb	<i>past+ -le</i>	<i>-uwe</i> (< PTCP+ <i>-le</i>)
imperative	<i>-e/-a</i>	<i>-e</i>
infinitive	<i>-es/-as</i>	<i>-es</i>
present	–	<i>-an/-as</i>
prohibitive	–	<i>m(V)- ... -di</i>
negative optative	–	<i>m(V)- ... -ab</i>

On the choice of one of the markers in the same category see the relevant sections below. For the different markers of the aorist (perfective past) see §5; for the choice of the vowels in the imperative and the infinitive see §8; the second of the two affixes in the present tense is the egophoric form (see §2 above). For the asymmetries in the system of special converbs see Sheyanova (2019). Other parallel categories in the two paradigms use the same markers.

There are verbs that lack the perfective stem. When asked to produce perfective forms for these verbs, the consultants suggest a combination of the infinitive with perfective verbs, mostly *=aʔes* ‘begin’. These defective verbs denote states and some atelic activities, such as *izes* ‘be ill’, *=iges* ‘want’, *=ukes* ‘itch’, *ures* ‘rain’, *ruʔzes* ‘be shivering’ (also ‘boil’), *ruʔqes* ‘flow’, *=uzes* ‘work’, *urʔes* ‘fight’, *=ulqes* ‘dance’. Note that some of these verbs show a morphological structure similar to one of the models of the imperfective stem derivation – infixation of *-r-* or *-l-* – and may historically go back to a regular two-stem verb. In fact, *=ulqes* ‘dance’ is

identical to the imperfective stem of *=uqes ~ =ulqes* ‘go, run’. Another defective verb is the bound root **k’es* (probably related to *uk’es* (IPFV) ‘say’) that is used in some morphologically complex but unanalyzable verbs.

Some verbs have identical perfective and imperfective stems. These include *umces* ‘weigh, measure’, *irxes* ‘reap’, *irc’es* ‘weed’, *=alces* ‘spin (thread)’, *=urhes* ‘tell’, *=uhes* ‘scold’, *=u?es* ‘be’, *=ises* ‘weep’, *=a’ldes* ‘hide’ (tr). Note again that some of these verbs have the *-V(l/r)C-* structure typical of imperfective stems.

There are also several verbs whose imperfective stem is distinct from the perfective stem in that it does not contain the gender prefix slot: *(=)ižes* ‘lick’, *(=)i’sqes* ‘mow, peel’, *(=)ites* ‘beat’, *(=)ig^wes* ‘burn’. More generally, there is an asymmetry between perfective and imperfective stem in terms of the presence of the gender agreement slot: imperfective stems may lack it with those verbs whose perfective stems have it, but not vice versa. Cf. the following table:

Table 4: Asymmetries between perfective and imperfective paradigms

		Imperfective	
		+	-
Perfective	+	66	29
	-	(2)	21

The two verbs which exceptionally have gender slots in the imperfective stem but lack it in the perfective stem are *kes* (PFV) *~ =ukes* (IPFV) ‘bring’ and *es* (PFV) *~ =uk’es* (IPFV) ‘say, tell’, both of which are morphologically irregular. The latter verb may be considered two separate lexical items (‘say’ and ‘tell’).

There are several highly irregular verbs, all shown in Table 5. Note that, again, with ‘see’ and ‘give’, the imperfective stems show one of the regular patterns of imperfective stem formation (see below) and are similar to their perfective stems, so that they represent a case of weaker suppletion than fully irregular ‘say’ and ‘go’.

Table 5: Aspectual stems of the irregular verbs

	‘say’	‘see’	‘give’	‘go’
PFV	<i>i-/e-/bet’-</i>	<i>g^w-</i>	<i>(=e)g-</i>	<i>=a’sq’-/u’sq’-/q’=-ež’-</i>
IPFV	<i>uk’-</i>	<i>irg^w-</i>	<i>lug-</i>	<i>=aš-</i>

The attested patterns of the connection between the perfective and the imperfective stems are summarized in Table 6. The choice of the pattern is not fully

independent of other formal properties of the verb, first of all the perfective past formation and/or the presence of labialization (a labialized final consonant or *u*); see the explanations below the table.

Table 6: Patterns of aspectual stems formation

Model	Subtype	Example	No.	Constraints & tendencies	Exceptions to constraints
infixation in IPFV	<l>	= <i>ic</i> '- ~ = <i>ilc</i> '- 'fill'	18	none	
infixation in IPFV	<r>	<i>ih</i> -(<i>ub</i>) ~ <i>irh</i> ^w - 'throw'	5	labialization	= <i>ix</i> - ~ = <i>irx</i> - 'put'
<i>er</i> - in PFV		= <i>erž</i> - ~ = <i>už</i> - 'drink'	17	none	
VIC ~ <i>luC</i>	<i>alC</i> ~ <i>luC</i> <i>eIC</i> ~ <i>luC</i>	= <i>elč</i> '-(<i>un</i>) ~ <i>luč</i> '- 'read'	9	AOR in - <i>un</i>	= <i>a^hlq</i> '- ~ <i>lu^hq</i> '- 'rinse'
ablaut	<i>a</i> - ~ <i>i</i> - <i>e</i> - ~ <i>i</i> -	<i>abx</i> - ~ <i>ibx</i> - 'open' = <i>e?</i> ~ = <i>i?</i> 'be enough'	19	(AOR in - <i>ib</i>)	
ablaut	<i>a</i> - ~ <i>u</i> - <i>e</i> - ~ <i>u</i> -	<i>ar</i> -(<i>un</i>) ~ <i>ur</i> - 'sift' = <i>erg</i> - ~ = <i>urg</i> 'spin (thread)'	22	labialization AOR in - <i>un</i> or - <i>ur</i>	= <i>arg</i> - ~ = <i>urg</i> - 'find' = <i>ebk</i> '- ~ = <i>ubk</i> '- 'die'

Infixation of *-l-* (18 verbs) is attested in all inflectional classes, while infixation of *-r-* (seven verbs) is present in five simple verbs, four of which are labialized (aorist in *-ub*). The model VIC ~ *luC* is typical specifically of the verbs with aorist in *-un*. Vowel alternation in V(C)C roots is usually *a/-e- ~ i-*, with *i-* changing to *u-* in verbs with the aorist in *-un*, *-ur* or *-ub*.

5 Conjugation classes and the issue of labialization

I group Mehweb verbs into three inflectional classes according to the marker of the perfective past they use – *-ib*, *-ur* or *-un*. Most verbs use the *-ib* suffix, which I will consider to be the default; the same suffix is used by verbs of all conjugations with the imperfective stem as the imperfective past, so in fact it may be considered to be simply a suffix (of the secondary derivational stem) of the past, perfective or imperfective, the choice between the perfective/imperfective

interpretation being, in these forms, fully determined by the aspectual characteristics of the stem. A small additional fourth class is very similar to the ‘default’ conjugation except that all verbs in this class have labialization on the final consonant of the stem and the aorist marker is realized as *-ub*; it is shown as 1a in the following table. However, not all inflectional properties of this 1a class may be explained as being a labialized variety of the first class; see below. Here are some representative forms:

Table 7: Verbal inflectional classes

	PFV PST	IPFV PST	
1.	<i>irx-ib</i>	<i>irx-ib</i>	‘reap’
	<i>=ic-ib</i>	<i>=ilc-ib</i>	‘sell’
1a	<i>=ig-ub</i>	<i>=ig^w-ib</i>	‘burn’
2.	<i>arc-ur</i>	<i>urc-ib</i>	‘fly’
	<i>=emž-ur</i>	<i>=umž-ib</i>	‘get warm’
3.	<i>=erg-un</i>	<i>=ug-ib</i>	‘eat’
	<i>alʔ-un</i>	<i>ulʔ-ib</i>	‘cut’

In verbs with lexical pharyngealization, the *-u-* of the aorist marker may be realized as *-o^ʕ-* (on pharyngealization, see Moroz 2019). Cf.:

(4) *=o^ʕrʔ-o^ʕb* ‘break’ (variant of *-ub*)

(5) *=iʔ-o^ʕn* ‘steal’ (variant of *-un*).

Labialized stems also exist in the *-un* and *-ur* classes, where the labialization is, however, lost before (absorbed by) the vowel of the aorist suffix. It is also lost in the imperfective forms if the stem vowel changes to *-u-* – apparently, the root vowel absorbs the labialization of the following consonant, including when there is another consonant that comes between the root vowel and the labialized consonant. Depending on the form and class, labialization of the stem is thus realized as labialization of the last consonant of the stem (e.g. in the imperative), labialization of the stem vowel (in various imperfective forms) or labialization of the suffix vowel (in *-ib* of the aorist).

Most verbs with *-ub* in the aorist also have labialization in other forms, so that one interpretation is that *-ub* results from the *-ib* marker meeting the final labialization of the stem. The two verbs that take *-ub* but do not show labialization in other forms – *=o^ʕrʔ-* ‘break’ and *=uh-* ‘become’ – both have *-u-* as the

underlying vowel of the root (o^{f} is the result of pharyngealization of u). When comparing this to the fact that the $-u-$ in the imperfective stem absorbs the labialization of the final consonant, as shown in Table 8, it seems appropriate to posit the deep form of the perfective stem of these two verbs as having the labialized consonant whose labialization changes the aorist marker $-ib$ to $-ub$ but is itself always absorbed $*=o^{\text{f}}r^{\text{w}}$, $*=uh^{\text{w}}$. Then, all verbs that take $-ub$ in the aorist have final labialization. On the other hand, none of the $-ib$ verbs has a labialized final consonant.

Table 8: Labialized stems

	Perfective			Imperfective		
	IMP	INF	PST	IMP	INF	PST
‘dig’	$=erB^{\text{w}}a$	$=erB^{\text{w}}es$	$=erBub$	$iB^{\text{w}}e$	$iB^{\text{w}}es$	$iB^{\text{w}}ib$
‘slaughter’	$=erh^{\text{w}}a$	$=erh^{\text{w}}es$	$=erhun$	$=urhe$	$=urhes$	$=urhib$
‘burn’	$=alk^{\text{w}}a$	$=alk^{\text{w}}es$	$=alk^{\text{w}}un$	$luk^{\text{w}}e$	$luk^{\text{w}}es$	$luk^{\text{w}}ib$
‘go down’	$=er\chi^{\text{w}}e$	$=er\chi^{\text{w}}es$	$=er\chiur$	$=ur\chi e$	$=ur\chi es$	$=ur\chi ib$

Given this evidence, it seems that the $-ub$ conjugation should merely be considered a formal subtype of the $-ib$ conjugation. However, the conjugation of the $-ub$ and $-ib$ verbs diverge in two important points. First, both the aorist marker $-ib$ and the homophonous imperfective past marker on all verbs lose the final consonant when followed by $-ra$ in egophoric forms or the perfective converb marker $-le$. With $-ub$, both forms keep the final $-b$. Second, the $-ib$ in the imperfective paradigm does not change to $-ub$ after a labialized stem – something which we would expect assuming that $-ub$ in the perfective paradigm results from $\dots^{\text{w}}+ib$.

Table 9: Divergence between the default $-ib$ and the $-ub$ conjugations

		IMP	PST	PST(EGO)	CVB
‘come’	PFV	$=ak^{\text{w}}e$	$=ak^{\text{w}}ib$	$=ak^{\text{w}}ira$	$=ak^{\text{w}}ile$
	IPFV	$=ik^{\text{w}}e$	$=ik^{\text{w}}ib$	$=ik^{\text{w}}ira$	$=ak^{\text{w}}uwe$
‘put on’	PFV	$ik^{\text{w}}a$	$ik^{\text{w}}ub$	$ik^{\text{w}}ubra$	$ik^{\text{w}}uble$
	IPFV	$irk^{\text{w}}a$	$irk^{\text{w}}ib$	$irk^{\text{w}}ira$	$irk^{\text{w}}uwe$

In other words, the suffix $-ub$ shows morphophonological behavior which is significantly different from $-ib$.

Whatever the ultimate interpretation of the $-ub$ aorist should be, it seems that this inflection type shows a position intermediate between a separate conjuga-

tion class and a subtype of the default. The full list of the attested labialized stems for all conjugations is as follows (in the aorist form): =eʔub ‘seed’, =erkun ‘eat’, gub ‘see’, ihub ‘throw’, =alk’un ‘take fire’, =igub ‘burn’, ik’ub ‘put on’, =erhun ‘slaughter’, =usaʔun ‘fall asleep’, =erʔub ‘dry up’, =aʔhun ‘get soaked’, =erq’ub ‘become worn’, =erbub ‘dig out’, =alhun ‘wake up’, =erχur ‘come down’. As explained above, the verbs =oʔrʔoʔb ‘break’ and =uhub ‘become’ are only labialized in their underlying forms.

6 Polarity

Verbal negation is expressed by one of the two prefixes, the standard negation prefix *ħa-* and the volitive negation prefix *mV-*. The latter is only used in volitional moods including the prohibitive (negative imperative) and negative optative, and the former is used elsewhere, both on finite and non-finite forms. Some speakers allow using *ħa-* in negative optative forms. The standard negation *ħa-* is, however, never used in prohibitive forms.

In periphrastic verbal forms, both the lexical and the auxiliary verb may be negated. The standard negation *ħa-* is placed immediately before the verbal stem, thus following the preverb with preverbal verbs. The full pre-root template of the verb is shown in the following example:

- (6) *ħar-ħa-d-uq-un.*
 PV-NEG-F1-flee:PFV-AOR
 ‘She did not run away.’

Some of the negative forms of the verb =ak’-as ‘come’ are given in Table 10 as an example. As masculine forms morphophonologically interact with the prefix (see below), feminine (more specifically, F1 – girls gender) forms are given instead.

The forms are morphophonologically straightforward except on vowel initial bases, including those resulting from the elision of the masculine prefix *w-*, where the vowel *-a* of the prefix interacts with the initial vowel of the stem. The elision of the masculine prefix *w-* occurs after all prefixal elements, including the standard negation prefix itself. After this, the following processes occur:

- (7) initial *a-* or *e-* of the base is dropped:
 ħa+aC... → ħa-C...
 ħa+eC... → ħa-C...
- (8) initial *i* → *j*:
 ħa+iC... → ħa-jC...

Table 10: Some negative forms of =ak'as ~ =ik'es 'come'

stem	=ak'	=ik'
PST	<i>ħadak'ib</i>	<i>ħadik'ib</i>
INF	<i>ħadik'as</i>	<i>ħadik'es</i>
HAB	–	<i>ħadik'an</i>
OPT	–	<i>midik'ab</i> (<i>ħadik'ab</i>)
PROH	–	<i>midik'ad(i)</i>
COND	<i>ħadak'ak'a</i>	<i>ħadik'ak'a</i>
PTCP	<i>ħadak'ibili</i>	<i>ħadik'uli</i>
CVB	<i>ħadak'ile</i>	<i>ħadik'uwe</i>
NMLZ	<i>ħadak'ri</i>	<i>ħadik'ri</i>

- (9) ...and then dropped before a consonant cluster:

ħa-jCC → ħa-CC...

- (10) initial u → w:

ħa+uC... → ħa-wC...

- (11) ...and then dropped before a consonant cluster leaving (probably optionally) labialization on one of the consonants:

ħa-wCC → ħa-C^(w)C^(w)

This labialization may only result from the initial *u-* of the root, not from the masculine prefix *w-*, which is dropped after a prefix, leaving no trace. Cf. the following forms with different types of anlaut (masculine forms are given for the verbs with the initial gender agreement slot):

Table 11: Standard negation on verbal stems with and without gender prefix slot

	=uC-	=aC-	=iC-	=uCC-	=aCC-	=iCC-
with gender slot	'enter' (PFV)	'nurture' (PFV)	'come' (IPFV)	'send' (IPFV)	'nurture' (IPFV)	'let go' (IPFV)
PST NEG (M)	<i>ħa-wq-un</i>	<i>ħa-χ-un</i>	<i>ħa-jk'-ib</i>	<i>ħa-rx^w-ib</i>	<i>ħa-lχ-ib</i>	<i>ħa-rq'-ib</i>
PST (M)	<i>uq-un</i>	<i>w-aχ-un</i>	<i>w-ik'-ib</i>	<i>urx-ib</i>	<i>w-alχ-ib</i>	<i>w-irq'-ib</i>
without gender slot	#uC	#iC	#uCC-	#aCC-	#iCC-	#eCC-
	'sift' (IPFV)	'take' (IPFV)	'pour' (IPFV)	'open' (PFV)	'open' (IPFV)	'count' (PFV)
PST NEG	<i>ħa-wr-ib</i>	<i>ħa-js-ib</i>	<i>ħa-lq'^w-ib</i>	<i>ħa-bx-ib</i>	<i>ħa-bx-ib</i>	<i>ħa-lʔ-un</i>
PST	<i>ur-ib</i>	<i>is-ib</i>	<i>ulq'-ib</i>	<i>abx-ib</i>	<i>ibx-ib</i>	<i>ulʔ-ib</i>

The same processes apply to the optative forms when they use the standard negation marker, cf.:

Table 12: Negation on the optative forms

		Optative	Negative Optative
=ik'es	'come' (IPFV)	w-ik'-ab (M)	ħa-jk'-ab (M)
ures	'rain' (IPFV)	ur-ab	ħa-wr-ab
ises	'take' (IPFV)	is-ab	ħa-js-ab
=irqes	'let go' (IPFV)	w-irq-ab (M)	ħa-rq-ab (M)
=urxes	'send' (IPFV)	urx-ab (M)	ħa-rx ^w -ab

Attested forms of negation in periphrastic forms use the negative auxiliary *ag^wara*:

(12) negation in periphrasis:

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------------|----|----------------------|---------------------------|
| a. | <i>luč'-uwe</i> | <i>le-w.</i> | b. | <i>luč'-uwe</i> | <i>ag^wara.</i> |
| | read:IPFV-CVB.IPFV | AUX-M | | read:IPFV-CVB.IPFV | AUX:NEG |
| | 'He is reading.' | | | 'He is not reading.' | |

The morphophonology of the forms with the dedicated volitive negation (NEGVOL) marker is different. The prohibitive and the negative optative forms both take the same consonantal prefix *m-* (*mV-* before consonants) but two different suffixes. The masculine prefix *w-* is lost after the negative volitional *m-*. When followed by a consonant, either a gender prefix or the initial consonant of the stem, the negative volitional copies the stem vowel. Finally, the neuter/human plural prefix *b-* is assimilated by the negative volitional and is represented by *m-*.

(13) morphophonology of the negative volitional prefix:

- a. *m-uz-adi* (< *m-w-uz-adi*)
NEGVOL-M.WORK:IPFV-PROH
'Do not work!' (to a man)
- b. *mu-d-uz-adi* (< *mV-d-uz-adi*)
NEGVOL-F1-WORK:IPFV-PROH
'Do not work!' (to a girl)
- c. *buz* *mu-m-uz-adi* (< *mV-b-uz-adi*)
(stem copy) NEGVOL-N-FRY:IPFV-PROH
'Do not fry (it)!'

As (13c) also shows, the process of stem copy (see below) applies before assimilation in nasality takes place.

As to the suffix position, the negative optative and the prohibitive have different suffixes. The negative optative takes the suffix *-ab*, same as the positive optative; the prohibitive takes a dedicated suffix *-adi*, whose final vowel is optionally dropped. In both cases, the initial *-a-* of the suffix is analyzed below as a marker of a secondary derivational stem termed irrealis (see next section). The following table shows the prohibitive of verbs with different stem structures.

Table 13: Volitional negation with different stem structures

Verb (IPFV)	Negative Optative			Prohibitive		
	M	F1/NPL	N/HPL	M	F1/NPL	N/HPL
=uC... =uzes ‘work’	<i>uzab</i>	<i>duzab</i>	<i>buzab</i>	<i>muzadi</i>	<i>muuzadi</i>	<i>mumuzadi</i>
=aC... =alχes ‘treat’	<i>walχab</i>	<i>dalχab</i>	<i>balχab</i>	<i>malχadi</i>	<i>madalχadi</i>	<i>mamalχadi</i>
=eC... =elk’es ‘choose’	<i>welk’ab</i>	<i>delk’ab</i>	<i>belk’ab</i>	<i>melk’adi</i>	<i>medelk’adi</i>	<i>memelk’adi</i>
=iC... =ilces ‘sell’	<i>wilc’ab</i>	<i>dilc’ab</i>	<i>bilc’ab</i>	<i>milc’adi</i>	<i>midilc’adi</i>	<i>mimilc’adi</i>
#VC <i>izes</i> ‘be ill’	<i>mizab</i>	<i>mizadi</i>				
CVC <i>luč’es</i> ‘read’	<i>muluč’ab</i>	<i>muluč’adi</i>				

The prohibitive frequently appears with what looks like reduplication; more specifically, a full copy of the stem together with the gender marker is placed to the left of the negative volitional prefix. The process is optional.

(14) stem copy in the prohibitive:

d-iz ~ mi-d-iz-ad

F1-wash:IPFV ~ NEGVOL-F1-wash:IPFV-PROH

(also *mi-d-iz-ad*)

NEGVOL-F1-wash:IPFV-PROH

‘Do not wash her!’

Outside its use in the prohibitive, stem copy is relatively common in the context of standard negation and elsewhere with a certain added expressive or pragmatic value (cf. Maisak 2012 on similar processes in other East Caucasian languages). Note that the stem copy shows the underlying form containing the masculine prefix, not the copy of the actual realization of the stem in this specific context. This is seen in standard negation involving stem copies; cf. (15) and (16):

- (15) stem copy in standard negation:

w-ak' ~ ħa-k'-ib-i

M-COME:PFV ~ NEG-M.COME:PFV-AOR-ATR

d-ak' ~ ħa-d-ak'-ib-i

F1-COME:PFV ~ NEG-F1-COME:PFV-AOR-ATR

'the one who did not come'

- (16) *w-ak'-ib-i* *ħa-k'-ib-i*
M-COME:PFV-AOR-ATR NEG-M.COME:PFV-AOR-ATR
'the one who came' 'the one who did not come'
d-ak'-ib-i *ħa-d-ak'-ib-i*
F1-COME:PFV-AOR-ATR NEG-F1-COME:PFV-AOR-ATR
'the one who came' 'the one who did not come'

The process is not reduplication *sensu stricto*. I call it stem copying. Structurally, the copy of the stem may be separated from the verb form by other material, especially by the discourse particle, as in (17) and (18), where it forms a separate wordform.

- (17) stem copy in standard negation (Corpus)

illi-če-la iz-uwe werħ d-a?-i-ra k'wan

this-SUPER-EL be.ill:IPFV-CVB.IPFV seven F1-arrive:PFV-AOR-EGO QUOT

ʔaj inc'-ul d-a?-ra ħa-d-a?-i-ra k'wan.

PTCL more F1-arrive:PFV=ADD NEG-F1-arrive:PFV-AOR-EGO QUOT

'From this (day) she fell ill, seven days, she said, it took not more than that, she said.'

- (18) *hanna hete b-a?-ib-i-jawle d-uc-ib nu*
now there(LAT) HPL-arrive:PFV-ATR-CVB.ANTE F1-take:PFV-AOR I
buša muħamma-jni q'uq'u-be-če, d-uc-ra
Buga Muhammad-ERG knee-PL-SUPER(LAT) F1-take:PFV=ADD
d-uc-i-le χal b-aq'-ib.
F1-take:PFV-AOR-CVB seek N-do:PFV-AOR

'When we arrived there, Buga Muhammad took me on his lap; having taken me, he examined (me).'

In all contexts stem copying is optional. However, it is in the prohibitive that these forms are very consistently produced as first translations of the Russian stimuli with the relevant meaning. It seems that expressive pragmatics of stem copying is being incipiently grammaticalized in the expression of the prohibitive.

7 Synthetic paradigm

This section gives an overview of the synthetic paradigm of the Mehweb verb. A summary table is provided at the end of the section. Polarity, gender and egophoric subject agreement and aspectual stem formation have been discussed above.

The derivation of forms is summarized in the following figure. For some more exceptional patterns, including derivation of special converbs from general converbs or from the infinitive stem, see Sheyanova (2019). (An asterisk shows morphologically bound bases.)

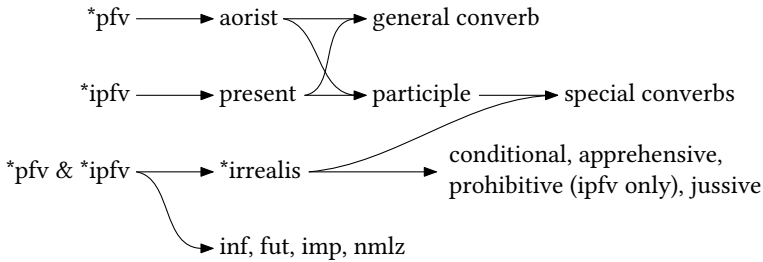


Figure 14: Derivation of verbal forms

The aspectual stem immediately derives the past (aorist in the perfective, imperfective past in the imperfective paradigm; note that the forms further derived from this secondary stem, e.g. converbs or participles, do not necessarily have past reference), present habitual (in the imperfective stem only), infinitive, the imperative, the nominalization in *-ri*.

Several other forms are based on a bound (hence the use of the asterisk) base produced by adding *-a-* to the aspectual stem; this base may be considered the base of irrealis (potential in terms of Nina Sumbatova, unpublished), because it produces such forms as optative, conditional, apprehensive, counterfactual and some other (see Dobrushina 2019). Support for this analysis not confirmed diachronically by the data from other Dargwa lects, comes from the counterfactual form in *-are*, one of the irrealis series, segmentable into the irrealis marker *-a-* and the past marker *-re*. The latter is attested elsewhere, including on the auxiliary in the past forms (*lewre* and *ag^wire*) and probably elsewhere (*=igibre* from *=igib* ‘want’ Ipft) – see Dobrushina (2019). Note the morphophonological difference between counterfactual *-re* and the egophoric *-ra* – the latter causes the past marker *-ib* to drop the final *-b*, while in the counterfactual *=igibre* it is preserved, just as in the egophoric forms of the verbs in the *-ub* subtype.

The general converb and the participle are formed differently in the perfective and the imperfective paradigms. In the perfective, the attributive marker *-i(l)* and

Table 15: Verbal inflection

	=ak'as 'come'		ik'wes 'put on'	
stem	=ak'	=ik'	ik' ^w	irk' ^w
HAB (3)	–	=ik'an	–	irk' ^w an
HAB (EGO)	–	=ik'as	–	irk' ^w as
IMP	=ak'e(na)	=ik'e(na)	ik' ^w a(na)	irk' ^w e(na)
INF/FUT	=ak'as	=ik'es	ik' ^w es	irk' ^w es
FUT (EGO)	=ak'iša	=ik'iša	ik' ^w iša	irk' ^w iša
NMLZ	=ak'ri	=ik'ri	ik' ^w ri	irk' ^w ri
PTCP	=ak'ibi(l)	=ik'ul	ik' ^w ubi(l)	irk'ul
PST (3)	=ak'ib	=ik'ib	ik' ^w ub	irk' ^w ib
PST (EGO)	=ak'ira	=ik'ira	ik' ^w ubra	irk' ^w ira
CVB	=ak'ile	=ik'uwe	ik' ^w uble	irk'uwe
PROH	–	mi=ik'adi(na)	–	mirk' ^w adi(na)
OPT	=ak'ab	=ik'ab	ik' ^w ab	irk' ^w ab
APPR	=ak'ala	=ik'ala	ik' ^w ala	irk' ^w ala
COND	=ak'ak'a	=ik'ak'a	ik' ^w ak'a	irk' ^w ak'a
	arces 'fly'		=elč'es 'read'	
stem	arc	urc	=elč'	luč'
HAB (3)	–	urcan	–	luč'an
HAB (EGO)	–	urcas	–	luč'as
IMP	arce(na)	urce(na)	=elč'a(na)	luč'e(na)
INF/FUT	arces	urces	=elč'es	luč'es
FUT (EGO)	arciša	urciša	=elč'iša	luč'iša
NMLZ	arcri	urcri	=elč'ri	luč'ri
PTCP	arcuri(l)	urcul	=elč'uni(l)	luč'ul
PST (3)	arcur	urcib	=elč'un	luč'ib
PST (EGO)	arcurra	urcira	=elč'unna	luč'ira
CVB	arculle	urcuwe	=elč'uwe	luč'uwe
PROH	–	murc'adi(na)	–	muluč'adi(na)
OPT	arcab	urcab	=elč'ab	luč'ab
APPR	arcala	urcala	=elč'ala	luč'ala
COND	arcak'a	urcak'a	=elč'ak'a	luč'ak'a

the converb marker *-le* are added to the aorist. In the imperfective, the participle marker *-ul* and the converb marker *-uwe* are added directly to the imperfective stem. While the *-l* of the imperfective participle marker *-ul* is always present, that

of *-i(l)* is often dropped, and the distribution of the variants is not clear (though it seems that at least in the predicative use of the participle in *-i(l)* the full variant is impossible).

It seems plausible to differentiate between *-ul* as the participle marker proper, used only with the imperfective stem of the verb, and the attributive marker *-i(l)*, attached to the aorist but also used on infinitives (to form future participles, also used finitely), auxiliaries (to form periphrastic participles) and adjectives. Note that the imperfective converb ending *-uwe* is more or less straightforwardly analyzable into *-ul-le*, where *-le* is a general converb marker (also in the perfective paradigm) and, more generally, is used as a cross-categorial adverbializer, i.e. in forming adverbs from adjective roots.

Special converbs may be based on the general converb form, as the causal converb *-na*, or on the participle, as anterior converb *-(j)able*; see more on special converb formation in Sheyanova (2019).

Unlike the nominalization in *-ri*, which is formed directly from the aspectual stem, nominalization in *-deš* is formed from many forms, including finite past, future, present (habitual), participles – but not from volitional forms and not from the nominalization in *-ri*. Given that *-deš* is also attached to adjectives and nouns, the generalization seems to be that *-deš* is not a derivational morpheme but a cross-categorial predicate nominalizer. The suffix does not combine with egophoric forms.

Table 15 summarizes synthetic verbal inflection. Forms are given without gender agreement marking; for gender agreement see §1. The negative prefix may attach to all forms in the table (except the imperative); morphology of polarity marking is discussed in §6. The marker *-na* is the marker of the plural of the addressee in volitional forms.

8 Imperative and infinitive

Both the imperative and the infinitive are formed from each of the two stems. While in the imperfective paradigm the suffixes are invariably *-e* and *-es*, respectively, the perfective imperative and the perfective infinitive / perfective non-egophoric future both have two markers (*-e* vs. *-a* in the imperative, *-es* vs. *-as* in the infinitive). The choice of the allomorph in the two categories is independent.

The choice of the imperative vowel depends on the transitivity of the verb: transitive verbs take *-a* and intransitive verbs take *-e*. Cf. *=urs-a* ‘pound’, *=iʔ-aʃ* ‘steal’, but *=alh^w-e* ‘wake up’, *=uq-e* ‘go’. Note that the choice of the marker is primarily based on transitivity rather than control, as e.g. motion verbs all take *-e*.

Table 16: Imperative and infinitive suffixes

	markers	choice
Perfective imperative	<i>-e/-a</i>	morphosyntactic
Perfective infinitive/future	<i>-es/-as</i>	phonological

P-labile verbs (i.e. verbs that are used with and without agentive argument) take *-e* or *-a* depending on the interpretation; cf. *w-a^lld-e* ‘hide (intr)’ (to a man) vs. *w-a^lld-a* ‘hide it’. Other labile verbs also show similar behavior; cf. *abx-a* ‘open (it)’ vs. *abx-e* ‘open (intr)’; *b-o^rrɔ-a* ‘break (it)’ vs. *b-o^rrɔ-e* ‘break (intr)’. Although in these cases the intransitive imperative might seem unlikely, it is readily interpreted by my consultants as when talking to something that resists acting on it, does not yield, or seems to take too long to achieve the result. There is evidence that A-labile verbs (i.e. verbs that may omit the patientive argument ascribing nominative to the agentive argument) may also take both markers; cf. *=erq-a* ‘suck (e.g. milk)’ vs. *=erq-e* ‘suck’ (implicit, out-of-focus patient).

Experiential verbs do not behave in a unified way. Generally, they prefer the intransitive suffix, but some also allow the transitive one, without a clear meaning shift; cf. *qumart-a* and *qumart-e* ‘forget’, *=ah-e* and *=ah-a* ‘know’. One would expect an interpretation with the imperative subject’s increased control over the situation but this is certainly not consistent through all the experiential verbs, though some consultants do report this difference e.g. in the verb *=arg-e* vs. *=arg-a* ‘find’. The verb *g^wes* ‘see’ does not form a generally accepted imperative, but if it does, the form is *g^w-a*.

There is no alternation in the imperfective imperative. A possible way to account for this would be to consider all imperfective imperatives as using the intransitive imperative suffix, which would amount to transitivity decrease with obligatory promotion of the Agent. Imperfectives are crosslinguistically more Agent-oriented forms. In an ergative language like Mehweb, promoting the Agent would show up as decrease in transitivity. The assumed promotion is, however, internal to verbal morphology and does not change argument marking. P retains nominative case, and A, if present, is marked with ergative.

The imperative of the verb ‘give’ has two perfective stems, *aga* and *=ega*, depending on the person of the recipient. The first stem is used when the recipient is the first person, otherwise the second stem is used. Both stems are suppletive with respect to the non-imperative stems, and the second stem additionally introduces an agreement prefix slot. This pattern of the verb ‘give’ is attested elsewhere in Dargwa and in East Caucasian at large (see Comrie 2003, also Daniel

et al. 2010). Another verb with an irregular imperative stem is *es* ‘say’ (inf) – *bet’a* ‘say’ (imperative). The verb *=u^ʃq’es* ‘go’ has two imperatives, the regular *=u^ʃq’-e* and the irregular *=e^ʃʔ-e*. The semantic distinction is not fully clear but probably has to do with the final point, the first better translated as ‘go there’ and the second as ‘go away, leave’. Irregular imperatives only exist in the perfective paradigm.

The forms *=eg-a* ‘give (away)’ and *=e^ʃʔ-e* ‘go (away)’ contain the expected imperative suffixes (transitive and intransitive, respectively). On the other hand, their stems are not present elsewhere in the paradigm of these verbs, and neither can they be causativized. The second form is also fully suppletive to all other stems of *=u^ʃq’es* ‘go’. They are thus close to the status of separate lexical items – imperative interjections. This becomes clear when they are compared to another suppletive imperative stem, *bet’-a* (from *es* ‘say’), which has a clearly different morphological status. First, it is the only imperative available for this verb. Second, the stem *bet’-* is optionally used in other forms (see Table 18), including causatives (see Table 21).

Imperatives show plural marking based on the number of the addressees (thus showing, formally, an accusative pattern of agreement). Unlike in the prefix slot – and, for that matter, anywhere in Mehweb – this marking is independent from the gender. The suffix is *-na* and it is regularly attached to the imperative marker as well as to the irregular imperatives except in the verb *=aš-e* ‘come here’ vs. *=aš-ina* ‘come here’ (plural addressee). Cf.:

(19) intransitive imperative

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. <i>uz-e</i> | b. <i>b-uz-e-na</i> |
| M.work:IPFV-IMP | HPL-work:IPFV-IMP-IMP.PL |
| ‘Work!’ (to one person) | ‘Work!’ (to many) |

(20) transitive imperative

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. <i>uc-a</i> | b. <i>b-uc-a</i> |
| M.catch:PFV-IMP.TR | HPL.catch:PFV-IMP.TR |
| ‘Catch him!’ (to one person) | ‘Catch them!’ (to one person) |
| c. <i>uc-a-na</i> | d. <i>b-uc-a-na</i> |
| M.catch:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL | HPL.catch:PFV-IMP.TR-IMP.PL |
| ‘Catch him!’ (to many) | ‘Catch them!’ (to many) |

On imperatives in Mehweb, see more in Dobrushina (2019).

The choice of *-es* vs. *-as* in the perfective infinitive/non-egophoric future forms, on the other hand, seems to have a purely formal motivation. The default marker

is clearly *-es*, while *-as* is only attested in about twenty verbs which (a) have *-a-* as a stem vowel that is (b) followed by a stem final glottal, pharyngeal, uvular or velar consonant; cf. *=usaʔ^w-as* ‘fall asleep’, *=aʔ-as* ‘begin’, *=ah-as* ‘know’, *=aʰH^waʰs* ‘get wet’, *aqʰ-as* ‘pour’, *=aχ-as* ‘nurture’, *=ak-as* ‘smear’. Neither (a) nor (b) alone seem to require *-a-* as the vowel of the infinitive; cf. *=uʰqʰ-es* ‘go’ (condition b but not a) or *=acʰ-es* ‘melt’ (condition a but not b).

There is a number of verbs where the consonant of the required place of articulation is separated from the *-a-* of the stem by another consonant. In these cases, the default seems to be *-es*, including *askʰ-es* ‘catch on’, *=alkʰ^w-es* ‘burn’, *abx-es* ‘open’, *=arx-es* ‘send’, *=arχ-es* ‘touch’, *=aʰlqʰ-es* ‘rinse’, *=alh^w-es* ‘wake up’, *=aʰld-es* ‘hide’. However, some verbs, including *=aʰlq-aʰs* ‘give harvest’, *=aʰbʔ-as* ‘kill’, *=aʰrʔ-as* ‘freeze’, *=aʰRH-as* ‘copulate’ do choose *-a-* as the vowel of the infinitive.

9 Auxiliary

Mehweb verbal inflection heavily relies on periphrasis. Periphrastic forms are used e.g. to form progressive/durative or resultative/perfective forms (combination of a converb with the auxiliary), future (combination of the infinitive with the auxiliary) and others. There are some periphrastic forms based on auxiliary use of the verb *=uʔes* ‘be’ (Pfv=Ipfv), but most forms in the periphrastic paradigm use one of the auxiliaries in Table 17. Complex forms (surcomposé) are also attested, using the auxiliary, the second auxiliary in a converb form and yet another converb of the lexical verb.

Periphrastic forms are also used to form jussive (combination of the imperative of the lexical verb with the imperative of the verb ‘say’; see Dobrushina 2019) and perfective forms from defective verbs that only have the imperfective stem.

The same verb is also used in locative and existential predication.

Inflection of the auxiliary is presented in the following table:

Table 17: Inflection of the auxiliary

	3	EGO	PST	ATR	PTCP	CVB
M	<i>lew</i>	<i>lewra</i>	<i>lewre</i>	<i>lewi</i>	<i>lewili</i>	<i>lewle</i>
F/NPL	<i>ler</i>	<i>lella</i>	<i>lelle</i>	<i>leri</i>	<i>lerili</i>	<i>lelle</i>
3/HPL	<i>leb</i>	<i>lebra</i>	<i>lebre</i>	<i>lebi</i>	<i>lebili</i>	<i>leble</i>
NEG LOC	<i>ag^wara</i>	*	<i>ag^wire</i>	<i>ag^wari</i>	<i>ag^warili</i>	<i>ag^walle</i>
NEG EQU	<i>aħin</i>	<i>aħinna</i>	<i>aħinne</i>	<i>aħini</i>	<i>aħinili</i>	<i>aħije</i>
AUX	<i>sabi</i>	? <i>sabi(ra)</i>	? <i>sabire</i>	(=3)	(=3)	(=3)

The form *sabi* is included in the list but has a very marginal status in Mehweb. If used at all, it has the status of a particle rather than of a true auxiliary/copula. It is clear that the *-b-* of the stem, etymologically a gender marker, has been fossilized.

Some forms, such as the converb of imminence, are not attested. Other special converbs are well-formed: *le=ijable*, *sabijable*, *ag^wirijable* (but apparently not *aħinijable*), causal *le=lēna*, *ag^warlena*, concessive *le=leʒur* and *ag^warleʒur*, additive *le=lera* and *ag^warlera* etc. Nominalizations such as *le=deš*, *le=ideš*, *sabideš*, *aħindeš*, *ag^wiredeš*, *ag^warideš* etc. are easily produced.

10 Irregular verbs

There is a number of irregular verbs, including especially motion and caused motion verbs. Several irregular verbs show irregularly short roots, consisting only of one consonant. In the case of *es* ‘say’ it may be argued that it has a zero stem in the perfective. With the exception of the bound verb **k’es* (cf. *uruχ k’es* ‘be afraid of’; the verb itself is probably historically a reduced version of the imperfective of *=uk’es* ‘say, tell’ Ipfv), all these verbs are irregular in the perfective stem, while their imperfective stem fits one of the regular patterns of stem formation (cf. *lug-* ‘give’ and *luk-* ‘saw’, *irg^w-* ‘see’ and *irk^w-* ‘put on’, *uk-* ‘say’ and *uk-* ‘eat’).

Note the marker of nominalization, usually *-ri*, is *-ari* on verbs that lack any vowel of the stem (*ari* for ‘say’, *g^wari* for ‘see’, *gari* for ‘give’), and the presence of two different imperatives of ‘give’ – ‘give to me’ and ‘give to someone else’. The inclusion of the stem *-uk-* as the imperfective counterpart to the verb *es* ‘say’ is controversial. The two stems differ in transitivity, the former being intransitive and the latter transitive, so that they may be considered as separate lexical items. However, *=uk’es* is not an equivalent of ‘talk (with/to)’ but is an imperfective counterpart of *es* ‘say’. In the perfective, it lacks any segment at all except in the imperative and irrealis series that share the stem *bet*, which is optional in irrealis forms.

Further, there are several highly irregular motion verbs. The first one is the basic verb of motion, *=a^lq’-(un) ~ =aš-* ‘go’, a non-ventive verb. In both perfective and imperfective subparadigms, two different stems are present. In the perfective, these are *=a^lq’-* (the participle and forms based on the participle stem, including aorist and general converb) and *=u^lq’* (imperative, infinitive, future, forms based on irrealis *a*-base and the action nominal). These are stems distributed between different perfective forms.

Table 18: Inflection of the irregular verbs

stem		*k'ib (bound)	ib 'say'	uk' 'say'
		IPFV	PFV	IPFV
HAB (3)		k'an	–	=uk'an
HAB (EGO)		k'as	–	=uk'as
IMP		k'e(na)	bet'a(na)	=uk'e(na)
INF/FUT		k'es	es	=uk'es
FUT (EGO)		k'iša	iša	=uk'iša
NMLZ		k'ari	ari	=uk'ri
PTCP		k'ul	ibi	=uk'ul
PST (3)		k'ib	ib	=uk'ib
PST (EGO)		k'ira	ira	=uk'ira
CVB		k'uwe	ile	=uk'uwe
PROH		–	–	mu=uk'adi
OPT		k'ab	(bet')ab	=uk'ab
APPR		k'ala	(bet')ala	=uk'ala
cond		k'ak'a	(bet')ak'a	=uk'ak'a
stem	gub 'see'	irg ^w	gib 'give'	lug
	PFV	IPFV	PFV	IPFV
HAB (3)	–	irg ^w an	– lugan	
HAB (EGO)	–	irg ^w as	–	lugas
IMP	–	irg ^w e(na)	aga(na) =ega(na)	luge(na)
INF/FUT	g ^w es	irg ^w es	ges	luges
FUT (EGO)	g ^w iša	irg ^w iša	giša	lugiša
NMLZ	g ^w ari	irg ^w ri	gari	lugri
PTCP	gubi	irgul	gibi	lugul
PST (3)	gub	irg ^w ib	gib	lugib
PST (EGO)	gubra	irg ^w ira	gira	lugira
CVB	guble	irguwe	gile	luguwe
PROH	–	mirg ^w adi(na)	–	mulugadi(na)
OPT	g ^w ab	irg ^w ab	gab	lugab
APPR	g ^w ala	irg ^w ala	gala	lugala
COND	g ^w ak'a	irg ^w ak'a	gak'a	lugak'a

In the imperfective, in addition to the stem *=aš* that possesses the full range of forms, there are several forms based on the stem *q'ʰ*. Attested are the synthetic present forms, the conditional form, the action nominal, the participle and the general converb; probably, there are other, unelicited forms. Unlike other stems, these forms lack the gender prefix altogether. The regular perfective *=aʰq'uwe* designates andative situations ('go away from here') and implies absence of the subject at the place of speech ('he is gone'). The converb *q'uʰwe* is imperfective and designates an actual ventive situation ('he is coming'). The converb *=ašuwe* is also imperfective but conveys multiple or habitual situations. The perfective situation 'he has come' is conveyed by the perfective converb of the regular verb *=ak'es*.

A similar meaning (probably implying that the situation of coming is visually attested) is conveyed by the present forms *q'aʰn* (non-egophoric) and *q'aʰs* (egophoric); unlike other synthetic presents that (at least tend to) have non-episodic (habitual) interpretations, these forms seem to be progressives. The same irregularities are observed in the andative verb *ʔaʰr-aʰq'-(un)* (*ʔaʰr=uʰq'ʰ*, *ʔaʰr-q'ʰ*) ~ *ar=aš*-, which is a derivation of *=aʰq'ʰ*-.

Table 19: Inflection of the motion verb *=uʰq'es*

	PFV	?	IPFV
HAB 3	–	<i>q'aʰn</i>	<i>=ašan</i>
HAB (EGO)	–	<i>q'aʰs</i>	<i>=ašas</i>
IMP	<i>=uʰq'e(na)</i> , <i>=eʰʔe(na)</i>		<i>=aše(na)</i>
PROH	–		<i>ma=ašadi</i>
OPT	<i>=uq'aʰb</i>		<i>=ašab</i>
APPR	<i>=uq'aʰla</i>		<i>=ašala</i>
COND	<i>=uq'aʰk'a</i>	<i>q'aʰk'a</i>	<i>=ašak'a</i>
INF/FUT	<i>=uʰq'es</i>		<i>=ašes</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>=uʰq'iša</i>		<i>=ašiša</i>
NMLZ	<i>=uʰq'ri</i>	<i>q'aʰri</i>	<i>=ašri</i>
PTCP	<i>=aʰq'uni</i>	<i>q'oʰl</i>	<i>=ašul</i>
PST 3	<i>=aʰq'un</i>		<i>=ašib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>=aʰq'unna</i>		<i>=ašira</i>
CVB	<i>=aʰq'uwe</i>	<i>q'oʰwe</i>	<i>=ašuwe</i>

Further, there are two perfective imperatives. The difference between them is not very clear but is probably correlated with telicity (the presence or absence of the final point of motion), as in 'go away, leave!' (=e'ʔe) and 'go there!' (=u'q'e). The imperfective imperative is interpreted either as a multiple going event (habitual interpretation, as 'be visiting them!') or as a single ventive imperative event (as 'come here!'). Single andative imperative events require the use of the perfective imperative.

As to the caused motion verbs, there are two series of forms, one based on *k-*, the other on $\chi-$. To the best of my knowledge, the two series of forms are strictly parallel and designate bringing/fetching events, the difference essentially being between fetching or bringing animate entities (*k-*) vs. bringing inanimate entities ($\chi-$). I will further gloss them conventionally as 'lead' vs. 'bring', though the contrast is not identical to the contrast between *lead* and *bring* in English. In both series, the monoconsonantal base expresses the meaning of ventive (*k-* and $\chi-$) and is perfective, the =*uC-* with a gender prefix slot is perfective and elsewhere-oriented (=uk-, =u $\chi-$), and the =*iC* base with a gender prefix slot is imperfective and orientation neutral (=ik-, =i $\chi-$). The strictly andative meaning 'lead/bring away from here' is expressed by a verb with a prefix (*ar=uk-* ~ *ar=ik-*; *ar=u $\chi-$* ~ *ar=i $\chi-$*).

In a sense, there are two pairs of stems, C ~ =*iC* and *uC* ~ =*iC*, with two perfective stems sharing one imperfective counterpart. However, similarly to the 'plain' motion verbs (see above), the relation between the stems is probably different from that in other perfective ~ imperfective stems. The =*iC* stem seems to convey the meaning of multiple events while the C and =*uC* stems designate single events. As a result, the monoconsonantal verb behaves irregularly in that it has two converbs, perfective *kile* and several specifically imperfective forms, including the imperfective converb *kuwe*, general present forms (with actual interpretation) *kas* (non-egophoric) and *kan* (egophoric), and the participle (other parallel forms may be present but unelicited). Unlike the non-causative motion verb described above, the supplementary episodic imperfective forms *kas*, *kan*, *kuwe* (χ as, χ an, χ uwe) in the imperfective share the stem with one of the perfective series. A different look at the paradigm would be to consider each of the verbs of caused motion as including two different verbs, the more or less regular Pfv₂ ~ Ipfv₂ and the highly defective Pfv₁ ~ (Ipfv₁), probably with the regular verb used as andative and the irregular as ventive – but this needs further research into semantics and usage of motion verbs.

Another irregularity of the caused motion verbs is morphosyntactic: their imperfective stem is A-labile with an antipassive pattern; see the following section.

Table 20: Inflection of the caused motion verbs *kes* ‘bring (animate)’ and *χes* ‘bring (inanimate)’

	<i>k-</i>	<i>=uk-</i>	<i>k-</i>	<i>=ik-</i>	<i>χ-</i>	<i>=uχ-</i>	<i>χ-</i>	<i>=iχ-</i>
	PFV ₁	PFV ₂	IPFV ₁	IPFV ₂	PFV ₁	PFV ₂	IPFV ₁	IPFV ₂
HAB (3)	–	– <i>kas</i>	<i>=ikas</i>	–	–	<i>χas</i>	<i>=iχas</i>	
HAB (EGO)	–	–	<i>kan</i>	<i>=ikan</i>	–	–	<i>χan</i>	<i>=iχan</i>
IMP	<i>ka(na)</i>	<i>=uka(na)</i>		<i>=ike(na)</i>	<i>χa(na)</i>	<i>=uχa(na)</i>		<i>=iχe(na)</i>
INF/FUT	<i>kes</i>	<i>=ukes</i>		<i>=ikes</i>	<i>χes</i>	<i>=uχes</i>		<i>=iχes</i>
FUT (EGO)	<i>kiša</i>	<i>=ukiša</i>		<i>=ikiša</i>	<i>χiša</i>	<i>=uχiša</i>		<i>=iχiša</i>
NMLZ	<i>kari</i>	<i>=ukri</i>		<i>=ikri</i>	<i>χari</i>	<i>=uχri</i>		<i>=iχri</i>
PTCP	<i>kibi</i>	<i>=ukibi</i>	<i>kul</i>	<i>=ikul</i>	<i>χibi</i>	<i>=uχibi</i>	<i>χul</i>	<i>=iχul</i>
PST (3)	<i>kib</i>	<i>=ukib</i>		<i>=ikib</i>	<i>χib</i>	<i>=uχib</i>		<i>=iχib</i>
PST (EGO)	<i>kira</i>	<i>=ukira</i>		<i>=ikira</i>	<i>χira</i>	<i>=uχira</i>		<i>=iχira</i>
CVB	<i>kile</i>	<i>=ukile</i>	<i>kuwe</i>	<i>=ikuwe</i>	<i>χile</i>	<i>=uχile</i>	<i>χuwe</i>	<i>=iχuwe</i>
PROH	–	–		<i>mi-ikadi</i>	–	–		<i>mi-iχadi</i>
OPT	<i>kab</i>	<i>=ukab</i>		<i>=ikab</i>	<i>χab</i>	<i>=uχab</i>		<i>=iχab</i>

11 Transitivity

In this section, I consider several transitivity related issues, first of all morphological causativization, but also change in argument structure or case assignment which is not marked by morphological means – binominative constructions and related lexical phenomena, labile verbs and antipassive verbs. I also briefly consider another type of verbal derivation, typologically rare, probably even limited to (and within) East Caucasian languages – the category of verificative.

The only regular process of valency change in Mehweb is causativization. Periphrastic causativization is weakly grammaticalized in Mehweb; it is based on the verbs *a?(ib) ~ iʔ-* ‘drive, cause to go’, *=aq(ib) ~ =irq-* ‘let go’ and *=aq’(ib) ~ =iq’-* ‘do’, and is discussed in detail in Baryl’nikova (2019). This section limits the discussion to the causativization in morphological and lexical domains. The discussion of morphological causatives heavily relies upon the data collected by Ekaterina Ageeva in 2012 (unpublished field report).

Mehweb verbs are very productively causativized through the suffixation of *-aq-*. The suffix is identical to the perfective stem of the verb *=aq(ib) ~ =irq-* ‘let go’. Grammaticalization of ‘let go’ into a causative marker is not surprising, but the suffix does not have the agreement slot present on the verb. Even though the slot might have been lost in the process of grammaticalization, the suggested path remains somewhat speculative. The suffix may combine both with the perfective and imperfective stem, so that each form present in the paradigm of

the original, non-causative verb, also has its causative counterpart. Note that all causative verbs follow the *-ib* inflectional class in the aorist, independently of the inflectional class of the lexical verb: *=a^hHun* ‘get wet’ – *=a^hHa^hqib* ‘cause to get wet’, *=arcur* ‘get stuck’ – *=arcaqib* ‘cause to get stuck’; just as *=ac^hib* ‘melt’ – *=ac^haqib* ‘cause to melt’; labialized verbs preserve labialization: *=erq^hub* ‘tear apart’ ~ *=erq^{hw}aqib* ‘cause to tear apart’. In a periphrastic form, the lexical verb but not the auxiliary is causativized:

- (21) *b-aš-aq-u-we* *le-b-re.*
 HPL-go:IPFV-CAUS-CVB.IPFV AUX-HPL-PST
 ‘He made them go (repeatedly).’

Causatives are formed from verbs with all types of argument structure, including intransitive, experiential and transitive; cf.:

- (22) causative from intransitive (Corpus)
a-b-iz-aq-ib *abzul=la xalq^h-ane.*
 PV-HPL-stand.up:PFV-CAUS-AOR all=ADD people-PL
 ‘(She) woke up everybody.’
- (23) causative from experiential verb (Magometov’s texts)
hanna uzi-li-?ini *ruzi-li-ze* *b-ah-aq-ib:*
 now brother-OBL-ERG sister-OBL-INTER(LAT) N-know:PFV-CAUS-AOR:
 ‘Then the brother announced (made it known) to the sister: ...’
- (24) causative from transitive verbs (Corpus)
d-aq^h-ib *dubo^hʔo^hr-t ni^h-ane,* *χajagun-t,* *d-aq^h-ib,*
 NPL-do:PFV-AOR dish-PL milk-PL, fried.egg-PL NPL-do:PFV-AOR
si-k^hal *ħa-b-erk^w-aq-i-le*
 what-INDEF NEG-N-eat:PFV-CAUS-AOR-CVB
w-aq-ħa-q-ib.
 M-let.go:PFV-NEG-M.let.go:PFV-AOR
 ‘(She) prepared meals, milk products, fried eggs (she) made, she did not let me go before I ate something.’

The causative from the ditransitive verb *g(ib)* ~ *lug-* ‘give’ is not attested in the corpus but is well-formed. It is, however, morphologically irregular, as with several other verbs with monoconsonantal stems. These verbs form causatives by adding the suffix *-aχ-*.

The verb *es* ‘say’ forms the imperative from each of its two perfective stems (see Table 18), *a-* (*aaqib*) and *bet^h-* (*bet^haqib*), both meaning ‘caused to say’.

Table 21: Irregular perfective causatives

<i>g(ib)</i>	‘give’	<i>g-aχaq-ib</i>	‘caused to give’
<i>g(ub)</i>	‘see’	<i>g^w-aχaq-ib</i>	‘caused to see’
<i>χ(ib)</i>	‘bring’	<i>χ-aχaq-ib</i>	‘caused to bring’
<i>k(ib)</i>	‘lead’	<i>k-aχaq-ib</i>	‘caused to lead’
<i>i-b</i>	‘say’	<i>aqaq-ib</i>	‘caused to say’

Caused motion verbs with irregular paradigm structure (see Table 20 above) apparently form causatives from all three stems; cf.:

(25) causatives of caused motion =*uχes* ‘bring’

- a. *χ-aχaq-ib*
bring.?-CAUS-AOR
‘caused to bring (it)’
- b. *ar-uχ-aq-iša*.
away-M.bring:PFV-CAUS-FUT.EGO
‘I will cause you to be brought away (by the river).’
- c. *ar-m-iχ-aq-adi*
away-NEGVOL-M.bring:IPFV-PROH
‘Let (the river) not bring me away!’

The non-caused motion verb =*u^ʕq’es* does not form the causative from its short stem *q’-* (see Table 19); the two available forms are formed from the stems =*u^ʕq’-* (perfective) and =*aš-* (imperfective):

(26) causatives of motion verb =*u^ʕq’es* ‘go’

- a. **q’-aq-ib, *q’-aχaq-ib*
go:IPFV-CAUS
- b. *b-u^ʕq’-aq-as*
HPL-go:PFV-CAUS-INF
‘cause (them) to go’ (perfective causative infinitive)
- c. *b-aš-aq-uwe*
HPL-go:IPFV-CAUS-CVB.IPFV
‘making them come again and again’ (imperfective causative converb)

Irregular causatives in the imperfective are not attested.

Morphologically possible and accepted by many speakers are double causatives (noted in Ageeva 2014). In some cases, the forms convey the compositional meaning of double causation (27), but sometimes consultants interpret them as single causatives (28). Double causatives are not attested in the corpus; elicited examples include:

- (27) compositional double causatives (from Ekaterina Ageeva's data)
- a. *b-elʒ-aq-aq-ib*
N-eat.full:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made someone feed (an animal)'
 - b. *b-erc'-aq-aq-ib*
N-fry:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made someone fry (it)'
 - c. *d-a^ʃH^w-a^ʃq-aq-ib*
NPL-get.wet:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made someone get them (feet) wet'
 - d. *b-alk'^w-aq-aq-ib*
N-burn:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made someone get (it) burning'
 - e. *b-arχ-aq-aq-ib*
N-touch:PFV-caus-caus
'made someone touch (it)'
 - f. *b-ac'-aq-aq-ib*
N-melt-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made someone melt (it)'
- (28) non-compositional double causatives (from Ekaterina Ageeva's data)
- a. *d-alh̄-aq-aq-ib*
F1-wake.up:PFV-caus-caus-aor
'woke her up'
 - b. *w-a^ʃrʔ-aq-aq-ib*
M-freeze:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made him freeze'
 - c. *w-a^ʃbʔ-aq-aq-ib*
M-kill:PFV-CAUS-CAUS-AOR
'made someone kill him'

The semantic contrast between double causatives in (28) and the respective simple causatives (=al \dot{h} aqas ‘cause to wake up’ etc.) is unclear, if it exists at all. Except (28c), all verbs in (27) and (28) are intransitive. (The verb =ar χ -es ‘touch’ means literally ‘something touched on something’, with a natural interpretation of getting one’s hand in contact with something. The full meaning of the form in (27e) is thus ‘caused someone_i to cause one_i’s hand to contact something’.) These are all double causative forms elicited by Ageeva. From a comparative East Caucasian perspective, all these meanings tend or may be labile; and some are also labile in Mehweb (e.g. (27d)). This provides a tentative explanation of why double causatives may be limited to these verbs. A simple causative from a labile root is usually interpreted as a causative of its intransitive rather than transitive meaning (schematically, ‘burn (tr/intr)’ → ‘burn (intr)’-CAUS (tr)). In such uses, the causative suffix does not derive a new transitive meaning but emphasizes the transitive semantics already present in the lexical meaning of the labile verb as one of its possible interpretations. It may be considered as a disambiguation mechanism for interpreting a labile root as expressing specifically transitive meaning. As this causative suffix does not have exactly the same function as regular causativization, it allows for a second marker which serves as a regular causative derivation.

The semantics of the simple causative forms, on the other hand, is always compositional, unless the whole causative derivation is lexicalized. On the special use of the causative in optative constructions see Dobrushina (2019). Examples of lexicalized causatives are, e.g. =a \dot{r} -aq(ib) ‘bring back’ and also ‘hit’ - cf. =a \dot{r} (ib) ‘reach’ (the latter probably from ‘reach with hand’, lit. ‘cause the hand to reach’), =ik-aq(ib) ‘put right’ (of a joint etc.) – cf. =ik(ib) ‘happen’ (probably from ‘fall’, thus ‘make fall in place’) etc.

Some verbs are equally available in transitive and intransitive constructions without any morphological marking of the (de)transitivization on the verb. There are two known types of labile verbs, P-preserving labile verbs and A-preserving labile verbs. Note that lability is strictly lexical and limited to small classes of verbs. Additionally, there is a phenomenon formally similar to A-labiles that includes one verb that may be called lexical antipassive.

Table 22: Lexical valency phenomena

	P-labiles	A-labiles	antipassives
transitive	A-ERG verb P-NOM	A-ERG verb P-NOM	A-ERG verb P-NOM
intransitive	P-NOM verb	A-NOM verb	A-NOM verb P-ERG

In other words, in comparing intransitive uses of these verbs to the transitive ones, P-labiles suppress their A-argument; A-labiles lose their P-argument and re-assign nominative marking to the A-argument; and, finally, antipassives re-assign nominative marking to the A-argument without suppressing their P-argument but demoting it to an oblique slot.

With P-preserving labiles, the problem is that, in an ergative language with pro-drop, it is hard to distinguish between a transitive verb with an omitted A-argument and intransitive use of a labile verb. Cf. their schematic representation in English:

(29) '(He) cut it.'

(30) '(He) cooked it.' / 'It cooked.'

Although, in my experience, the speakers easily distinguish between the availability of the intransitive reading with labile verbs and pro-drop with strictly transitive verbs (e.g. by translating into Russian and using mediopassive for the former and a non-referential third person plural for the latter, or else adding *it happened all by itself* vs. *someone did it*), some kind of formal diagnostic may also be used. This diagnostic is provided by the morphological distinction between transitive and intransitive imperatives in the perfective paradigm. I thus classify a verb as labile if it is judged grammatical with both imperative endings. The following labile verbs are attested (note that the speakers' judgements do not seem to be fully consistent):

(31) =ic'(ib) ~ =ilc'- 'fill'

(32) =erx(un) ~ =urx- 'cook'

(33) =erc'(ib) ~ =uc'- 'fry' (in intransitive use with human subjects, also 'straighten up')

(34) mi? a?(ur) ~ mi? ir?w- 'freeze' (?)

(35) =o^rrʔ(o^b) ~ =o^rʔ- 'break'

(36) =erq'(ub) ~ =iq'^w- 'tear apart, wear off' (?)

(37) abx(ib) ~ ibx- 'open'

(38) ʔaj-k'(ib) ~ ʔaj-k'- 'lock'

(39) q'a^bbʔ(ib) ~ q'i^bʔ- 'close'

(40) =a^lld(un) ~ =a^lld- 'hide'

(41) =arʔ(ib) ~ =irʔ- 'gather'

The labile verbs designate situations that may proceed unsupervised (such as cooking events), may both be carried out on purpose or occur spontaneously (such as breaking or opening/closing events) or may involve both non-human/inanimate (thus non-intentional) or human undergoers (such as ‘hide’ or ‘gather’); on the semantics of lability in East Caucasian, see Haspelmath (1993); Daniel et al. (2012).

Another test that could have been applied to Mehweb labiles is marking of egophoricity. Because personal agreement works on the accusative rather than ergative basis, after the A-argument is suppressed, the remaining P-argument controls personal agreement on the verb (see Section 3.1 in Ganenkov 2019). However, I have only applied the imperative test. Note that both tests are applied to labile verbs with some difficulty, or not equally well to all of them. Most labile verbs, in their intransitive uses, typically take inanimate subjects and thus are not compatible with first and second person subjects and are not easily compatible with imperatives. In the latter case, the speakers envisage a situation of urging a process to proceed (see Dobrushina 2019) – and most of them very easily accommodate to this interpretation.

No special study of semantics of the transitive/intransitive pattern alternation with labile verbs has been carried out. The following two examples from the text indicate that, in some cases, it may be connected to the absence of the agent, the usually transitive situation proceeding in a spontaneous way:

(42) intransitive (Corpus)

urx-ne q'-a^vb-ib k'^wan, unza ʔaj-k'-i-le
 key-PL PV-close:PFV-AOR QUOT door lock-LV:PFV-AOR-CVB
b-ik-ib.
 N-happen:PFV-AOR

‘The lock has locked itself, the door closed (=locked).’

(43) transitive (Corpus)

abaj hil-l-ix-i-le r-arg-i-ra, unza=ra
 mother PV-F-lie.down:PFV-AOR-CVB F-find:PFV-AOR-EGO door=ADD
ʔaj-k'-i-le, hil-l-ix-i-le r-arg-i-ra
 lock-LV:PFV-AOR-CVB PV-F-lie.down:PFV-AOR-CVB F-find:PFV-AOR-EGO
abaj.
 mother

‘I found (my) mother already gone to bed – I discovered that, having locked the door, she lay down.’

Note that, in these examples, there is no direct morphosyntactic evidence of transitive vs. intransitive use. It is only the context that suggests these readings. In (42), the agent is truly absent. In (43), it is omitted in the converb clause ('having locked the door') under co-reference to the subject of the main clause ('mother went to bed'). The first episode describes a situation of spontaneous locking of the door, leaving the master of the apartment, unexpectedly, outside the door and unable to go inside. The second episode tells how the narrator, coming home quite late, discovered her mother already asleep, and the door locked (apparently, by her mother, prior to going to bed). Very often, however, the division of labour between transitive and intransitive constructions with labile verbs in East Caucasian languages is more complex, so this needs further research.

In Mehweb, most experiential verbs are intransitive, with the experiencer marked by the inter-lative case. Some of these verbs take either the transitive or intransitive imperative suffix (e.g. *=arg(ib) ~ =urg-* 'find'; *=ah(ur) ~ =alh-* 'know'; *qum-art(ur) ~ -urt-* 'forget'). For two verbs, this correlates with a change in argument marking – the experiencer changes from inter-lative to ergative, and its agentivity increases ('know' = 'learn (so as to know)', 'forget' = 'try to forget' – see Ganenkov 2019).

A-preserving labiles are less prominent in Mehweb and, generally, in East Caucasian, and were not collected systematically, although, in principle, the same imperative test could have been applied. It seems that the following is an example of a verb that can be used both intransitively and transitively while preserving its A-argument: *=erq(ib) ~ =uq-* 'suck (intr and tr – e.g. milk)'.

Finally, two caused motion verbs *k(ib) ~ =uk(ib) ~ =ik(ib)* 'bring (animate object)' and *χ(ib) ~ =uχ(ib) ~ =iχ(ib)* 'bring (inanimate object)' exceptionally follow the antipassive pattern of valency change. The verb is primarily transitive, but, exclusively (or at least preferably) in the imperfective, it can also be used with the A-argument in the nominative and the P-argument in the ergative.

- (44) transitive pattern (elicited)

it-ini mura d-iχ-ib.
 this-ERG hay NPL-bring:IPFV-IPFT
 'He was bringing hay.'

- (45) antipassive pattern (elicited)

it mura-li-ni w-iχ-ib.
 this hay-OBL-ERG M-bring:IPFV-IPFT
 'He was bringing hay.'

This pattern, to the best of my knowledge not documented in other Dargwa varieties, was independently confirmed by several consultants.

Some morphologically simple verbs may be considered to be ‘lexical causatives’ with respect to other simple verbs – i.e. forming pairs of verbs whose mutual relation is more or less similar to that in causative pairs but whose stems are not morphologically related. The list cannot be exhaustive because it largely depends on what pairs one considers to be in causative correlation, but, in a language with highly productive causative derivation, lexical causatives are not expected to be many. One example is *=ebk'(ib) ~ =ubk'* ‘die’ – *=a^fbʔ(ib) ~ =i^fbʔ* ‘kill’; the other, already much more questionable, is *q^ʔ- ~ =a^fq'(un) ~ =aš-* ‘go’ – *k(ib) ~ =uk(ib) ~ =ik(ib)* ‘lead’.

The last phenomenon related to transitivity is the binominative (alias biabsolutive) construction. In Mehweb, as in some other East Caucasian languages, including the languages of the Dargwa branch, periphrastic constructions license nominative marking of both A- and P-arguments. Binominative constructions are only available in periphrastic forms based on imperfective converbs (see Ganenkov 2019).

(46) binominative construction (Corpus)

q^fus-ra w-iʔ-i-le dursi-la širbit-la dubilhani
 be.squatted=ADD M-sit:PFV-AOR-CVB daughter-GEN shoe-GEN lace
b-ilh-uwe le-w-re il.
 N-tie:IPFV-CVB.IPFV AUX-M-PST this

‘He (lit. this one) squatted and was tying (his) daughter’s shoelace.’

The alternation between the expected ergative ~ nominative and the binominative pattern in the periphrastic transitive construction has been noticed and discussed by Magometov (1982: 84ff.) The semantic effect that the binominative construction brings remains unclear; in fact, Magometov suggests that, in Mehweb, it is the binominative construction that is more natural in imperfective periphrasis. For further discussion of the syntax of binominative constructions in Mehweb, see Ganenkov (2019); Lander (2019).

Finally, I provide some examples of what has come to be called, in recent research on East Caucasian, the verificative construction. This construction has not been controlled in elicitation; the only and few examples that I have come from the corpus. The verificative construction based on a verb P is a complex predicate whose meaning is, speaking formally, ‘verify whether P is true’ or ‘check what/who is x such that P(x) is true’, where x is the argument of P – see the examples below. The verbal complex essentially includes two elements – the lexical

verb followed by the interrogative particle followed by a more or less grammaticalized form of the verb ‘see’; literally, ‘P-whether-see’. This construction has been previously attested in two distantly related Lezgian languages, Archi (Kibrik 1977: 291) and Agul (Maisak & Merdanova 2004), and later also reported in Chirag by Dmitry Ganenkov. In Daniel & Maisak (2014); Maisak (2016), various properties of the verificative construction are discussed, including that, while various forms may appear in elicitation, the verificative is primarily used in purposive contexts with the infinitive (‘in order to check whether...’) or in the imperative (‘go and check whether...’). These are exactly the forms attested in the corpus; only the copula as the main verb is attested:

- (47) infinitive verificative, no question word (corpus)

nomir-ra *χal* *b-aq’-i-ra* *k^wan šula-le*
number=ADD seek N-do:PFV-AOR-EGO QUOT tight-ADVZ
le-b-u-g-es.
be-N-Q-VERIF-INF

‘I touched the number (plate), to see whether was fixed tightly.’

- (48) imperative verificative, question word (Magometov’s texts)

w-e^ʔe, *ħule w-iz-e,* *či-ja* *le-b-u-g^w-a.*
M-go:PFV look M-LV:PFV-IMP who-Q be-N-Q-VERIF-IMP

‘Go and look, see who is there.’

In all East Caucasian languages where it has so far been attested, the verificative results from univerbation of the interrogative form of the main verb with the verb ‘see’. Our consultants tend to write these forms together in transcription; otherwise, the only formal indication of grammaticalization in Mehweb is the loss of labialization in infinitive verificatives (*g^w-es* → *-g-es*). In other languages the grammaticalization process is more advanced. To understand the position of the Mehweb verificative with respect to the parameters previously set up for Archi and Agul, further research is needed.

12 Complex verbs

In Mehweb, a verbal stem is a bound morpheme that typically consists of one syllable, followed by one or more inflectional suffixes (an exception being the truncated optative, where no suffix follows; see Dobrushina 2019). Pre-root slots are optional. The presence of a gender prefix is lexically determined – formally identical roots may be different in having or not having a gender agreement

prefix (cf. *umc-* ‘weight (IPFV)’ and *=umc-* ‘swell (IPFV)’). After the agreement prefix, the next slot to the left is that of the inflectional marker of negation (either standard or volitional). Then may follow a preverbal element. Schematically, this template may be generalized as PREVERB-NEGATION-GENDER-ROOT-INFLECTION.

I consider the position of the negation prefix to be a diagnostic of a morphologically complex verb – if it is inserted inside what otherwise seems a verbal stem that conveys single verbal meaning, then the morphological element preceding the negation marker is a preverbal part of the verb, however bound it is. For verbs possessing an agreement slot, the position of this slot is another such diagnostic. Cf. the verb *qumartes* ‘forget’ where neither *qum-* or *-art-* is used without the other part, yet the negation is inserted between them. In *kajʔes* ‘sit down’, the gender prefix comes after what historically is a spatial preverb.

(49) ‘forget’ *qumartur* – *qum-art-ur* (PFV), cf. negative *qum-ħa-rt-ur*

(50) ‘sit down’ *kajʔib* – *ka-jʔ-ib*, the masculine *w-* is lost after vowel – cf. feminine *ka-d-iʔ-ib* (see §2)

Unlike negation, positioning of a gender prefix at the beginning of a verbal form does not prove its simplex status, because the preverbal element may have its own gender agreement position. Then, the complex status of a verbal stem is only unambiguously tested by the position of the negation.

(51) ‘pull’ *bitʔakʔib* (N), *ditʔakʔib* (F1), cf. *bitʔ-ħa-kʔ-ib*

There is only one bisyllabic simplex root recorded so far – a root with two syllables not split by negation:

(52) ‘fall asleep’ *=usaʔ(un)* ~ *=usulʔ-*, cf. negative *ħa-wsaʔun*

While many East Caucasian languages use some more or less bound preverbal morphemes, some but not all of them also have a more or less substantial set of true preverbs (derivational verbal prefixes). Preverbs constitute a specific subclass of preverbal elements in that they combine with several verbal stems – first of all, motion and posture verbs, and have an isolatable meaning – often, spatial. While many Dargwa languages possess a considerable inventory of preverbs, in Mehweb they all ceased to be productive, so that many verbs with preverbs ended up with non-compositional meanings. On the other hand, there is a set of verbal stems that are more or less productively used in complex verb formation. Finally, some complex verbs are combinations of a preverbal element and a verbal stem that are only used together, as *qum-art-* above. I will consider them in turn.

Dargwa preverbs are identifiable in Mehweb first of all on etymological grounds. The only typical preverb formations are the prefix *ar-* ‘away’ (*ʔaʔr-* in roots with pharyngealization, see Moroz 2019) in various motion verbs, in which a prefix with a clear directional meaning combines with a motion verb. All other combinations show a strong degree of idiomatization. The presence of highly idiomatic combinations seems to contradict Magometov’s (1982: 74) suggestion that, in Mehweb, the system of prefixes has not been fully developed – rather, it passed away, leaving behind few vestiges. Below, all preverb ~ verb combinations attested so far are given as perfective and imperfective, the perfective also showing the aorist suffix in parentheses; the preverbs are provided with meaning labels suggested by Magometov (1982: 74–80), who based these suggestions on comparison with other Dargwa languages.

(53) Preverb *ar-* ‘away’

- a. *ʔaʔr-aʔqʔ-(un)* ~ *ar-aš-* ‘go away, leave’ from *=aʔqʔ-* ‘go’
- b. *ar-uk-(ib)* ~ *ar-ik-* ‘lead away’; cf. *=uk-* ~ *=ik-* ‘lead’
- c. *ar-uχ-(ib)* ~ *ar-iχ-* ‘bring away’; cf. *=uχ-* ~ *=iχ-* ‘bring’
- d. *ar-ik-(ib)* ~ *ar-irk-* ‘fall down, fall out’; cf. *=ik-* ~ *=irk-* ‘happen’ (etymologically probably ‘fall’)
- e. *ar-ih(ub)* ~ *=irh^w-* ‘throw away, out from somewhere’; cf. *=ih(ub)* ~ *=irh^w-* ‘throw’
- f. *ar-as(ib)* ~ *ar-is-* ‘take away’; cf. *as(ib)* ~ *is-* ‘take’
- g. *ar-uʔ-* ~ *ar-ulʔ-* ‘lose’; cf. *=uʔ-* ~ *=ulʔ-* ‘spoil’

(54) Preverb *ka-* ‘down’

- a. *ka-lʔ(un)* ~ *k-ulʔ-* ‘remain’; cf. *alʔ(un)* ~ *ulʔ-* ‘cut’
- b. *ka-at(ur)* ~ *ka-alt-* ‘leave’; cf. *=atur* ~ *=alt-* ‘put on/under (?)’ (the distribution of this verbal stem in Mehweb is further discussed below)
- c. *ka=iʔ(ib)-* ~ *ka=irʔ-* ‘sit down’; the stem is not attested as a free verb

(55) Preverb *har-* (not discussed by Magometov, highly idiomatized)

- a. *har=ik(ib)* ~ *har=irk-* ‘become first’; cf. *=ik(ib)* ~ *=irk* ‘happen’ (etymologically probably ‘fall’)
- b. *har=uq(un)* ~ *har=ulq-* ‘run away, flee’; cf. *=uq(un)* ~ *=ulq* ‘come, enter’

(56) Preverb *če-* ‘surface’ (highly idiomatized)

- a. *če=uq(un)* ~ *če=ulq-* ‘grow (of plants or hair)’; cf. *=uq-* ~ *=ulq* ‘come, enter’

- b. *če-di=uq(un) ~ če-di=ulq-* ‘become arrogant’; cf. *=uq- ~ =ulq* ‘come, enter’
- c. *če=arc-(ur) ~ če=urc-*, the verb which is described as ‘unmount a horse’ by Magometov (1982: 76) but is only attested in his texts once meaning ‘stay as a guest’ (Magometov’s texts, Brother and sister); cf. *=arc- ~ =urc* ‘stuck’

(57) Preverb *q’a-* (not discussed by Magometov)

- a. *q’a^hbʔ(ib) ~ q’-ibʔ^h-* ‘close’; cf. *ʔa^hbʔ(ib) ~ ʔibʔ^h-* ‘shut someone up; cast someone a spell of not being able to urinate or defecate (?)’
- b. *q’a=ik(ib) ~ q’a=irk-* ‘become silent, stop’; cf. *=ik(ib) ~ =irk-* ‘happen’

Some preverbs are only attested with one verbal root, and thus synchronically indistinguishable from bound preverbal elements discussed below:

(58) *hil=ixib ~ hil=irxib* ‘lie down (intr)’; cf. *=ixib ~ =irxib* ‘put’

(59) *a=izur ~ a=ilzib* ‘stand up’; cf. below on the status of the verbal stem

Like many East Caucasian languages, Mehweb has verbs that combine with various elements in preverbal position to form non-compositional (or not fully compositional) complex verbs. Complex verbs show different degrees of univerbation, which may be viewed as a decrease in compositionality of the complex and an increase in the boundedness of the preverbal element. The latter includes the loss of categorical transparency of the preverbal element, from autonomous noun, adverb or adjective for which the verbal stem serves as a verbalizer, to a bound morpheme with no clear autonomous semantics or categorical status. Assumedly, intermediate cases are also possible, when the preverbal element is recognized by the speakers as a separate word but is much more often used in a verbal complex, but this issue has not been studied, so the orthographic solutions are somewhat arbitrary. Whenever I have no elicited evidence that the element is only used in this complex, I write it separately below.

The most productive verbs include *=uh(ub)* ‘become’ and *=aq’(ib)* ‘do’. When combining with adjectives (the short form, lacking the attributivizer *-(i)l*), the two verbs form inchoative ~ causative pairs. Cf. *ara =uhes* ‘recover’ lit. ‘healthy become’, *ara =aq’as* ‘heal’ lit. ‘healthy do’ from *ara(l)* ‘healthy’. Other verbs are only exceptionally attested in inchoative constructions. I have one example: *ʔa^hrba =aʔib* ‘stretch’; cf. *ʔa^hrba(l)* ‘long’ and *=aʔas* ‘begin’.

The verbs *=uh(ub)* ‘become’ and *=aq’(ib)* ‘do’ also form less compositional derivations with nouns or elements of synchronically unclear categorical sta-

tus, e.g. *deḥ buh(ib)* ‘start stinking’ (*deḥ* ‘smell’), *g^wer baq(ib)* ‘rock (a cradle)’, *χal-baq(ib)* ‘seek’, *dam-baq(ib)* ‘beat up’.

The verb *ib* ‘say’ (PFV) is used in complex verbs designating sound production or similar (*š^wa^t ib* ‘whistle’, *tu ib* ‘spit’, *a^fmču ib* ‘sneeze’ etc.) The recorded complex verbs designating motion are based on the verb *=uq(un) ~ =ulq* ‘come, enter’ which has a limited distribution as a free verb but is also used with prefixes (see above), or in combination with an adverbial element *dur(a)* ‘outside’ in *dura =uq(un)* ‘exit’. The complex verbs with *=uq(un) ~ =ulq* ‘move, enter’ include *t^aḥ =uq(un)* ‘jump’, *ča^fχ =uq(un)* ‘slip’, *duc^o =uq(un)* ‘run’, *tir =uq(un)* ‘wander’ – it seems such verbs tend to designate quick movement. The verb *=a^fq(ib) ~ =irq^f* ‘hit’ is used in several complex verbs, from highly compositional *k^wama =a^fq(ib)* ‘churn butter’ (*k^wama* ‘butter’) and *urculi =a^fq(ib)* ‘chop wood’ (*urculi* ‘firewood’) to non-transparent verbs with no common semantic denominator, *kal =a^fq(ib)* ‘go stale’ (*kal* ‘stale’), *ʔa^sš =a^fq(ib)* ‘come back’ and *uruχ =a^fq(ib)* ‘become afraid’. The meaning ‘be afraid’ in the imperfective may also be rendered by *uruχ k^o-*, where *k^o-* is a bound verbal stem only attested in the imperfective. It could be that the difference between the two imperfective verbs, *uruχ =irq^f(ib)* and *uruχ k^o(ib)* is that between multiple episodic events (true imperfective of *uruχ =a^fq(ib)*) vs. state, respectively – but the evidence for this is not sufficient.

Other verbs include completely non-compositional combinations with roots which do not serve as productive verbalizers, so that identification of a light verb with a lexical verb is fully formal. These include:

- (60) *xar b-aʔ(ib)* ‘ask’ cf. *=aʔ(ib)* ‘begin’
 (61) *q^aac^o b-ik(ib)* ‘bite’ cf. *=ik(ib)* ‘happen’ (<^{*} ‘fall?’)

While the common way of univerbation is the increase in boundedness of the preverbal adverb or nominal with the stem of a free verb, several complex verbs contain a stem whose identification is problematic. Attested cases are:

- (62) *miʔ aʔ(ur) ~ ir^w-* ‘freeze’ (cf. *miʔ* ‘ice’)
 (63) *dub a^fʔib ~ ilʔ^f-* ‘eat’ (cf. *dub d-at(ur)* or *b-uc(ib)* ‘be fasting’)
 (64) *qum-art-(ur) ~ qum-urt-* ‘forget’
 (65) *=uḥ(a)-aq^o-* (IPFV only?) ‘talk’
 (note the absence of the agreement slot, thus not *=aq^o(ib)* ‘do’)
 (66) *=it^o(a)-ak^o(ib) ~ =it^o(a)-irk^o-* ‘drag’
 (67) *ʔaj-k^o(ib) ~ ʔaj-k^o-* ‘lock’

In (65) and (66), the *(a)* appears before the negative prefix, and is otherwise lost before the vowel of the stem. The verb in (67) has a negative form *ʔajk'-ħa-jk'-an* ‘does not (usually) lock’, which suggests an underlying structure of the positive forms looking something like *ʔajk'-k'(ib)*, with the two occurrences of *k'* merging in one.

Two cases have an especially unclear morphological status in terms of (un)boundedness of the verbal root. First, the verbal root *=at(ur) ~ =alt* seems to mean ‘put’ (probably from the original meaning ‘leave’), but it is a markedly rare choice in this meaning (the common verb for ‘put’ is *=ix(ib)*). The stem is much more common in several non-compositional structures, including the prefixal verb *ka=at(ur) ~ ka=alt-* ‘leave behind, lose’ (also causative *ka=at-aq-* ‘kidnap (cause to be lost?)’), with designation of clothes meaning ‘take off’, the noun *ši* ‘sting’ (meaning ‘sting (verb)’), the apparently bound element *dub* (meaning ‘hold fast’, cf. also *dub buc(ib)* ‘hold fast’ and *dub aʔ(ib)* ‘eat’), the word *c'urʔa* in the sense ‘become/leave orphan’ and the spatial form *hune=* ‘on the road’ meaning ‘see off’ (‘leave/put on the road?’). But it is also used in the construction *=atur =aʔas* ‘let (someone pass/go)’, where what appears to be a finite form (an aorist *=atur*) is used in apparent subordination to the verb ‘begin’/‘arrive’. Another probable use is the complex verb *waʔb-aʔt(ur) ~ waʔb-aʔlt-* ‘call out’. The verbal stem is similar, but, first, the putative *=at(ur) ~ =alt* is irregularly pharyngealized (probably, pharyngealization has spread from the preverbal component, but this is an irregular process, because pharyngealization in Mehweb usually spreads leftwards – see Moroz 2019). And, second, in negative forms, the *b* splits in two (*waʔb-ħa-baʔt(ur)*). This may mean that the former gender marker, now frozen because it was controlled by the lexical noun which was the source of the bound preverbal element *waʔb-*, fused with the final *-b* of this element when there was no intervening negation prefix. But this process, again, is irregular.

Second, the verbal root *=iz(ib) ~ =ilz-* is attested with a preverb (see *a=iz(ib)* ‘stand up’ above), in *tir =iz(ib) ~ =ilz-* ‘turn around’ (cf. *tir =uq(un)* ‘wander, go in circles’ above), and in the expression *ħule =iz(ib)*, where *ħule* is an unclear form related to the noun ‘eye’, while the complex verb agrees with the subject – the one who looks). Otherwise, the verb *=iz(ib)/=ilz-* does not seem to be used alone.

Finally, there are some idiomatic combinations of words of different categories with verbs, showing more or less clear paths of semantic derivation, e.g. *lihi bixes* ‘listen’ – lit. ‘ear put’; *surat diltes* ‘draw’, lit. ‘take out image’; *himi abizes* ‘become angry’, lit. ‘the bill raises’, *aqu ih^wes* ‘cover’, lit. ‘throw up’; and less transparent synchronically *žux wiʔ(ib)* ‘urinate’ and *k'uč'e wiʔ(ib)* ‘defecate’ – cf. the same root as a bound root in *ka=iʔ(ib) ~* ‘sit down’; *ask'es =erχ^wes* ‘fight’ (lit. ‘catch/cling go’) etc.

List of abbreviations

ADD	additive particle
ADVZ	adverbializer
ANTE	anteriority converb
AOR	aorist
APPR	apprehensive
ATR	attributivizer
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
COND	conditional
CVB	converb
EGO	egophoric
EL	motion from a spatial domain
ERG	ergative
F	feminine (gender agreement)
F1	feminine (unmarried and young women gender prefix)
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
HAB	habitual (durative for verbs denoting states)
HPL	human plural (gender agreement)
IMP	imperative
INDEF	indefinite particle
INF	infinitive
INTER	spatial domain between multiple landmarks
IPFT	imperfect
IPFV	imperfective (derivational base)
LAT	motion into a spatial domain
LOC	locative converb
LV	light verb
M	masculine (gender agreement)
N	neuter (gender agreement)
NEG	negation (verbal prefix)
NEGVOL	negation in volitional forms (negative imperative, negative optative)
NMLZ	nominalizer
NOM	nominative
NPL	non-human plural (gender agreement)
OBL	oblique (nominal stem suffix)

OPT	optative
PFV	perfective (derivational base)
PL	plural
PROH	prohibitive
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
PV	preverb (verbal prefix)
Q	question (interrogative particle)
QUOT	quotative (particle)
SUPER	spatial domain on the horizontal surface of the landmark
TR	transitive
VERIF	verificative

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