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NOMINAL MORPHOLOGY OF MEHWEB DARGWA

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NOMINAL MORPHOLOGY OF MEHWEB DARGWA^{2,3}

This paper describes the nominal morphology of the Mehweb language. It deals with the following issues: noun structure, plural formation, the oblique stem, case formation and use, and irregular locatives. In this paper I analyse both the structure and the semantics of these features. The description is mostly based on the existing studies of the Mehweb language, and the field data collected during three field trips in the years 2013–2015.

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1. Introduction

This study describes the morphology of nouns and pronouns in Mehweb. Mehweb is spoken by about 1,000 people in the village of Mehweb, Daghestan. It is a member of the Dargwa group of the East Caucasian (Nakh-Daghestanian) language family. Mehweb is a one-village language spoken by a community that has been isolated from other Dargwa speaking groups for a considerable period of time.

In this paper, I consider the following aspects of Mehweb grammar:

- Word structure
- Formation of plural
- The oblique stem
- Grammatical cases
- Irregular locatives
- The inflection of place names

This description is mostly based on the data collected during 2013, 2014 and 2015 field trips to Mehweb. The other sources I used were Magometov (1982), Moroz (MS).

2. Noun Structure

In this section, I describe the morphological structure of Mehweb nominal word forms. Nouns in Mehweb have three stems: nominative, oblique and plural. The oblique and plural stems are derived from the nominative stem. The plural stem requires a plural suffix to be present. Therefore, I do not postulate a separate slot for them in the following table. There are only 2 derivations: the oblique stem and Plural stem + Plural Suffix. Note, that the oblique stem may coincide with the nominative.

The stems have up to 2 slots, which can be filled with inflectional affixes. Table 1 describes how the slots are filled. Note that the nominal paradigm of Mehweb Dargwa consists of 2 parts: *grammatical*, or *functional*, cases and *locative forms*. The two types differ in their morphology: functional cases consist of one inflectional morpheme; locative forms include two inflectional slots: *localization* (LOC) and *orientation* (OR):

Tab. 1. Possible Noun Forms

STEM	SLOT 1	SLOT 2
Nominative STEM	(NOM)	
Nominative STEM	GEN	
Oblique STEM	DAT/ERG/COMIT	
Oblique STEM	LOC	OR
Plural STEM+PL	(NOM)	
Plural STEM+PL	DAT/GEN/ERG/COMIT	
Plural STEM+PL	LOC	OR

3. Plural

In this section, I provide a description of the plural formation. It is essentially different from the account in Magometov (1982), with a different set of suffixes and a different set of morphophonological stem changes. My analysis is based on the wordlists provided in Magometov (1982), and the lexical data collected by Georgi Moroz during the 2013–2015 field trips (Moroz MS).

Magometov provides the following set of plural suffixes:

Simple: *-t*, *-be*, *-me*, *-ne*, *-re*, *-e*.

Complex: *-nu-be*, *-tu-ne*, *-n-t*, *-r-t*, *-ur-be*, *-lu-me*.

Rare: *-le*, *-he*, *-qale*, *-še*.

My description differs from that by Magometov in the following ways:

1) I consider the stem changes caused by plural suffixes to be a plural stem formation. The nouns in Mehweb thus have 3 stems: nominative, plural, and oblique.

2) I analyse the *-nu-*, *-tu-*, *-ur-*, *-lu-* parts Magometov's complex suffixes as plural stem morphemes. However, I also consider them former plural suffixes *-ne-*, *-t(e)-*, *-re-*, *-le-* combined with the plural stem morpheme *-u-*. These affixes have probably lost their plural meaning with a small set of lexemes and these lexemes required a new plural suffix. Therefore, the plural stem morpheme *-u-* and a new plural suffix occurred after them (except for *-u-r-*, where the *-u-*

morpheme has always preceded the plural suffix), and the structure of the suffixes can be described as follows: *-n-u-be*, *-t-u-ne*, *-l-u-me*, and *-u-r-be*.

3) I describe the *-qale* suffix not as "rare"; in my description this suffix has the meaning of associative plural. It is not rare because it is not restricted to a small closed set of nouns, while "rare" suffixes are.

These assumptions lead us to the conclusion that all of the plural markers are (or used to be) simple and there are only 10 of them. The suffixes *-le*, *-he*, *-re* and *-še* are rarely used and behave differently from the more frequent suffixes *-t*, *-be*, *-me*, *-ne*, *-e*: usually the former are restricted to a closed set of nouns, while the more frequent suffixes can be attached to new words as well. The suffix *-qale* usually does not bear the meaning of simple plurality as "a set of objects, described by the same stem"; but an associative plural: "a set of objects that includes a focus object, which is described by the stem, and the objects related to it". However, it has developed the meaning of simple plural when attached to the kinship terms, e.g. *mother*, *father*, etc. (Lander 2008).

I also consider the mechanism of plural suffix assignment to be lexicalized. It means that, in most cases, the plural suffix cannot be predicted from the shape of the nominative stem or its semantics. The plural stem formation mechanism sometimes cannot be predicted, either.

Note that each plural suffix applies its own requirements to the phonotactic structure of the stem. Thus, there are different rules of plural formation for different affixes, which may, however, involve the same patterns such as the final vowel drop, which is universal except for single syllable words and borrowings.

3.1. The Plural Suffix *-t*

This plural suffix is one of the most productive. Its requirements/rules applied to the stem are:

1) If a stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped. The vowel of the pre-last syllable changes to [u]⁴. This rule does not apply to borrowed stems.

2) If a stem ends with a sonorant or [b], including after (1) is applied, the plural suffix *-t* can be attached directly to it.

⁴ If a vowel is pharyngealized, it changes into o^h, which phonologically is u^h.

3) If a stem does not end with a sonorant or [b] after (1) has been applied or if a stem is borrowed or contains a borrowed morpheme and ends with a vowel, the plural stem is formed by attaching the morpheme *-r-*.

Informally, these requirements can be described as follows: the suffix *-t* wants to attach to the stems ending with a sonorant.

Table 2 illustrates the vowel drop and the vowel change (Rule 1):

Tab. 2. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
a piece of firewood	urculi	urcul-t
broom	bu'škala	buškul-t
flue	zamari	zamura-t
border	durʔa'ri	durʔo'r-t
mountain	dubura	dubur-t
sunny hillside	burhala	burhul-t

Table 3 illustrates the second rule:

Tab. 3. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
blacksmith	ustar	ustar-t
spoon	k'uc'u'l	k'uc'ul-t
bridle	hurhur	hurhur-t
horse	ʔa'bul	ʔa'bul-t

a piece of dry dung	kupar	kupar-t
cauldron	qazam	qazam-t
sack	halban	halban-t
flue	zamari	zamura-t
hand mill	ulχab	ulχab-t
waterfall	rurqaʕni	rurqoʕn-t
fairytale	χabaʕr	χabar-t
dream	muʔer	muʔer-t

Table 4 shows what happens if a stem or its part is borrowed and ends with a vowel. Note that the vowel drop does not apply here:

Tab. 4. Rule 3

Translation	Sg	Pl	Source
reaper	irχʕanči	irχʕanči-r-t	Turkic suffix <i>-či</i> and the <i>črt</i> consonant cluster is restricted in Mehweb
hunter	awči	awči-r-t	Turkic <i>avči</i> ‘hunter’ and the <i>črt</i> consonant cluster is restricted in Mehweb
old man	uqna	buqna-r-t	The <i>qnrt</i> consonant cluster is restricted in Mehweb
time	zamana	zamana-r-t	Arabic <i>zamana</i> ‘time’
sign	išara	išara-r-t	Arabic <i>ʔišara</i> ‘sign’

mine	šaxta	šaxta-r-t	Russian <i>šaxta</i> (<i>шахта</i>) ‘mine’
car	mašina	mašina-r-t	Russian <i>mašina</i> (<i>машина</i>) ‘car’
oppression	zulmu	zulmu-r-t	Arabic <i>zalam</i> ‘injustice’
carriage	ʔaʔraba	ʔaraba-r-t	Arabic <i>earba</i> ‘car’

Borrowed stems that comply with the requirements attach the *-t* suffix directly:

Tab. 5. Borrowed stems that attach the suffix *-t* directly

Translation	Sg	Pl
sugar	čakar	čakar-t
sheet of paper	kaʔar	kaʔar-t
city	šahar	šahar-t
a bar of soap	sapun	sapun-t
person	insan	insan-t
cure	darman	darman-t
regent	hakim	hakim-t
agronomist	agranum	agranum-t
member	čilen	čilen-t
table	ustul	ustul-t
sack	čantaj	čantaj-t

3.2. The Plural Suffix *-ne*

The plural suffix *-ne* has the following requirements for the stem:

- 1) If the stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
- 2) One-syllable words form the plural stem by attaching the morpheme *-a-*.
- 3) If after (1) has been applied and/or the stem has two or more syllables and ends with a consonant, the plural stem is derived by attaching the morpheme *-u-*.

Table 6 illustrates the first rule:

Tab. 6. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
axe	barda	bard-ne
spring	derga	derg-ne
dew	marka	mark-ne
honey	warʔa	warʔ-ne
stain	tʰabʁa	tʰabʁ-ne
pile	bekʰa	bekʰ-ne
mosquito	kʰara	kʰar-ne
place	musa	mus-ne
cover	qʰapʰa	qʰapʰ-ne
mouse	waca	wac-ne
voice	tʰama	tʰam-ne
bird	čiq ^w a	čiq ^w -ne
hedgehog	satk ^w a	satk ^w -ne

Table 7 illustrates the mechanism of the plural formation of one-syllable stems attaching the suffix *-ne* (2):

Tab. 7. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
load	deχ	deχ-a-ne
herd	hanq	hanq-a-ne
manure	dek ^w	dek ^w -a-ne
wedge	č'ut'	č'ut'-a-ne
fist	χunk'	χunk'-a-ne
pupil (of the eye)	nur	nur-a-ne
place	mer?	mer?-a-ne
liver	k'ac'	k'ac'-a-ne
lightning	parx	parx-a-ne
shelter (of branches)	paž	paž-a-ne
yoke	duk'	duk'-a-ne
strut	t'al	t'al-a-ne
month	baz	baz-a-ne
drop, point	t'ank'	t'ank'-a-ne

Table 8 illustrates (3):

Tab. 8. Rule 3

Translation	Sg	Pl
scythe	č'inik'	č'inik'-u-ne

shock/stook	bizaq'	bizaq'-u-ne
chain	raχas	raχas-u-ne
kidney	urcec	urcec-u-ne
ploughshare	uʔab	uʔab-u-ne
glue	luʔmes	luʔmes-u-ne
trousers	waχčag	waχčag-u-ne
fork	χinč'ult'	χinč'ult'-u-ne
metal tray	sarɣas	sarɣas-u-ne
needle	bureba	bureb-u-ne
corpse	žanaza	žanaz-u-ne
pound	qilawka	qilawk-u-ne
alms	sadaq'a	sadaq'-u-ne
swallow	určuti	určut-u-ne
nose	šumšut'i	šumšut'-u-ne
whirligig	c'alači	c'alač-u-ne
jug	burbut'i	burbut'-u-ne
button	mičawi	mičaw-u-ne

Rule 3 has one exception: the word *ɣamas* 'box' forms plural stem by dropping the last vowel:

Tab. 9. Exception (Rule 1)

Translation	Sg	Pl
box	κamas	κams-ne

The nouns given in Table 10 table undergo haplology:

Tab. 10. Haplology

Translation	Sg	Pl
omelet	xajqane	xajq-u-ne
moustache	sersit'ane	sersit'-u-ne
lizard	šuršut'ani	šuršut'-u-ne
fat tail	urβadiq'a ^h ni	urβadiq ^h -u-ne
bellows	pušduk'ani	pušduk'-u-ne

Magometov does not treat these cases as haplology. He analyses the forms *xajqune* and *sersit'une* as follows: "There are cases, even though they are rare, when a word ending with *-e* in the plural differs [from singular] only by a vowel change in the stem. This vowel change, therefore, acquires a morphological meaning". This analysis, however, makes the behaviour of these two words irregular, even though several other words behave exactly the same. Moreover, the solution based on haplology does not only happen in the plural, e.g. the genitive case of the word *č'imič'ala* 'eyelash' can both be *č'imič'ala-la* and *č'imič'a-la*.

These words can also be analysed as attaching the suffix *-e* after dropping the final vowel. However, such behaviour is not typical for this suffix, because this rule prefers one-syllable stems. Therefore, I prefer the analysis given above.

Several words form plural stems by changing the vowel in the 1st syllable into *-u-*:

Tab. 11. Vowel change in the root

Translation	Sg	Pl
measure for grains	barxa	burx-ne
stomach	ʁaga	ʁug-ne
frog	ʔaʔ'a	ʔoʔ'-ne

3.3. The Plural Suffix *-be*

The plural suffix *-be* has the following requirements to the stem:

- 1) If a stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
- 2) Two-syllable words with [a] in the 1st syllable often employ *-u-* to form their plural stems.

Table 12 illustrates (1):

Tab. 12. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
bear	sinka	sink-be
crust	wank'a	wank'-be
tooth	cula	cul-be
mill	šinq'a	šinq'-be

Table 13 illustrates (2):

Tab. 13. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
leg	daga	dag-u-be
heel	q ^ʰ a ^ʰ č ^ʰ a	q ^ʰ a ^ʰ č ^ʰ -u-be
bone	liga	lig-u-be
sledge	čana	čan-u-be
stone	kaɾka	kaɾk-u-be
cheek	la ^ʰ ʒi	la ^ʰ ž-u-be
spike	canzi	canz-u-be
cradle	k ^w ahni	k ^w ahn-u-be

Note that *liga* ‘bone’ also forms the plural stem by attaching *-u-*, even though it does not have [a] in the 1st syllable.

Several nouns form their plural stems by changing the vowel in the pre-last syllable (before the vowel drop). Note that all of the words either have [e] in this syllable or contain a labial/labialized consonant:

Tab. 14. Vowel change in the root

Translation	Sg	Pl
melted butter	neɾx	nurx-be
cricket	c ^ʰ erc ^ʰ	c ^ʰ urc ^ʰ -be
tear	neɾɸ	nurɸ-be
eyebrow	ned	nud-be

boar	t'erH	t'urH-be
armful	k ^w ec'	kuc'-be
lip	k ^w et'	k'ut'-be
peach	q ^w arč	q'urč-be
cattle-shed	derq ^w	durq-be

The following assimilation happens in the stems ending with [n]: /n+be/ → [mbe]:

Tab. 15. /n+be/ → [mbe]

Translation	Sg	Pl
stall	t'eni	t'um-be
cooker	wana	wum-be

If a stem ends with a labialized consonant, this consonant is de-labialized:

Tab. 16. De-labialization

Translation	Sg	Pl
cattle-shed	derq ^w	durq-be

3.4. The Plural Suffix *-me*

1) 1-syllable words with the CV structure usually attach the suffix *-me* (see the exceptions in 3.6).

Tab. 17. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
fire	c'a	c'a-me

nit	q'i	q'i-me
horn	qi	qi-me
village	ši	ši-me
oath	q ^w e	q ^w e-me
blood	hi	hi-me
name	ʔu	ʔu-me

2. If a stem of two or more syllables ends with a vowel, this vowel is dropped:

Tab. 18. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
turnip	q'ana	q'an-me
(female) goat	q' ^s a ^s ca	q' ^s a ^s c-me
bolter	ʔula	ʔul-me
(male) sheep	k ^w iha	k ^w ih-me
light	šala	šal-me
cliff	šuri	sur-me
scythe	čuri	čur-me
the bottom of a dress	suri	sur-me

Several nouns form their plural stem by attaching *-u-* after dropping the last vowel. Note that all of them contain an [u] or a labial/labialized consonant. One may notice that in most of the cases after the final vowel drop has been applied, it is also necessary to avoid a consonant cluster and therefore [u] has to be inserted. This assumption can be challenged by the fact that there is no consonant cluster in *uq'lah-u-me*, since the form *k^wih-me* proves that the [hm] cluster is possible.

Note, that this description does not imply that these stems always behave this way (see previous table):

Tab. 19. Plural stem formation by attaching *-u-*

Translation	Sg	Pl
spoon	q'usla	q'usl-u-me
missile	gulla	gull-u-me
bucket	bidra	bidr-u-me
window	uq'laha	uq'lah-u-me
shroud	bišri	bišr-u-me
thought	pikri	pikr-u-me
stone for a ring	la ^ʕ wlu	la ^ʕ wl-u-me
mind	waq'lu	waq'l-u-me

Note that the words *la^ʕwlu* and *waq'lu* also drop their last vowel and attach *-u-*:

la^ʕwlu → *la^ʕwlu + me* → *la^ʕwl + me* → *la^ʕwl + -u- + -me* → *la^ʕwl-u-me*

Thus, the [u] in the plural form is not the same [u] as in singular.

3.5. The Plural Suffix *-e*

Rules of the plural stem formation:

1. The suffix *-e* has to be attached to a one-syllable stem.
2. If a stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
3. If a stem consists of more than one syllable, all the vowels, except for the first, undergo syncope.

The plural suffix *-e* can be attached directly to the CVC(C) stems:

Tab. 20. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
root	maq ^w	maq ^w -e
nut	xih ^w	xih ^w -e
finger	t ^w ul	t ^w ul-e
bread	t ^w ult ^w	t ^w ult ^w -e
bull	unc	unc-e
gut	rud	rud-e
khinkal	χinč ^w	χinč ^w -e
hand	na ^w ʁ	no ^w ʁ-e

Table 21 illustrates (2):

Tab. 21. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
horse	urči	urč-e
bee	mirqi	mirq-e
nettle	nizbi	nizb-e
ear	lugi	lug-e
sparkle	purχi	purχ-e

Table 22 illustrates the syncope of the vowel described in (3):

Tab. 22. Rule 3

Translation	Sg	Pl
worm	muleɤ	mulɤ-e
helminth	šulek	šulk-e
bull-calf	k'umeš	k'umš-e
toe	gubul	gubl-e
plank	ulq'uli	ulq'l-e
white (of an egg)	šuhari	šuhr-e
egg	žigari	žigr-e

3.6. The Plural Suffix *-re*

This suffix is rare. The rules of plural stem formation resemble the rules of other "Ce" suffixes (see also 3.4):

1) If a stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped.

2) One-syllable stems tend to form their plural stems by changing the vowel into [u]. Since I do not have any data concerning words consisting of more than one syllable after dropping the last vowel, I cannot say whether they do or do not undergo this vowel change.

The suffix *-re* seems to prefer one-syllable words and two-syllable words ending with [i].

Table 23 illustrates (1):

Tab. 23. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
leaf	k'ap'i	k'ap'-re
cross-beam	duk'i	duk'-re
mouth	dubi	dub-re

nipple	ut'i	ut'-re
--------	------	--------

Table 24 illustrates (2):

Tab. 24. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
fly	t'ant'	t'unt'-re
fish	k'as	k'us-re
pocket	č'ep	č'up-re
paw	k'wac	k'wuc-re

However, (2) is not a strict rule for the suffix *-re*, because there are stems that contain [a] but do not undergo the vowel change:

Tab. 25. Exceptions (Rule 2)

Translation	Sg	Pl
neck	q ^ə a ^ə b	q ^ə a ^ə b-re
manure	q ^w a	q ^w a-re

The [r] in the suffix *-re* can assimilate and become [l]:

Tab. 26. Assimilation /r/ → /l/

Translation	Sg	Pl
house	qali	qul-le/qul-re

3.7. The Plural Suffix *-le*

The plural suffix *-le* is employed only by four lexemes. If a stem ends with a vowel the vowel is dropped. In the first syllable of the stem the vowel is always changed into [u]:

Tab. 27. The plural suffix *-le*

Translation	Sg	Pl
body	čarx	čurx-le
handle	arʔ	urʔ-le
worm	serh ^w	surh ^w -le
rope	ɸ ^w a ^ɕ ɾɸo ^ɕ	ɸ ^w o ^ɕ ɾɸ-le

3.8. The Plural Suffixes *-he* and *-še*

The suffix *-he* is employed by two lexemes. Both lexemes have irregular plural stems:

Tab. 28. The plural suffix *-he*

Translation	Sg	Pl
woman	xunul	xu-he
dog	χ ^w e	χur-he

The plural suffix *-še* is employed only by the word *qu* ‘field’:

Tab. 29. The plural suffix *-še*

Translation	Sg	Pl
field	qu	qu-še

3.9. The Associative Plural Suffix *-qale*

The plural suffix *-qale* is a grammaticalized form of the noun *qali* ‘house’. The semantics of this suffix is usually described as "a set of objects that includes a focus object, which is described by the stem, and the objects, related to it" (Lander 2008). On the basis of Tanty Dargwa data, Lander concludes that the suffix *-qale* has also developed the meaning of simple plural, i.e. "a set of objects, described by the same stem". However, in standard Dargwa this change did not happen.

Mehweb data leads us to the conclusion that in Mehweb dialect this semantic shift happened the same way, as in Tanty Dargwa. Tab. 30 depicts the use of this suffix:

Tab. 30. The plural suffix *-qale*

Translation	Sg	Pl	Translation
mum	abaj	abaj-qale	mums
dad	adaj	adaj-qale	dads
grandma	baba	baba-qale	grandmas
grandpa	dat:a	dat:a-qale	grandpas
Abakar (a male name)	Abakar	Abakar-qale	Abakar and his family

3.10. Complex Plurals

The suffixes *-l-u-me*, *-t-u-ne*, *-n-u-be*, *-u-r-be* are all composed of two plural suffixes and a plural stem marker between them (except for the suffix *-u-r-be*): *-le-u-me*, *-t-u-ne*, and *ne-u-be*, respectively. The suffix *-u-r-be* can be decomposed as follows: *-u-re-be*. These morphemes can be analysed in two different ways⁵:

1) The plural suffixes are attached twice. Each suffix requires a plural stem, thus, the *-u-* has to be attached, as well. This analysis explains the fact that the plural stem is derived twice by each of the suffixes. Moreover, the phonotactic structure of the words attaching the *-t-u-ne* suffix is exactly the same as of the words attaching the *-t* suffix, which proves they may have used the *-t* suffix before. However, this description leads us to the conclusion that the plural meaning is divided between the two suffixes, which is a drawback of this analysis.

2) The first suffix has lost its plural meaning and became a plural stem formation mechanism. Therefore, these words have special plural stems consisting of what historically was a "*plural stem + plural marker + plural stem*" combination. In this approach the plural meaning is expressed by the new suffix. However, the fact that the mechanism of plural stem formation is completely regular but seems to be even synchronically applied twice is neglected in this description.

⁵ Note that these words did not always use double plural marker, in other Dargwa dialects they may use only the first part (the suffixes *-t(e)*, *ne*, *be*, *re*, *le*)

Even though I cannot fully prove any of these points, the second analysis seems to be closer to the real situation. Firstly, if the plural meaning is not divided between two suffixes and I do not postulate any additional suffixes, the description does not become more complex. Secondly, the fact, that in Kubachi dialect these words employ simple suffixes which correspond with the first part of the complex suffixes in Mehweb, proves that the second part of the suffixes developed after Kubachi dialect separated from other Dargwa dialects (Kubachi is one of the deepest Dargwa branches). Therefore, the second part of these plural suffixes was an innovation at some point. Thus, the plural forms of these words must have started to lose their plural semantics; therefore, a new plural suffix emerged. However, this mechanism has not become productive: only a small number of words use complex plurals.

The words *qašqar* ‘a bald man’, *wakil* ‘lawyer’, *arab* ‘Arab’ and *sabab* ‘reason’ use the morpheme *-tu* to produce their plural stems. This mechanism is not productive. These words employed the suffix *-t(e)*, but now have changed their plural suffix to *-ne*, therefore, this plural stem morpheme can be decomposed as *-t-u-ne*, where *-t* is the plural suffix. This assumption is supported by the fact that the same words employ the plural suffix *-te* in other Dargwa dialects, e.g. in Kubachi:

Tab. 31. The complex plural *-t-u-ne*

Translation	Mehweb Sg	Mehweb Pl	Kubachi Sg	Kubachi Pl
bald	qašqar	qašqar-t-u-ne	q ^ʰ a ^ʰ šq ^ʰ a ^ʰ r	q ^ʰ a ^ʰ šq ^ʰ a ^ʰ r-te
lawyer	wakil	wakil-t-u-ne	wakil	wakil-te
arab	arab	arab-t-u-ne	warab	warab-te
reason	sabab	sabab-t-u-ne	sabab	sabab-te

Several words form their plural stem with the suffixes *-n-u-be* and *-u-r-be*:

Tab. 32. The complex plurals *-n-u-be* and *-u-r-be*

Translation	Sg	Pl
thief	curku	curk-nu-be

small stone	наҥна	наҥн-ну-be
belt	irʔi	irʔ-nu-be
onion	šerši	šerš-nu-be
burned clay	t'aʔna	t'aʔn-nu-be
door	unza	unz-ur-be
swamp	šinʔa	šinʔ-ur-be
grapes	t'ut'i	t'ut'-ur-be
wheat	anč'e	anč'-ur-be

The next table contains all the words that form plurals with the suffix *-l-u-ne*:

Tab. 33. The complex plural *-l-u-me*

Translation	Sg	Pl
garden	baxča	baxč-l-u-me
corner	murʔa	murʔ-l-u-me
shadow	daʔxc'i	daʔxc'-l-u-me
ceiling	burxa	burx-l-u-me

4. Oblique Stem

The oblique stem marker has 3 allomorphs: *-li*, *-j*, and *-i*. The *-li* marker is the default way to form an oblique stem and is applicable to almost any stem.

The marker *-i* occurs after consonants. It may occur in the same phonological context as *-li* but is limited to a small set of words:

moʔhammad-li-ni

moʔhammad-i-ni

The following table shows the possible endings for the *-li* → *-j* assimilation. Note, that the last three sounds of a stem matter. The first column shows the vowel preceding the last consonant. The second column shows the last consonant and the vowels that can follow it:

Tab. 34. Possible stem endings for the *-li* → *-j* assimilation.

Pre-last syllable	Last syllable
a	l/li/la/n/ni
i	l/li/la/n/ni
o ^s	l/li/la
u	l/n

Note, that the oblique stem of the same words can also be formed with the suffix *-li*.

The last three sounds of all noun stems seem to be a basis for the morphophonological rules in Mehweb, since both plural and oblique stem derivations require information about them. However, this assumption has to be proved.

5. Case System

The nominal paradigm of Mehweb Dargwa consists of 2 parts: *grammatical*, or *functional*, cases and *locative forms*. The two types differ in their morphology: functional cases consist of one inflectional morpheme; locative forms include two inflectional slots. The core function of locative forms is to describe spatial relations between an object and a landmark. Functional cases are primarily used to express grammatical relations. However, in different East-Caucasian languages, both types can be used in both abstract and spatial contexts (Kibrik 2002). In Mehweb, however, functional cases do not have any spatial uses.

The structure of the paradigm is shown in the two tables below (Tab. 35 and Tab 36).

Mehweb has 5 localizations and 5 orientations. There are 2 relative markers, which do not differ in their locative semantics. However, the second one is never used in non-spatial contexts. Below I provide two tables (Tab. 35 for localizations and Tab. 36 for orientations), where the basic meanings of each localization and orientation are shown. Note that the meanings provided here are merely illustrative:

Tab. 35. Mehweb functional cases

CASE	Sg	Pl
NOM	∅	(Plural form)
ERG	-obl-∅/ni/iʔni/ini	Pl-li/ni/iʔni/ini
DAT	-obl-s	Pl-s
GEN	-la/wa/jja	-Pl-la/wa/jja
COMITATIVE	-obl-ču	Pl-ču
CAUSAL	-obl-čible	-Pl-čible

Tab. 36. Mehweb locative paradigm

Meaning	LAT ‘to the area denoted by the localization’	ESS ‘no movement’	ELAT ‘away from the area denoted by the localization’	TRANS ‘through the area denoted by the localization’	ALLAT ‘in the direction of the area denoted by the localization’
SUPER ‘on’	če	če-CL	če-la CL-ad-al-a	če-di	če-ba ^ʕ H
IN ‘in a container’	he ∅	he-CL ∅-CL	he-la he-CL-ad-al-a ∅-la ∅-CL-ad-al-a	he-di ∅-di	he-ba ^ʕ H ∅-ba ^ʕ H
INTER ‘in a substance’	ze	ze-CL	ze-la CL-ad-al-a	ze-di	ze-ba ^ʕ H
AD ‘near’	šu	šu-CL	šu-la	šu-di	šu-ba ^ʕ H

			CL-ad-al-a		
APUD ‘in	ʔe	ʔe-CL	ʔe-la	ʔe-di	ʔe-ba ^с H
the			CL-ad-al-a		
functional					
area of a					
landmark’					

5.1. Nominative and Ergative

The nominative marks S of an intransitive verb and P of a transitive verb. Ergative marks A of a transitive verb and the instrument:

(1) *Гяли вакIиб*

ʔa^сli w-ak'-ib

Ali(NOM) M-come.PFV-AOR

‘Ali came’

(2) *Адайни машинкалини муцIур берчур*

ada^сj-ni mašinka-li-ni mu^с 'ur b-erč-ur

father-ERG hair.cutter-OBL-ERG beard(NOM) N-cut.hair.PFV-AOR

‘The father cut his beard with a hair cutter’

5.2. Genitive

The main function of the genitive case (*-la*) is to mark a noun which is dependent on another noun (e.g. possessive construction):

(3) *Расуйни ардукиб МухIяммадла квигъме*

rasujni ar-d-uk-ib tina^сmmad-la k^{wi}h.me

rasul.OBL-ERG away-NPL-lead.PFV-AOR Muhammad-GEN sheep.PL

‘Rasul has stolen (led away) Mohammad’s sheep.’

(4) *Нушала дикъан хъулле гъаргъубела*

nuša-la d-iq'-an qulle karvu-be-la
 we-GEN NPL-do.IPFV-PRS house.PL stone-PL-GEN

‘We build our houses of stones.’

There are two types of possessive constructions in Mehweb. The possessor in the first type of constructions is marked with the INTER-ESS case (-ze-CL). In the second type it is marked with the genitive. The difference between their semantics can be described as follows: if the right to possess and to dispose of the object belongs to the possessor, the possessor is encoded with the genitive. If this right does not belong to the possessor, the possessor is encoded with INTER-ESS. Inalienable possession is always encoded with genitive. Note, that the second type occurs only in predicative constructions and thus may be considered not a true possessor:

(5) *МухІяммадла квиғьме*

тинаʼттad-la kʷih.me

Muhammad-GEN sheep.PL

‘Mohammad’s sheep (PL)’

(6) *Расуїзеб дила дис леб*

rasu.j-ze-b di-la dis le-b

Rasul.OBL-INTER-N(ESS) I-GEN knife be-N

‘Rasul has my knife with him.’

5.3. Dative

The dative case marker is *-s*. It attaches to the oblique stem. The dative case is used to mark the experiencer of the verb (*d)iges* ‘want, love’:

(7) *Юсупис дигуве лер ПатІимат*

jusup.i-s d-ig-uwe le-r pat'imat

Jusup.OBL-DAT F2-want-CVB be-F Patimat

‘Jusup loves Patimat.’

The two types of possession described in the section 5.2 on genitive also apply to the transmission of an object. If the rights are transmitted together with an object, the recipient is encoded with the dative. If they are not transmitted, the recipient is marked with *-ze-* (INTER-LAT):

(8) *Абайни гиб садакъачилис тІултІ*

abaj-ni gi-b sadaq'ači-li-s t'ult'
 mother-ERG give.PFV-AOR pauper-OBL-DAT bread

‘Mother gave bread to a pauper.’

(9) *Расуїни гиб МухІяммадизе дис*

rasu.j-ni gi-b муна^сmmad.i-ze dis
 Rasul-ERG give.PFV-AOR Muhammad-LI-DAT knife

‘Rasul lent a knife to Muhammad.’

Mehweb has two types of experiential verbs that differ in their frames: [experiencer = *-ze*, stimulus = NOM] and [experiencer = DAT, stimulus = NOM]. With the latter, dative marks the experiencer. Note that these verbs do not seem to have a subject (there is no *-ra* suffixed to the verb with 1SG either as experiencer or the stimulus). Thus, the INTER-labelled participant is not a subject, unlike the INTER-marked experiencer of morphologically simple verbs:

(10) *ХІу наб эба угъуб*

nu nab eba uh-ub
 you I.DAT boring (M)become.PFV-PST

‘You bored me.’

(11) *Ну хІад эба угъуб*

nu had eba uh-ub
 I you.DAT boring (M)become.PFV-PST

‘I bored you.’

5.4. Comitative

There is a special case for expressing the participant who performs the action together with the agent:

(12) *Расул ургъес бикиб МухИяммадичу*

rasul urɣes b-ik-ib mo^hhammad.i-č̣u

Rasul fight N-happen.PFV-AOR Muhammad.OBL-COMIT

‘Rasul fought together with Muhammad.’

5.5. Causal

Accordingly to Magometov (1982), there is a case that marks the reason for an event. However, Mehweb speakers did not support Magometov's examples and declined the *-čible* forms that I tried to construct. Therefore I assume that this case does not exist in Mehweb anymore, but may have existed about 30 or 40 years ago.

5.6. Locative Forms

5.6.1. Super

The Super localization *-č̣e-* is used in the contexts like the following:

(13) *Устуйчѣб гъадара леб*

ustu.j-č̣e-b vadara le-b

table.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS) plate be-N

‘A plate is on the table.’

CONT is a functional label of the following spatial configuration: the object is located on the surface of a landmark and stays there because of the contact between the object and the landmark or because it is a part thereof. The most typical CONT contexts are: *(a picture) on the wall, (a ring) on the finger, (wings) on the back, (a birthmark) on the face*. In several East Caucasian languages, there is a separate localization dedicated to the CONT meaning. In Mehweb, this semantic domain is divided between *-č̣e-* (labelled SUPER) and *-ze-* (labelled INTER):

(14) *Ихия баришиби тІулека леб тІуїчѣб/*тІуїзѣб*

iχi.ja b-arš-ib-i t'uleka le-b
 she.GEN N-be.beautiful.PFV-AOR-ATTR ring be-N

*t'u.j-če-b/*t'u.j-ze-b*

finger.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS)/ finger.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)

‘There is a beautiful ring on her finger.’

(15) *Сурат ахъиле леб бях Iузеб/бях Iучеб*

*surat aqi-le le-b ba^h.i-ze-b/*ba^h.i-če-b*

picture up-CVB be-N wall.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)/wall.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS)

‘A picture is hanging of the wall.’

The following use of SUPER as ‘near’ is fairly rare, it was recorded for the word ‘house’ and ‘wall’. However, it is not a clear case of AD/APUD ‘near’ as well and can be understood as a specific case of CONT:

(16) *ГIялини мажар бях Iуче шихиб*

ʒa^hli-ni mažar ba^h.i-če b-iχ-ib

Ali-ERG rifle wall.OBL-SUPER(LAT) N-put.PFV-AOR

‘Ali put the rifle against the wall.’

(17) *Ну хъайчела арякъунна*

nu qa.j-če-la ar-a^hq'-un-na

I house.OBL-SUPER-EL AWAY-M.go.PFV-AOR-1SG

‘I walked away from the house.’

In comparative constructions the object of comparison is marked with SUPER:

(18) *Расул дерхъвил лев Мух Iяммадиче*

rasul derq^wil le-w тина^hmmad.i-če

Rasul strong be-M Muhammad.OBL-SUPER

‘Rasul is stronger than Mohammad.’

SUPER-LAT is used to mark the target, e.g. with the verbs such as ‘hit’, ‘bark’, ‘shout at’, ‘be angry at’, ‘look at’, ‘laugh at’.

SUPER-EL is used in the frames of the verbs of avoidance: ‘run away’, ‘hide’, ‘fear’ etc. Note that only the elative in *-la* marks this argument.

5.6.2. In

The locative morpheme *-ne-* expresses the configuration when one object is inside another one and the second is conceptualized as a container.

(19) *XIapши кьункьурлехIep лер*

narši q'unq'ur-le-ne-r le-r

soup pot-OBL-IN-NPL(ESS) be-NPL

‘The soup is in the pot.’

Note that *-ne-* causes vowel assimilation (i → e) in the oblique stem marker.

(20) *КьункьурлехIep*

q'unq'ur-le-ne-r

pot-OBL-IN-NPL(ESS)

‘in the pot’

5.6.3. Inter

INTER denotes the configuration when an object is inside a landmark and the landmark is a substance or a set of related objects (e.g. *forest*):

(21) *KIac xIapкIвизеб*

k'as narк'w.i-ze-b

fish river.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)

‘fish in the river’

CONT (for description, see **Section 5.6.1** on Super):

(22) *Сурат ахъиле леб бях Iизеб*

surat aqi-le le-b ba^h.i-ze-b

picture up-CVB be-N wall.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)

‘A picture is hanging of the wall.’

INTER has a variety of grammatical uses which do not seem to be clearly related to its locative meaning. Below I provide a list of non-locative uses of INTER:

- Involuntary Agent
- Manage construction
- Addressee
- Target
- Temporary Possessor

Note that in the non-locative uses only *-la* relative is possible.

Involuntary agent is a participant who performs an action without an intention to do it. Example (23) also illustrates that it is impossible to use the *CL-adala* relative in these constructions:

(23) *Дизела/*дизебадала машина бѣрг Iѣб*

*di-ze-la/*di-ze-b-adala mašina b-o^hrʔ-o^hb*

I.OBL-INTER-EL/I.OBL-INTER-N-EL car N-break.PFV-AOR

‘I accidentally broke the car.’

Manage construction:

(24) *Расуѣзела ахъ бакъас бугъес гъаргъа*

rasu.j-ze-la aq b-aq'-as b-uh-es varva

Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL up N-do.PFV-INF N-become.IPFV-FUT stone

‘Rasul can lift the stone.’

INTER also marks a temporary possessor/recipient, described in the sections genitive and dative:

(25) *Расуйни гиб МухІяммадизе дис*

rasu.j-ni gi-b тинаʼmmad.i-ze dis

Rasul.OBL-ERG give.PFV-AOR Muhammad.OBL-INTER(LAT) knife

‘Rasul lent Mohammad a knife.’

Addressee:

(26) *Расуйни сикІал хІаиб МухІяммадизе*

rasu.j-ni sikʼal ha-ʔ-ib тинаʼmmad.i-ze

Rasul.OBL-ERG nothing NEG-say.PFV-AOR Muhammad.OBL-INTER(LAT)

‘Rasul said nothing to Mohammad’

5.6.4. Ad and Apud

The difference between the localizations *-ʔe-* (APUD) and *-ʃu-* (AD) is that *-ʃu-* means the simple ‘near’ and is a personal locative, and *-ʔe-* is a *functional locative*.

AD (*-ʃu-*) localization is used to express the fact that one object is located near another:

(27) *Нуша устуйшуб кабира*

nuša ustu-j-ʃu-b kaiʔi-ra

we table-OBL-AD-N(ESS) sit<N>-1/2

‘We are sitting near the table.’

It is also used as a personal locative:

(28) *Ну вякъунна ахІмадишув*

ni w-aʹqʼ-in-na ahmad.i-ʃu-w

I M-go.PFV-AOR-1SG Ahmed.OBL-AD-M(ESS)

‘I visited Ahmed.’

The marker *-ʔe-* (APUD) denotes an area close to an object, in which the actor is located when using or interacting with the object. This fact determines the very low compatibility of this suffix: it is only compatible with the words designating landmarks that have such area: ‘table’ *ustul*, ‘water source’ *iniz*, ‘house’ *qali*, ‘bottom’ *lut’i*. In different languages, the same landmark may be conceptualized as having such area or not. In Mehweb the set of words that can attach this suffix has not been established yet because it varies between speakers. Therefore, this phenomenon requires a sociolinguistic study.

The following examples illustrate the difference between AD and APUD localizations:

(29) *Нуша устуӷеб кабиура*

nuša ustu-j-ʔe-b kabiʔi-ra
 we table-OBL-APUD-N(ESS) sit-1/2

‘We are sitting at the table.’

(30) *Нуша устуӷушуб кабиура*

nuša ustu-j-šu-b kabiʔi-ra
 we table-OBL-AD-N(ESS) sit-1/2

‘We are sitting near the table.’

(31) *Лут’илеӷеб*

lut’i-le-ʔe-b
 bottom-OBL-APUD-N

‘on the bottom’

It also marks an exchange equivalent—one of the objects to be exchanged:

(32) *Расуйни барс бақ’иб къвял шувал квиӷалеӷеб*

rasujni bars baq’ib q’wa’l šuwal kwihaleʔeb
 Rasul exchange N-do.PFV-AOR cow five sheep.OBL-APUD-N(ESS)

‘Rasul exchanged the cow for five sheep’

-ʒe- may also be used to denote the inner part of a landmark of the hole-type (somewhat synonymous to *-ne-*):

(33) *Шкаф унзалегiedi бякъун*

škaf unza-le-ʒe-di b-aʹqʹ-un

wardrobe door-OBL-APUD-TRANS N-go.PFV-AOR

‘The wardrobe fitted through the door’

The localization *-ne-* can be used the same way:

(34) *Шкаф унзалехiedi бякъун*

škaf unza-le-ne-di b-aʹqʹ-un

wardrobe door-OBL-IN-TRANS N-go.PFV-AOR

‘The wardrobe went through the door’

Note that *-ʒe-* causes vowel assimilation *i* → *e* in the oblique stem marker:

(35) *Унзалегiedi*

unza-le-ʒe-di

door-OBL-APUD-TRANS

‘through the door’

6. Place names and irregular locatives

A limited number of nouns form locatives in an irregular way. Such irregular locatives usually mark the default location, which is associated with the landmark. Below I provide the list of the known irregular locatives with translations:

Tab. 37. Irregular locatives

Translation	Nominative	Locative
forest	duz	duzani-CL
village	ši	ša-CL

room, house	qali	quli-CL
cattle-shed	derq ^w	durqe-CL
field	qu	qu-CL
road	huni	hunHe-CL
gorge, street	q'aq'a	q'aq'a-CL
grave	χ ^w a ^s b	χ ^w a ^s b (b is not a class marker)
hole	tarqi	turqe-CL

There is also a number of place names which function as locative words [Daniel 2015]:

Tab. 38. Place names

	Quot	Ess	El
Mehweb	meHwe	meHwe-CL	meHwe-CL-adal
Sogratl'	surʒatli	surʒatli-CL	surʒatli-CL-adal
Obokh	q ^w a ^s dulli	q ^w a ^s dulli-CL	q ^w a ^s dulli-CL-adal
Gunib	ʒuni	ʒuni-CL	ʒuni-CL-adal
Keger	ha ^s nnuqara	ha ^s nnuqara-CL	ha ^s nnuqara-awadal
Rugudzha	ʒixatli		
Makhachkala	anʒi	anʒi-li-CL	anʒi-li-CL-adal
Moscow	maskaw	maskaw.i-ze-CL	maskaw.i-ze-la
	Lat	Gen	Pl
Mehweb	meHwe	meHwe-la	meHwa-n-t
Sogratl'	surʒatli	surʒatla-ja	surʒarla-n-t
Obokh	q ^w a ^s dulli	q ^w a ^s dura-ja	q ^w a ^s dura-n-t
Gunib	ʒuni	?	ʒuni-w-adil
Keger	ha ^s nnuqara	ha ^s nnuqara-ja	ha ^s nnuqara-n-t
Rugudzha			
Makhachkala	anʒili	anʒi-la	?anʒili-CL-adil
Moscow	maskaw.i-ze	maskaw-la	? maskaw.i-ze-CL-adil

8. List of abbreviations

1SG	first person singular	INTER	'in a substance'
AD	'near'	IPFV	imperfective stem
ALLAT	allative	LAT	lative

AOR	aorist	LOC	localization
APUD	‘in the functional area of a landmark’	M	masculine agreement class
ATTR	attributive	N	neuter agreement class
CL	class agreement marker	NOM	nominative
COMIT	comitative	NPL	non-human plural
CVB	converb	OBL	oblique stem
DAT	dative	OR	orientation
ELAT	elative	PFV	perfective stem
ERG	ergative	PL	plural
ESS	essive	PRS	present
F	feminine agreement class	PS	plural stem
F2	second feminine agreement class	PST	past
FUT	future	SG	singular
GEN	genitive	SUPER	‘on’
IN	‘in a container’	TRANS	‘through the area denoted by the localization’

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