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CASE AND AGREEMENT IN MEHWEB[2]

The chapter deals with patterns of case marking and agreement in Mehweb. Based on morphosyntactic coding and binding, the system of five valency classes is described for Mehweb. The chapter covers basic monoclausal structures with verbs of the five valency classes as well as their interaction with several specific constructions, such as reciprocal, causative, and bi-absolutive.

JEL Classification: Z.

Keywords: Case, personal agreement, gender, transitivity, experiential verbs, dative verbs, subject, reported speech, bi-absolutive construction

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The present chapter deals with basic morphosyntax of Mehweb. In many respects, Mehweb is a fairly typical representative of the Dargwa branch of Nakh-Daghestanian, and of the whole family in general. In certain respects, however, the language displays rare features only attested in a few other languages of the family. Three linguistic phenomena – argument case marking, gender agreement, and person agreement – are in focus of this chapter. The three coding properties are interrelated in many ways and together constitute major surface evidence about grammatical functions and subjecthood supported by other diagnostics, like binding of reflexive and reciprocal pronouns. They also generally determine the breakdown of Mehweb verbal lexicon to verb (valency) classes. The notion of *core argument* will be key to capturing the system of valency classes. In this chapter, I define *core argument* as a clausal constituent expressed by a noun phrase that is able to determine at least one type of verbal agreement, either gender or person, or both. Depending on the number of core arguments and their morphosyntactic behavior with respect to coding properties, the Mehweb verbal lexicon is divided into the following valency classes:

(1) Mehweb valency classes

a. *Intransitive verbs* have a single core argument in the absolutive that triggers both person and gender agreement.

b. *Transitive verbs* feature two core arguments. One core argument, the subject, is in the ergative case and triggers person agreement on the finite verb; the other core argument, the direct object, is in the absolutive case and determines morphological exponence in gender agreement slot.

c. *Locative subject verbs* are also bi-valent verbs with two core arguments. However, instead of an ergative argument, as with transitive verbs, they possess a core experiencer argument in the spatial case called *inter-lative*, see Chechuro (this volume) for details of the nominal paradigm. Like the ergative subject of a transitive verb, the inter-lative (henceforth, locative) subject of a locative subject verb also triggers person agreement.

d. *Dative subject verbs* have one core argument in the absolutive that only triggers gender agreement. No argument of a dative subject verb is able to determine person agreement on its own.

e. *Inter-elative subject verb buhes* ‘manage, be able’ features one core argument in the inter-elative case which optionally triggers person agreement, but cannot control gender agreement.

The rest of this paper provides empirical evidence about the behavior of various types of verbal arguments that motivates the above classification. Section 1 describes patterns of case marking and provides evidence from reflexive binding about the relative structural prominence of verbs' arguments. Sections 2 and 3 deal with rules of gender and person agreement, respectively. Section 4 presents an overview of case marking and agreement in reciprocal constructions. Section 5 deals with causative constructions. Section 6 describes basic properties of bi-absolutive construction. The conclusion briefly summarizes main issues described in the chapter.

1. Case marking and structural prominence

Mehweb is a morphologically ergative language where the sole argument (S) of intransitive verb is grouped together with the direct object (P) of transitive verb with regard to morphological case marking, but separately from the subject (A) of transitive verb: S and P arguments are in the unmarked absolutive case, while A arguments bear the ergative case morphology.

(2) *ʔali* *w-ak'-ib.*
Ali(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR
'Ali came.'

(3) *sinka-ni* *ʔali* *uc-ib.*
bear-ERG Ali(ABS) (M)catch:PF-AOR
'A bear seized Ali.'

(4) *ʔali-ini* *sinka* *b-aʕbʔ-ib.*
Ali-ERG bear(ABS) N-kill:PF-AOR
'Ali killed a bear.'

In (2), the DP *ʔali* 'Ali (a man's name)' is in its unmarked form and functions as the core argument of the intransitive verb *bak'es* 'come'. In (3), the same form is used to express the direct object (patient) of the transitive verb *buces* 'catch, seize'. In (4), however, the DP functions as the subject of the transitive verb *baʕbʔes* 'kill' and thus must be in ergative case.

Absolutive case is present in almost every Mehweb clause. In intransitive clauses, the absolutive argument is the highest one from the structural point of view, as seen from the fact that it can bind reflexive pronouns in any other position, but cannot be bound itself by any other argument.[3] Example (5) show the intransitive verb *ħulebizes* 'look' with an oblique (dative)

[3] In this paper, to diagnose structural prominence, I employ sentences with *wh*-pronouns serving as antecedents of reflexive pronouns. This is necessary in order to exclude the possibility of the co-reference relation between the antecedent and the reflexive (Reinhart 1983). Co-reference is normally available with referential antecedents and works on pragmatic rather than strictly syntactic grounds in Mehweb. In particular, the "antecedent" can appear in a structurally lower position in co-reference, as in (i), which is not a grammatical option under semantic binding by non-referential (quantified, wh-pronouns) antecedents, cf. (5b).
(i) *sune-la-l* *urši* *madina-če* *ħule‹w›iz-ur.*
REFL-GEN-EMPH son(ABS) Madina-SUP ‹M›look:PF-AOR
'Her$_i$ son looked at Madina$_i$ (a woman's name).'

argument which is diagnosed as structurally less prominent than the clause-mate absolutive argument.

(5) *ħulebizes* 'look': absolutive > super-lative

a. *čija* *ħule‹d›iz-ur-a* *sune-la-l* *urši-li-če ?*
who(ABS) ‹F›look:PF-AOR-Q REFL-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-SUP
'Who$_i$ looked at her$_i$ son?'

b. **sune-la-l* *urši* *hi-če* *ħule‹w›iz-ur-a?*
REFL-GEN-EMPH son(ABS) who-SUP ‹M›look:PF-AOR-Q
'Who$_i$ did her$_i$ son look at?'

The absolutive argument is not restricted to expressing any particular thematic role: it can denote an agentive participant, a patientive participant, or an experiencer. Unergative and unaccusative verbs in Mehweb thus are not distinguished by case marking. (6) lists more intransitive verbs.

(6) Intransitive verbs

a=izes 'stand up', *arces* 'fly', *aqas* 'raise, climb', *=alħʷes* 'wake up', *=ebk'es* 'die', *=erʔʷes* 'become dry', *=isses* 'cry', *=usaʔʷas* 'fall asleep', *=urdes* 'become worn', *=ušes* 'die out (of fire)', *=uzes* 'work', *kalʔes* 'remain', *uruχ =aʿqes* 'get afraid'

Two-place verbs are the verbs that mark their structurally highest argument with a morphological case other than absolutive. As suggested in (1) above, depending on the particular case of the highest argument, two-place verbs fall into three classes: transitive verbs with ergative subjects, locative subject verbs with inter-lative subjects, and dative subject verbs with dative subjects.

With transitive verbs, the ergative-marked argument is structurally the most prominent, as evidenced by its ability to bind a reflexive pronoun in any other position in the clause, including the absolutive argument, (7a-8a). The reverse binding of the ergative reflexive by an oblique or absolutive argument is impossible, (7b-8b).

(7) *haraq'e ihʷes* 'deceive': ergative > absolutive

a. *hinija* *haraq'e* *ihʷ-es-a* *sune-la-l* *urši?*
who(ERG) forward throw:PF-FUT-Q SELF-GEN-EMPH son(ABS)
'Who$_i$ will deceive his$_i$ son?'

b. **sune-la-l* *urši-li-ni* *čija* *haraq'e* *ihʷ-es-a?*
SELF-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-ERG who(ABS) forward throw:PF-FUT-Q
'Who$_i$ will his$_i$ son deceive?'

(8) *kumak baq'es* 'help': ergative > dative

a. *hinija* *sune-la-l* *urši-li-s* *kumak* *b-aq'-ib-a?*
who(ERG) SELF-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-Q
'Who$_i$ helped his$_i$ son?'

b. **sune-la-l* *urši-li-ni* *hi-sa* *kumak* *b-aq'-ib-a?*
SELF-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-ERG who-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-Q
'Who$_i$ did his$_i$ son help?'

Apart from agents, the ergative argument of a transitive verb can also denote a non-agentive causer (see also Chechuro, this volume, on the instrumental function of the ergative).

(9) *ʒab-li-ni* *mura* *d-aˤħʷ-aˤq-ib.*
rain-OBL-ERG hay(ABS) NPL-become wet:PF-CAUS-AOR
'The rain made the hay wet.'

(10) *ʁʷaˤl-li-ni* *ʁut'-be* *šiš* *d-uk'-aq-uwe* *le-r.*
wind-OBL-ERG tree-PL(ABS) move NPL-LV:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-NPL
'The wind is waving trees.'

(11) *c'a-li-ni* *qul-le* *ig-uwe* *le-r.*
fire-OBL-ERG house-PL(ABS) burn:IPF-CONV COP-NPL
'Fire is burning houses.'

Ergative case is thus tightly associated with agentive and causative semantics and is not employed to express participants with other thematic roles. Almost every transitive clause contains an absolutive argument. Exceptions are very few and can be summarized as follows.

With verbs of contact like *baʔaqas* 'hit' and *baˤqas* 'hit (an animal)', the absolutive argument expresses the instrument. Generally, instruments are never obligatory and can be freely omitted from overt expression. The absolutive argument in the instrumental function thus often does not appear overtly.

(12) *it-i-ni* *q'ʷaˤj-če* *(derxa)* *b-aˤq-ib.*
DEM-OBL-ERG cow+OBL-SUP stick(ABS) N-hit:PF-AOR
'She hit the cow (with a stick).'

(13) *ɬali-ni* *(χunk')* *unza-li-ze* *b-aʔaq-ib.*
Ali-ERG fist(ABS) door-OBL-INTER N-hit:PF-AOR
'Ali hit the door with his fist (lit. his fist into the door).'

Arguably, when omitted from overt expression, it is still present in the sentence, as evidenced by the possibility of non-default (plural) gender agreement.

(14) *ɬali-ni* *unza-li-ze* *d-aʔaq-ib.*
Ali-ERG door-OBL-INTER NPL-hit:PF-AOR
'Ali hit the door (with his fists).'

In (14), the plural gender marking on the verb reflects plurality of the instrumental DP in the absolutive.

With some transitive verbs of speech and thought, the absolutive argument denotes content of speech/thought.

(15) *ħu-ni sija i-ra?*
you.sg-ERG what(ABS) say:PF+AOR-1/2+Q
'What did you say?'

(16) *nu-ni b-urh-iša ca χabar.*
I-ERG N-tell:PF-FUT.1/2 one story(ABS)
'I will tell (you) one story.'

Likewise, many such verbs alternatively subcategorize for either an absolutive DP argument or a clausal argument. In the latter case, again, no absolutive argument is present in the clause.

(18) *rasuj-ni abzulaj-ze b-urh-ib mašina as-i-ra ile.*
Rasul+OBL-ERG all+OBL-INTER N-tell:PF-AOR car(ABS) take:PF-AOR-1/2 COMP
'Rasul told everyone that he had bought a car.'

With some complex transitive verbs, a nominal constituent in the unmarked form functions as a non-verbal component.

(19) *mallarasbadij-ni žawab b-aqʼ-i-le le-b.*
Molla Nasreddin-ERG answer N-do:PF-AOR-CONV COP-N
'Molla Nasreddin answered.'

(20) *nu-ni di-la-l urši-li-s kumak b-aqʼ-i-ra.*
I-ERG I-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-1/2
'I helped my son.'

The morphosyntactic status of such unmarked nominals is not clear. In principle, they can be analyzed as absolutive-cased DPs, on the one hand, or as (pseudo)-incorporated caseless NPs, on the other hand. More work is needed to decide on this question.

Two other classes of two-place verbs are locative subject verbs and dative subject verbs. The locative subject class includes verbs *arʁes* 'hear, understand', *bahes* 'know', *barges* 'find', *gʷes* 'see'.

(21) *ʔali-ze it dehʷ arʁ-ib.*
Ali-INTER DIST word(ABS) hear/understand:PF-AOR
'Ali heard / understood this word.'

(22) *rasuj-ze* *ʔali* *w-alh-an.*
Rasul+OBL-INTER Ali(ABS) M-know:IPF-HAB
'Rasul knows Ali.'

(23) *ɬali-ze* *arc* *d-arg-ib.*
Ali-INTER money(ABS) NPL-find:PF-AOR
'Ali found money.'

(24) *rasuj-ze* *ɬali* *g-ub.*
Rasul+OBL-INTER Ali(ABS) see:PF-AOR
'Rasul saw Ali.'

The dative subject class includes verbs *biges* 'want, love', *bikes* 'happen', *eba buhes* 'get bored', *určeb leb* 'remember', *urče bak'as* 'recall', *urče bikes* 'recall'.

(25) *madina-s* *rasul* *w-ig-an.*
Madina-DAT Rasul(ABS) M-love:IPF-HAB
'Madina loves Rasul.'

(26) *ɬali-s* *ɬaʕχ-il* *q'immat* *b-ik-ib.*
Ali-DAT good-ATR grade(ABS) N-happen:PF-AOR
'Ali got a good grade.'

(27) *madina-s* *rasul* *eba* *uh-ub.*
Madina-DAT Rasul(ABS) bore (M)become:PF-AOR
'Madina got bored with Rasul.'

(28) *madina-s* *ʔali* *urče-w* *le-w.*
Madina-DAT Ali(ABS) on.heart-M COP-M
'Madina remembers Ali.'

(29) *rasuj-s* *hel* *deh^{w}* *urče* *b-ak'-ib.*
Rasul+OBL-DAT DEM word(ABS) on.heart N-come:PF-AOR
'Rasul recalled that word.'

The verb *qumartes* 'forget' alternatively allows for either the locative or the dative case marking of its subject.

(30) {*ɬali-ze* / *ɬali-s*} *dečʼ* *qumart-ur.*
Ali-INTER Ali-DAT song(ABS) forget:PF-AOR
'Ali forgot the song.'

The inter-lative (locative) and dative arguments are the highest arguments in their respective clauses. Again, this is evidenced by the ability of the locative/dative argument to bind any other argument, including absolutive, while the reverse binding pattern is ungrammatical.

(31) *g^{w}es* ‘see’: inter-lative > absolutive

a. *hi-ze* *g-ub-a* *sune-la-l* *urši?*
who-INTER see:PF-AOR-Q SELF-GEN-EMPH son(ABS)
‘Who$_i$ saw her$_i$ son?’

b. **sune-la-l* *urši-li-ze* *čija* *g-ub-a?*
SELF-GEN-EMPH son-OBL-INTER who(ABS) see:PF-AOR-Q
‘Who$_i$ did her$_i$ son see?’

(32) *biges* ‘love’: dative > absolutive

a. *hi-sa* *ħa-d-ig-ul* *sune-la-l* *abaj?*
who-DAT NEG-F-love:IPF-PART REFL-GEN-EMPH mother(ABS)
‘Who$_i$ does not love his$_i$ mother?’

b. **sune-la-l* *abaj-s* *čija* *ħa-d-ig-ul?*
REFL-GEN-EMPH mother-DAT who(ABS) NEG-F-love:IPF-PART
‘Who$_i$ does his$_i$ mother not love?’

Again, while absolutive generally must be present in a clause with a locative or dative subject verb, it may be absent in case the corresponding semantic argument is expressed by another constituent. Most locative and dative subject verbs allow a clausal complement instead of the absolutive argument.

(34) *bahes* ‘know’ with nominalized (factive) complement
ʔali-ze *b-alh-an* *abaj* *iz-uwe* *le-r-deš.*
Ali-INTER N-know:IPF-HAB mother(ABS) be sick:IPF-CONV COP-F-NMLZ
‘Ali knows that mother is sick.’

(35) *arʁes* ‘hear’ with finite complement
ʔali-ze *arʁ-ib* *abaj* *iz-uwe* *le-r* *ile.*
Ali-INTER hear:PF-AOR mother(ABS) be sick:IPF-CONV COP-F COMP
‘Ali heard that mother was sick.’

(36) *biges* ‘want’ with infinitival complement
rasuj-s *dig-uwe* *le-b* *anži-li* *uqʼˤ-es.*
Rasul+OBL-DAT want:IPF-CONV COP-N Makhachkala-IN (M)go:PF-INF
‘Rasul wants to go to Makhachkala.’

(37) *bikes* ‘happen’ with a finite complement
abzulaj-s *b-ik-ib* *ʔali* *w-ebkʼ-i-le* *ile.*
everyone+OBL-DAT N-happen:PF-AOR Ali(ABS) M-die:PF-AOR-CONV COMP
‘Everyone thought (it occurred to everyone) that Ali was dead.’

Finally, the verb *buhes* ‘manage, be able’ is the only verb in Mehweb that licenses a core argument in the inter-elative case.

(38) *rasuj-ze-la* *ajz-es* *ħa-b-urh-an.*
Rasul+OBL-INTER-ELAT (M)rise:PF-INF NEG-N-manage:IPF-HAB
‘Rasul cannot stand up.’

(39) *rasuj-ze-la* *ħa-b-uh-ub* *ʁarʁa* *aq-b-aq'-as.*
Rasul+OBL-INTER-ELAT NEG-N-manage:PF-AOR stone(ABS) up-N-do:PF-INF
'Rasul did not manage to lift the stone.'

To summarize, Mehweb features five verb classes depending on the case of the structurally highest argument: (i) intransitive verbs with absolutive subject, (ii) transitive verbs with ergative subject, (iii) locative subject verbs with inter-lative subject, and (iv) dative subject verbs with dative subject, and (v) one inter-elative subject verb *buhes* 'manage, be able'. Argument structure of all verbs, with a few exceptions, also includes an absolutive argument. As will be shown below, the subject and the absolutive argument (if they are different) play a special role in gender and person agreement, and thus are called *core arguments*. All other arguments are *oblique*.

2. Verbal gender agreement

Two morphological slots for gender agreement are potentially available in the Mehweb clause. One is the prefixal (or infixal, with verbs hosting a locative prefix) gender agreement marker on lexical verbs. Every verbal stem is specified to host or not the prefixal (infixal) gender agreement slot. Most verbs are specified to host this agreement marker in their perfective stems. In imperfective stems, the slot is often absent. For more on agreement morphology and its relation to stems, see Daniel (this volume).

(40) a. *urši-li-ni* *kaʁar-t* *d-elk'-un.*
boy-OBL-ERG letter-PL(ABS) NPL-write:PF-AOR
'The boy wrote letters.'
b. *urši-li-ni* *kaʁar-t* *luk'-an.*
boy-OBL-ERG letter-PL(ABS) write:PF-HAB
'The boy writes letters (every day).'

Example (40) shows that the verb 'write' has a prefixal slot for gender agreement in its perfective stem, (40a), but lacks any such slot in its imperfective stem, (40b). If a stem features gender agreement, it is obligatory in any verbal form based on this stem, be it finite or non-finite.

The other morphologic slot for gender agreement in the verbal complex is the suffix on the copula within periphrastic verbal forms.

(41) *urši-li-ni* *kaʁar-t* *luk'-uwe* *le-r.*
boy-OBL-ERG letter-PL(ABS) write:IPF-CONV COP-NPL
'The boy is writing letters.'

The rule of thumb for gender agreement in monoclausal structures is to agree with the clause-mate absolutive argument. With regard to gender agreement on lexical verbs, this means that

agreement is always with the absolutive subject of an intransitive verb or with the absolutive direct object of other verb classes (transitive, locative subject, and dative subject), as shown below.

(42) a. *urši* *w-ak'-ib.*
boy(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR
'The boy came.'
b. *dursi* *d-ak'-ib.*
girl(ABS) F-come:PF-AOR
'The girl came.'

(43) a. *ʔali-ini* *sinka* *b-aˤbʔ-ib.*
Ali-ERG bear(ABS) N-kill:PF-AOR
'Ali killed a bear.'
b. *sinka-li* *ʔali* *w-aˤbʔ-ib.*
bear-ERG Ali(ABS) M-kill:PF-AOR
'A bear killed Ali.'

(44) a. *abaj-ze* *urši* *w-arg-ib.*
mother-INTER boy(ABS) M-find:PF-AOR
'Mother found her son.'
b. *adaj-ze* *dursi* *d-arg-ib.*
father-INTER girl(ABS) F-find:PF-AOR
'Father found his daughter.'

(45) a. *madina-s* *ʔali* *w-ig-ib.*
Madina-DAT Ali(ABS) M-love:IPF-PST
'Madina loved Ali.'
b. *ʔali-s* *madina* *d-ig-ib.*
Ali-DAT Madina(ABS) F-love:IPF-PST
'Ali loved Madina.'

If a clause lacks an absolutive argument, as observed with some types of formally transitive verbs, gender agreement on the lexical verb appears as the default singular neuter agreement marker *b-*. This is also observed with intransitive impersonal predicates. See examples in Section 1 above.

The verb *buhes* 'manage, be able' subcategorizes for the inter-elative subject and the infinitival complement and thus does not have an absolutive argument. This verb, therefore, always invariably appears with the default (singular neuter) marker *b-*, see examples (38)-(39) above.

The second morphological slot for gender agreement appears on the copula within periphrastic verbal forms like Present and Past Progressive, Present and Past Resultative. This slot cross-references the gender-number features of the highest absolutive argument. In clauses with one absolutive argument and in clauses with no absolutive argument, gender agreement on the copula patterns with gender agreement on the lexical verb, that is, agrees with the absolutive in the former case and shows default agreement in the latter case.

(46) a. *urši* *iz-uwe* *le-w.*
boy(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CONV COP-M
'The boy is sick.'
b. *dursi* *iz-uwe* *le-r.*
girl(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CONV COP-F
'The girl is sick.'

(47) a. *madina-ze* *rasul* *w-alh-uwe* *le-w.*
Madina-INTER Rasul(ABS) M-know:IPF-CONV COP-M
'Madina knows Ali.'
b. *rasuj-s* *madina* *d-alh-uwe* *le-r.*
Rasul+OBL-DAT Madina(ABS) F-know:IPF-CONV COP-F
'Rasul knows Madina.'

(48) a. *madina-s* *rasul* *w-ig-uwe* *le-w.*
Madina-DAT Rasul(ABS) M-love:IPF-CONV COP-M
'Madina is loving Rasul.'
b. *rasuj-s* *madina* *d-ig-uwe* *le-r.*
Rasul+OBL-DAT Madina(ABS) F-love:IPF-CONV COP-F
'Rasul is loving Madina.'

(49) *urši-li-ni* *i-le* *le-b* *…*
boy-OBL-ERG say:PF+AOR-CONV COP-N
'The boy said that …'

In complex verbs that include an adjectival stem specified for prefixal gender agreement as a non-verbal component, the adjective always agrees with the absolutive argument.

(50) a. *adam-ule-ni* *huni* *b-aʔu* *b-aq'-ib.*
man-PL-ERG road(ABS) N-wide N-do:PF-AOR
'Men widened the road.'
b. *adam-ule-ni* *hun-be* *d-aʔu* *d-aq'-ib.*
man-PL-ERG road-PL(ABS) NPL-wide NPL-do:PF-AOR
'Men widened the roads.'

If a sentence contains two absolutive arguments, as attested in bi-absolutive constructions, the copula agrees with the subject, see Section 6.

3. Verbal person agreement

3.1. Intransitive, transitive, and locative subject verbs in synthetic indicative forms

In synthetic indicative tense-aspect forms (aorist, imperfect, habitual, future), person agreement operates on nominative-accusative basis and cross-references the person of the subject: the absolutive argument of intransitive verbs, the ergative argument of transitive verbs, or the inter-lative argument of locative subject verbs.

(51) *nu usaʔ-un-na.*
I(ABS) fall asleep:PF-AOR-1/2
'I fell asleep.'

(52) *nuša-jni qali b-aqʼ-i-ra.*
we-ERG house(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-1/2
'We built a house.'

(53) *di-ze sinka g-ub-ra.*
I-INTER bear(ABS) see:PF-AOR-1/2
'I saw a bear.'

Morphologically, person inflection only distinguishes two options: one is a form overtly specified for person (*-iša* in the Future, *-s* in the Habitual, *-ra* in the rest of indicative tense-aspect forms), the other is a non-agreeing form. A peculiar feature of Mehweb is that person agreement is sensitive to the illocutionary force of the utterance. In declarative sentences, the overt person marker points to the first person of the subject, whereas non-agreeing forms are observed with second and third person subjects; by contrast, in interrogative sentences, the same overt person marker indicates second person subject, while first and third person subject do not trigger overt person marking on the verb. The following question-answer pairs illustrate.

(54) Q: *ħu dag kuda* {*w-aʕqʼ-un-na / *w-aʕqʼ-un-a*}?
you.sg(ABS) yesterday where M-go:PF-AOR-1/2(Q) M-go:PF-AOR-Q
'Where did you go yesterday?'
A: *nu anži-li* {*w-aʕqʼ-un-na / *w-aʕqʼ-un*}.
I(ABS) Makhachkala-IN M-go:PF-AOR-1/2 M-go:PF-AOR
'I went to Makhachkala.'

(55) Q: *dag nu-ni sija* {*b-aqʼ-ib-a / *b-aqʼ-i-ra*}.
yesterday I-ERG what(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR-Q N-do:PF-AOR-1/2+Q
'What did I do yesterday?'
A: *ħu-ni paʕrun* {*b-urʔ-aq-ib / *b-urʔ-aq-i-ra*}.
you.sg-ERG glass(ABS) N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2
'You broke a window.'

Example (54) shows that second person subjects in interrogatives and first person subjects in declaratives obligatorily bear the overt person marking, whereas subjects in reverse combinations of person and illocutionary force – first person subjects in interrogatives and second person subjects in declaratives – can never be overtly marked for person, as example (55) demonstrates (see the discussion of one notable exception in Section 3.4 below).

Person marking on synthetic tense-aspect forms is obligatory with intransitive absolutive subjects and transitive ergative subjects and cannot be omitted. Locative subject verbs display variation on this point. The verb *gʷes* 'see' patterns with transitive and intransitive verbs in

requiring person agreement, whereas with the rest of the locative subject verbs, person marking is optional.

(56) *di-ze urx-ne* {*d-arg-i-ra / d-arg-ib*}.
I-INTER key-PL(ABS) NPL-find:PF-AOR-1/2 NPL-find:PF-AOR
'I found the keys.'

(57) *di-ze rasu-wa t'ama* {*arʁ-i-ra / arʁ-ib*}.
I-INTER Rasul+OBL-GEN sound(ABS) hear:PF-AOR-1/2 hear:PF-AOR
'I heard Rasul's voice.'

(58) *di-ze rasul* {*w-alh-as / w-alh-an*}.
I-INTER Rasul(ABS) M-know:IPF-HAB.1/2 M-know:IPF-HAB
'I know Rasul.'

Similar to locative subject verbs, the inter-elative subject of the verb *buhes* 'manage, be able' triggers overt person marking only optionally.

(59) *di-ze-la ajz-es* {*ħa-b-urh-an / ħa-b-urh-as*}.
I-INTER-ELAT (M)rise:PF-INF NEG-N-manage:IPF-HAB NEG-N-manage:IPF-HAB.1/2
'I cannot stand up.'

(60) *di-ze-la ħa-b-uh-ub(-ra) ʁarʁa aq-b-aq'-as.*
I-INTER-ELAT NEG-N-manage:PF-AOR-1/2 stone(ABS) up-N-do:PF-INF
'I did not manage to lift the stone.'

Non-subjects, including absolutive direct objects, inter-lative indirect objects (addressee, causee), inter-elative arguments (including involuntary agents) and other oblique arguments can never trigger person agreement.

(61) *ʔali-ini nu* {*w-it-ib / *w-it-i-ra*}.
Ali-ERG I(ABS) M-beat:PF-AOR M-beat:PF-AOR-1/2
'Alit beat me up.'

(62) *madina-ze nu* {*g-ub / *g-ub-ra*}.
Madina-INTER I(ABS) see:PF-AOR see:PF-AOR-1/2
'Madina saw me.'

(63) *rasuj-ni di-ze ca χabar* {*b-urh-ib / *b-urh-i-ra*}.
Rasul-ERG I-INTER one story(ABS) N-tell:PF-AOR N-tell:PF-AOR-1/2
'Rasul told me a story.'

(64) *abaj-ni di-ze ʁadur-me* {*d-az-aq-ib /*
mother-ERG I-INTER dish-PL(ABS) NPL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR
**d-az-aq-i-ra*}.
NPL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2
'Mother made me wash dishes.'

(65) *di-ze-la guruška b-urʔ-ub*(-**ra*).
I-INTER-ELAT cup(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR-1/2
'A cup broke on me.'

3.2. Dative subject verbs

Unlike subjects of intransitive, transitive, and locative subject verbs, dative subjects do not trigger overt person agreement.

(66) *nab rasul* {*w-ig-an* / **w-ig-as*}.
I(DAT) Rasul(ABS) M-love:IPF-HAB M-love:IPF-HAB.1/2
'I love Rasul.'

(67) *nab ɬaʕχ-il q'immat* {*b-ik-ib* / **b-ik-i-ra*}.
I(DAT) good-ATR grade(ABS) N-happen:PF-AOR N-happen:PF-AOR-1/2
'I got a good grade.'

(68) *nab rasul eba* {*uh-ub* / **uh-ub-ra*}.
I(DAT) Rasul(ABS) bore (M)become:PF-AOR (M)become:PF-AOR-1/2
'I got bored with Rasul.'

(69) *nab ʔali urče-w* {*le-w* / **le-w-ra*}.
I(DAT) Ali(ABS) on.heart-M COP-M COP-M-1/2
'I remember Ali.'

(70) *nab hel deh*^{w} *urče* {*b-ak'-ib* / **b-ak'-i-ra*}.
I(DAT) DEM word(ABS) on.heart N-come:PF-AOR N-come:PF-AOR-1/2
'Rasul recalled that word.'

(71) *nab* {*b-ik-ib* / **b-ik-i-ra*} *ʔali w-ebk'-i-le ile.*
I(DAT) N-happen:PF-AOR N-happen:PF-AOR-1/2 Ali(ABS) M-die:PF-AOR-CONV COMP
'I thought (it occurred to me) that Ali was dead.'

The contrast between locative and dative subject verbs is clearly seen in sentences with the verb *qumartes* 'forget'. Recall that this verb allows both the locative and dative subjects. With a first person locative subject, the verb has optional person agreement, as with other locative subject verbs. With a first person dative subject, the verb cannot show overt person marking, as is usual with dative subject verbs.

(72) a. *di-ze ʔali qumart-ur*(-*ra*).
I-INTER Ali(ABS) forget:PF-AOR-1/2
b. *nab ʔali qumart-ur*(-**ra*).
I(DAT) Ali(ABS) forget:PF-AOR-1/2
'I forgot Ali.'

In sentences with dative subjects, absolutive direct objects do not trigger person agreement either.

(73) *madina-s nu {w-ig-an / *w-ig-as}.*
Madina-DAT I(ABS) M-love:IPF-HAB M-love:IPF-HAB.1/2
'Madina loves me.'

(74) *madina-s nu eba {uh-ub / *uh-ub-ra}.*
Madina-DAT I(ABS) bore (M)become:PF-AOR (M)become:PF-AOR-1/2
'Madina got bored with me.'

(75) *madina-s nu urče-w {le-w / *le-w-ra}.*
Madina-DAT I(ABS) on.heart-M COP-M COP-M-1/2
'Madina remembers me.'

(76) *rasuj-s nu urče {b-ak'-ib / *b-ak'-i-ra}.*
Rasul+OBL-DAT I(ABS) on.heart N-come:PF-AOR N-come:PF-AOR-1/2
'Rasul recalled me.'

This is especially unexpected given the fact that many of the dative subject verbs clearly go back to intransitive structures where absolutive arguments diachronically go back to intransitive subjects, and thus could act as agreement triggers, contrary to fact.

(77) a. *X Y eba b-uh-es*
DAT ABS bore N-become:PF-INF
'For X, Y becomes boring.'
b. *X Y urče-b le-b*
DAT ABS on.heart-N(ESS) COP-N
'To X, Y is on heart.'
c. *X Y urče b-ak'-as*
DAT ABS on.heart(LAT) N-come:PF-INF
'To X, Y comes to heart.'

The clear contrast between intransitive and dative subject constructions with respect to person agreement is observed in a construction with the verb *haraq'e bak'as* (lit. 'come forward') that denotes illusionary seeing like in dreams or hallucinations, see (70).

(78) *rasuj-s tamaša-l si-k'al-t haraq'e d-ik'-uwe le-r.*
Rasul+OBL-DAT surprising-ATR what-INDEF-PL forward NPL-come:IPF-CONV COP-NPL
'Rasul is seeing something bizarre.' (lit. 'Something bizarre is coming forward to Rasul.')

Like in other dative subject structures, neither of the two arguments, the dative subject or the absolutive direct object, is able to trigger person agreement on the verb.

(79) a. *nab tamaša-l si-k'al-t haraq'e {d-ak'-ib /*
I(DAT) surprising-ATR what-INDEF-PL forward NPL-come:PF-AOR
**d-ak'-i-ra}.*
NPL-come:PF-AOR-1/2
'Something bizarre appeared to me.'

b. *rasuj-s* *nu* *haraq'e* {*w-ak'-ib* / **w-ak'-i-ra*}.
Rasul+OBL-DAT I(ABS) forward M-come:PF-AOR M-come:PF-AOR-1/2
'I appeared to Rasul (in a hallucination).'

Overt person marking on the verb *bak'as* 'come' in the latter example, however, is grammatical but only in the literal sense of physical movement.

(80) *rasuj-s* *nu* *haraq'e* {*w-ak'-i-ra* / **w-ak'-ib*}.
Rasul+OBL-DAT I(ABS) forward M-come:PF-AOR-1/2 M-come:PF-AOR
'I came forward to Rasul.' (not: 'I appeared to Rasul (in a hallucination).')

We therefore have a minimal pair: in the same construction with *haraq'e bak'as* 'come forward', person agreement with the first person absolutive argument is either obligatorily required when denoting physical movement or completely banned when referring to imaginary visions.

To sum up, neither of the two arguments of a dative subject verb – the dative subject or the absolutive direct object – can control person agreement. Strikingly enough, overt person marking on a finite dative subject verb is nevertheless possible in constructions where both the dative subject and the absolutive direct object are first person (i.e. in reflexive constructions with first person subject).

(81) *nab* *nu-wal* *w-ig-as.*
I(DAT) I(ABS)-EMPH M-love:PF-HAB.1/2
'I love myself.'

The syntax of dative subject constructions and mechanisms of person agreement therein require further syntactic analysis.

3.3. Agreement in the Present Progressive

Present Progressive forms demonstrate a different pattern of person agreement in sentences with transitive and locative subject verbs. Unlike other indicative forms, not only the person feature of the subject is taken into account here, but also the person feature of the direct (absolutive) object.

The descriptive generalization is that overt person agreement with the first person subject is only possible (and obligatory) when the absolutive direct object is local (first or second person); otherwise, with third person direct objects, person agreement is ungrammatical, and the finite verb is in the unmarked form.[4]

[4] In transitive clauses with third person direct objects, such as (82a), first person marking is marginally accepted by some native speakers. It is not clear where such marginal acceptability stems from. One option could be that optional person agreement in these configurations is actually a part of Mehweb grammar. Another option, however, is that it arises from contamination with bi-absolutive constructions where person agreement with the subject is obligatory in the Present Progressive (see Section 6). Indeed,

(82) a. *nu-ni kung luč'-uwe le-b*(*-*ra*).
I-ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-CONV COP-N-1/2
'I am reading a book.'
b. *nu-ni ħu ulc-uwe le-w-**(*ra*).
I-ERG you.sg(ABS) (M)catch:IPF-CONV COP-M-1/2
'I am catching you (male).'

(83) a. *di-ze sinka irg-uwe le-b*(*-*ra*).
I-INTER bear(ABS) see:IPF-CONV COP-N-1/2
'I am seeing a bear.'
b. *di-ze ħu irg-uwe le-w-**(*ra*).
I-INTER you.sg(ABS) see:IPF-CONV COP-M-1/2
'I am seeing you.'

Examples (82a)-(83a) show that agreement with first person subjects is impossible in the presence of a third person absolutive direct object. By contrast, agreement is obligatory when the direct object is also local. Relative specification of the subject and the direct object for number plays no role in availability of person agreement.

(84) a. {*nu-ni / nuša-jni*} *ħuša b-ulc-uwe le-b-**(*ra*).
I-ERG we-ERG you.pl(ABS) HPL-catch:IPF-CONV COP-HPL-1/2
'{I am / we are} catching you all.'
b. *nuša-jni ħu ulc-uwe le-w-**(*ra*).
we-ERG you.sg(ABS) (M)catch:IPF-CONV COP-M-1/2
'We are catching you.'

(85) a. {*nu-ni / nuša-jni*} *ul-e b-ulc-uwe le-b*(-**ra*).
I-ERG we-ERG child-PL(ABS) HPL-catch:IPF-CONV COP-HPL-1/2
'{I am / we are} catching the kids.'
b. *nuša-jni qazam b-iz-uwe le-b*(-**ra*).
we-ERG you.sg(ABS) N-wash:IPF-CONV COP-N-1/2
'We are washing the cauldron.'

3.4. Matrix infinitival questions

One exception to the generalization that only second, but not first, person subjects trigger person agreement in interrogative sentences concerns agreeing forms of the Future which may co-occur with first person subjects in interrogatives, yielding questions with modal semantics.

(86) *nu-ni ħad sija g-iša?*
I-ERG you.sg(DAT) what(ABS) give:PF-FUT.1/2+Q
'What should I give you?' (not: 'What will I give you?')

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many speakers, when accepting person agreement in examples like (82a), tend to re-phrase the ergative construction of (82a) into the corresponding bi-absolutive construction with the absolutive subject, with subject-controlled person and gender agreement on the copula. Note that with locative subject verbs which are not easily allowed in bi-absolutive constructions, person agreement in the Present Progressive is definitely out for all speakers, see (83a).

(87) *nu u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-iša-w?*
I(ABS) (M)go:PF-FUT.1/2-Q
'Should I go?' (not: 'Will I go?')

Examples like (86)-(87) are remarkable in two respects. First, they are only available in the Future, but not in other tense-aspect forms.

(88) **nu-ni ħad sija g-i-ra?*
I-ERG you.sg(DAT) what(ABS) give:PF-AOR-1/2+Q
intended: 'What should I have given you?' (or 'What did I give you?')

Second, the modal interpretation of the questions in (86) and (87) only arises with first person subjects, but never with second person subjects, cf. the contrast between (89) and (90).

(89) *nu kuda u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-iša?*
I(ABS) where (M)go:PF-FUT.1/2+Q
'Where should I go?' (not: 'Where will I go?')

(90) *ħu kuda u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-iša?*
you.sg(ABS) where (M)go:PF-FUT.1/2+Q
'Where will you go?' (not: 'Where should you go?')

This contrast raises a question whether the two sentences in (89) and (90) contain the same verb form or two different verb forms. The question is especially relevant in the light of the fact that the infinitive in Mehweb is formally identical to non-agreeing forms of the future (which appear e.g. in declarative sentences with second/third person subjects), as shown in (91).

(91) a. *ʔali ša-baħ u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-es.*
Ali(ABS) village-ALL (M)go:PF-FUT
'Ali will go to the village.'
b. *ʔali-s$_i$* [pro$_i$ *ša-baħ u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-es*] *dig-uwe le-b.*
Ali-DAT ABS village-ALL (M)go:PF-INF want:IPF-CONV COP-N
'Ali wants to go to the village.'

The infinitive and the future, however, are normally distinguished in contexts with overt person marking (e.g. declarative sentences with first person subjects): the future takes the overt person marking, while the infinitive never does so, see (92).

(92) a. *nu ša-baħ u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-iša.*
I(ABS) village-ALL (M)go:PF-FUT.1/2
'I will go to the village.'
b. *nab$_i$* [pro$_i$ *ša-baħ u$^{\text{ʕ}}$q'-es*] *dig-uwe le-b.*
I(DAT) ABS village-ALL (M)go:PF-INF want:IPF-CONV COP-N
'I want to go to the village.'

Note now the fact that across Dargwa languages, the modal semantics found in the Mehweb examples in (86), (87), (89) is commonly expressed by a special form where the first person marker is added on top of the infinitive, see an example from Chirag Dargwa.

(93) Chirag Dargwa
di-cːe χabar-e d-urs-i-da-j?
I-ERG story-PL(ABS) NPL-tell:PF-INF-1/2-Q
'Should I tell the stories?'

Furthermore, the same modal semantics is characteristic of matrix infinitival questions cross-linguistically (cf. English *Where to go?* or German *Wohin gehen?*, Bhatt 2012: 108, 110).

Given two facts: (i) the formal identity between the infinitive and the future in non-agreeing forms and (ii) the morphological evidence that the combination of infinitive with first person marking may yield the modal semantics of 'should', it is natural to suggest that the Mehweb modal questions like in (86) actually involve a combination of the infinitive and overt person marking, but not the formally identical agreeing form of the future.

3.5. Agreement shift in embedded reports

Person agreement as described above is only available in finite clauses: no non-finite clause can feature person agreement marker. The following examples show that person agreement is unavailable in complements headed by nominalizations.

(94) *rasuj-ze b-alh-an …*
Rasul+OBL-INTER N-know:IPF-HAB
'Rasul knows …'
a. *nu-ni kung* {*b-elč'-un-deš* / **b-elč'-un-na-deš*}.
I-ERG book(ABS) N-read:PF-AOR-NMLZ N-read:PF-AOR-1/2-NMLZ
'… that I read (past) the book.'
b. *nu-ni ħu ulc-uwe* {*le-w-deš* / **le-w-ra-deš*}.
I-ERG you.sg(ABS) (M)catch:IPF-CONV COP-M-NMLZ COP-M-1/2-NMLZ
'… that I am catching you.'
c. *nu-ni kung-ane* {*luč'-an-deš* / **luč'-as-deš*}.
I-ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-HAB-NMLZ read:IPF-HAB.1/2-NMLZ
'… that I read (habitual) books.'

Apart from independent finite clauses described above, Mehweb also features complement finite clauses with the complementizer *ile*. Etymologically, the complementizer goes back (and is still synchronically identical) to the perfective converb of the verb *es* 'say'. Functionally, it is used with verbs of speech and thought to introduce reported speech (attitude reports).

(95) a. *abaj-s* *b-ik-ib …*
mother-DAT N-happen:PF-AOR
'Mother thought …
b. *abaj-ni* *b-urh-ib …*
mother-ERG N-tell:PF-AOR
'Mother said / told …
c. *abaj* *uruχ‹d›aʕq-ib …*
mother(ABS) ‹F›fear:PF-AOR
'Mother feared …

ca *insan* *w-ak'-ib* *ile.*
one person(ABS) M-come:PF-AOR COMP
… that someone came.'

Personal pronouns and person agreement in embedded reports under the complementizer *ile* are subject to *person shift* (*indexical shift* and *agreement shift*, respectively).

Indexical shift affects the interpretation of first and second person pronouns and is always optional: personal pronouns in embedded reports may refer not only to the participants (speaker and addressee) of the actual speech act, as in independent finite clauses, but also to the participants of the speech act denoted by the matrix clause. On the latter option, the first person pronoun refers to the reporter (attitude holder) expressed as the subject of the matrix clause, while the second person pronoun denotes the addressee of the matrix reporter.

(96) *rasuj-ni* *ib* *di-la* *mašin* *b-urʔ-ub* *ile.*
Rasul+OBL-ERG say:PF+AOR I-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR COMP
a. 'Rasul$_i$ said that my$_j$ car is broken.' (unshifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)
b. 'Rasul$_i$ said that his$_i$ car is broken.' (shifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)

(97) *madina-ini* *rasuj-ze* *ib* *ħa-la* *mašin*
Madina-ERG Rasul+OBL-INTER say:PF+AOR you.sg-GEN car(ABS)
b-urʔ-ub *ile.*
N-break:PF-AOR COMP
a. 'Madina said to Rasul$_i$ that your$_j$ car is broken.' (unshifted reading of the 2nd person pronoun)
b. 'Madina said to Rasul$_i$ that his$_i$ car is broken.' (shifted reading of the 2nd person pronoun)

With matrix verbs selecting for a complement clause with *ile* but lacking addressee, such as matrix verbs of thought, only first person pronouns can be shifted, while second person pronouns only denote the addressee in the actual speech act.

(98) *rasul* *uruχ‹w›aʕq-ib* *di-la* *mašin* *b-urʔ-ub* *ile.*
Rasul (M)fear:PF-AOR I-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR COMP
a. 'Rasul$_i$ fears that my$_j$ car is broken.' (unshifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)
b. 'Rasul$_i$ fears that his$_i$ car is broken.' (shifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)

(99) *rasul* *uruχ‹w›aʕq-ib* *ħa-la* *mašin* *b-urʔ-ub* *ile.*
Rasul (M)fear:PF-AOR you.sg-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR COMP
'Madina$_i$ fears that your$_j$ car is broken.' (only unshifted reading of the 2nd person pronoun)

Person agreement in finite embedded clauses is subject to obligatory *agreement shift*: only arguments denoting the participants of the reported speech act can control person agreement; all other arguments including those representing the participants of the actual speech act can never trigger agreement. In declarative embedded clauses, only embedded subjects denoting the closest reporter / attitude holder trigger overt agreement on the verb. One possibility is that the embedded subject is expressed by the shifted first person pronoun.

(100) *rasul* *uruχ‹w›aʕq-ib* *nu-ni* *mašin* *b-urʔ-aq-i-ra* *ile.*
Rasul(ABS) ‹M›fear:PF-AOR I-ERG car(ABS) N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2 COMP
'Rasul$_i$ feared that he$_i$ broke the car.'

In (100), the subject is expressed by the first person pronoun that undergoes indexical shift, that is, refers not to the speaker of the actual speech act, but rather to the attitude holder Rasul expressed as the subject of the matrix clause. The embedded verb thus shows obligatory overt agreement for person.

The other possibility is that the embedded subject is expressed by the long-distance reflexive pronoun bound by the matrix subject representing the attitude holder. The long-distance reflexive thus ends up being co-referent with the attitude holder, and the verb obligatorily shows overt person marking.

(101) *rasul* *uruχ‹w›aʕq-ib* *sune-jni* *mašin* *b-urʔ-aq-i-ra* *ile.*
Rasul(ABS) ‹M›fear:PF-AOR SELF-ERG car(ABS) N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2 COMP
'Rasul$_i$ feared that he$_i$ broke the car.'

No other argument can trigger person agreement on the finite verb in embedded reports, including unshifted first person pronouns denoting the speaker of the actual speech act. Example (102) illustrates.

(102) *rasul* *uruχ‹w›aʕq-ib* *nu-ni* *mašina* {*b-urʔ-aq-ib* /
Rasul(ABS) ‹M›fear:PF-AOR I-ERG car(ABS) N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR
**b-urʔ-aq-i-ra*} *ile.*
N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2 COMP
'Rasul$_i$ feared that I$_j$ broke the car.'

Kozhukhar' (this volume) reports that overt person marking with unshifted first person pronoun is also possible in examples like (102). Indeed, consultants sometimes judge such sentences acceptable. I maintain, however, that overt person agreement with an unshifted first person pronoun is ungrammatical, and the judgments must stem from confusion. First person pronouns strongly tend to shift their reference in embedded reports, and consultants usually have a hard time recognizing that the pronoun could refer to the actual speaker. So, when presented with a

sentence containing a first person pronoun and overt person marking on the verb, some consultants judge it acceptable due to the fact that they have a different reference in mind: instead of the reference to the speaker of the actual speech act, they interpret the pronoun as denoting the attitude holder. However, if a suitable example is constructed where the confusion is not possible because of overt morphological marking, overt person marking with unshifted first person pronouns is uniformly judged unacceptable. Consider examples (103) and (104).

(103) *abaj-s* *b-ik-ib* *nu* *usaʔ-uwe* *le-w*(-**ra*) *ile.*
mother-DAT N-happen:PF-AOR I(ABS) (M)fall asleep:PF-CONV COP-M-1/2 COMP
'Mother$_i$ thought that I$_j$ fell asleep.'

(104) *abaj* *uruχk'-uwe* *le-r* *nu* {*arik-es* /
mother(ABS)be.afraid:IPF-CONV COP-F I(ABS) (M)fall:PF-FUT
**arik-iša*} *ile.*
(M)fall:PF-FUT.1/2 COMP
'Mother$_i$ is afraid that I$_j$ am going to fall down.'

In (103) and (104), the first person pronoun in the embedded clause is unambiguously interpreted as denoting the actual speaker, not the attitude holder, since masculine gender marking appears on the embedded verb (both the converb of the lexical verb and the copula) indicating that the referent of the first person pronoun is a man. Since the attitude holder ('mother') is unambiguously female, the embedded first person pronoun may only receive a disjoint reference, and thus be co-valued with the speaker of the actual speech act. In this configuration, overt agreement was unanimously considered definitely unacceptable.

Agreement shift thus makes possible mismatches between the "lexical" person feature of an argument and verbal person agreement. On the one hand, third person reflexive pronouns trigger overt person marking, as in (101); on the other hand, first person pronouns referring to the actual speaker cannot ever trigger overt person agreement, (102)-(104).

The examples above show that the attitude holder can be lexically expressed in the embedded clause as either a shifted first person pronoun or a long-distance reflexive pronoun. However, these two options cannot co-occur within the same embedded clause: in the presence of a long-distance reflexive bound by the matrix subject, first person pronouns are obligatorily interpreted as referring to the speaker of the actual speech act.

(105) *rasul* *uruχ‹w›aʕq-ib* *nu-ni* *sune-la* *mašina*
Rasul(ABS) ‹M›fear:PF-AOR I-ERG SELF-GEN car(ABS)
b-urʔ-aq-i-ra *ile.*
N-break:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2 COMP
a. *'Rasul$_i$ feared that he$_i$ broke his$_i$ car.'
b. 'Rasul$_i$ feared that he$_i$ broke his$_j$ car.'
c. *'Rasul$_i$ feared that I$_j$ broke his$_i$ car.'

In (105), the embedded clause includes both the first person pronoun in the ergative subject position and the possessive reflexive pronoun that modifies the direct object. The two cannot be interpreted as denoting the same participant (105a), so two options are available: either the first person pronoun or the reflexive is interpreted as denoting the attitude holder. In the former case, the reflexive must then have a disjoint reference (long-distance bound by an even higher subject or a free logophor, see Kozhukhar', this volume), as in (105b). In the latter case, the first person pronoun must refer to the actual speaker which is not possible in this sentence, since unshifted first person pronouns do not trigger verbal person marking, (105c). Should the finite verb in the embedded report be in the unmarked form *burʔaqib*, reading (105c) becomes available.

In interrogative embedded clauses, a similar distribution is observed: only arguments co-valued with the addressee of the reporter (expressed as the addressee argument of the matrix verb) show overt person marking on the embedded verb, whereas unshifted second person pronouns cannot trigger overt person marking.

(106) *rasuj-ni* *madina-ze* *xarba-ib* *ħu* *kuda* {*d-aš-as-a* /
Rasul-ERG Madina-INTER ask:PF-AOR you.sg(ABS) where F-walk:IPF-HAB.1/2-Q
**d-aš-an-a*} *har* *barħi* *ile.*
F-walk:IPF-HAB-Q every day COMP
'Rasul asked Madina$_i$ where she$_i$ goes every day.'

(107) *rasuj-ni* *madina-ze* *xarba-ib* *ħu* *kuda* {*w-aš-an-a* /
Rasul-ERG Madina-INTER ask:PF-AOR you.sg(ABS) where M-walk:IPF-HAB-Q
**w-aš-as-a*} *har* *barħi* *ile.*
M-walk:IPF-HAB.1/2-Q every day COMP
'Rasul asked Madina where you go every day.'

Again, in examples like (107), the second person pronoun in the embedded clause may only be interpreted disjoint from the matrix addressee argument due to a gender mismatch between the feminine gender of the matrix addressee and the masculine gender agreement on the embedded verb. When so, overt person agreement is ungrammatical with a second person pronoun in interrogative embedded clauses.

For the sake of completeness, a few words are in order about availability of indexical shift and agreement shift. As said above, both are only possible in finite complement clauses with the

complementizer *ile* under verbs of speech and thought, but not in other types of complements. The examples below demonstrate that indexical shift and agreement shift are possible in the finite complement with the verb *arʁes* 'hear', but not in the factive non-finite (nominalized) complement with the same verb.

(108) *rasuj-ze* *arʁ-ib* *di-la* *mašin* *b-urʔ-ub* *ile.*
Rasul+OBL-INTER understand:PF-AOR I-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR COMP
a. 'Rasul$_i$ realized that my$_j$ car is broken.' (unshifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)
b. 'Rasul$_i$ realized that his$_i$ car is broken.' (shifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)

(109) *rasuj-ze* *arʁ-ib* *di-la* *mašin* *b-urʔ-ub-deš* *ile.*
Rasul+OBL-INTER understand:PF-AOR I-GEN car(ABS) N-break:PF-AOR-NMLZ COMP
a. 'Rasul$_i$ realized that my$_j$ car is broken.' (unshifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)
b. *'Rasul$_i$ realized that his$_i$ car is broken.' (shifted reading of the 1st person pronoun)

Whether or not a matrix verb combines with ile-complements is not lexically determined, but rather depends on the semantics (speech or thought report). This is clearly seen in case like those shown in the following examples.

(110) *rasuj-ze* *b-ah-ur* *abaj* *iz-uwe* {*le-r-deš* /
Rasul-INTER N-know:PF-AOR mother(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CONV COP-F-NMLZ
**le-r* *ile*}.
COP-F COMP
'Rasul found out that mom was sick.'

(111) *madina-ini* *rasuj-ze* *b-ah-aq-ib* *abaj* *iz-uwe*
Madina-ERG Rasul-INTER N-know:PF-CAUS-AOR mother(ABS) be.sick:IPF-CONV
{*le-r-deš* / *le-r* *ile*}.
COP-F-NMLZ COP-F COMP
'Madina let Rasul know that mom was sick.'

Example (110) shows that the factive matrix verb *bahes* 'know' does not combine with finite *ile*-complements. In (111), the causative *bahaqas* of the same verb is normally understood as denoting a speech act ('let know, inform) and therefore is compatible with an *ile*-complement.

4. Reciprocals

Reciprocal pronouns consist of two instances of the numeral *ca* 'one' adjacent to one another.

(112) *uz-be-ni* *ca-li-ni* *ca-li-če* *b-aaq-ib.*
brother-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-SUPER(LAT) N-hit:PF-AOR
'The brothers hit each other.'

As seen from the example above, the two components of the reciprocal bear independent case marking. One component is always in the case of the subject, the other component bears the case of the reciprocized argument. The distribution of case marking on the two components of the reciprocal pronoun depends on a particular argument/case combination.

Absolutive case, whether it corresponds to the subject or to the direct object, is always marked on the second component of the reciprocal, the first component therefore bears the case of the other argument participating in the reciprocal construction.

(113) *uz-be* *ca-li-če* *ca* *ħule‹b›iz-ur.*
brother-PL(ABS) one-OBL-SUPER one(ABS) ‹HPL›look:PF-AOR
'The brothers looked at each other.'

(114) *uz-be-ni* *ca-li-ni* *ca* *b-aʕbʔ-ib.*
brother-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:PF-AOR
'The brothers killed each other.'

In (113), the intransitive verb *ħulebizes* 'look' is used in the reciprocal construction. The absolutive case of the subject is marked on the second part of the reciprocal, whereas the case of the oblique argument is marked on the first part. In (114), the transitive verb *baʕbʔas* 'kill' participates in the reciprocal construction. Again, the absolutive case, which is the case of the direct object here, is marked on the second part of the reciprocal pronoun, while the ergative case of the transitive subject is marked on the first part.

When no absolutive argument participates in a reciprocal construction, the case marking on the reciprocal pronoun is determined by structural prominence: the first component is in the case of the higher argument, while the second component is in the case of the lower argument, see (112) above and the following examples.

(115) *ul-e-jni* *ca-li-ni* *ca-li-s* *kumak* *b-aqʼ-ib.*
child-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR
'The kids helped one another.'

(116) *ul-e-jni* *ca-li-ni* *ca-li-ze-la* *arc* *ar-is-an.*
child-PL-ERG one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-INTER-ELAT money(ABS) PV-take:IPF-HAB
'The kids take money away from one another.'

The case of the overt antecedent NP also depends on the presence of an absolutive argument in the construction. As a rule, the overt antecedent stands in the case of a more structurally prominent argument. Examples (112) and (114)-(116) above show that in the reciprocal construction with transitive verbs, the overt antecedent is in the ergative case. Example (113) shows

that the reciprocal construction with intransitive verbs requires the overt antecedent in the absolutive case. Example (117) below illustrates the reciprocal construction with locative subject verbs.

(117) *uz-be-ze* *ca-li-ze* *ca* {*g-ub* / *b-ah-ur* /
brother-PL-INTER one-OBL-INTER one(ABS) see:PF-AOR HPL-know:PF-AOR
b-arg-ib / *qumart-ur*}.
HPL-find:PF-AOR forget:PF-AOR
'The brothers {saw / recognized / found / forgot} each other.'

The only exception to this rule is dative subject verbs where the absolutive marking of the overt antecedent is preferred over the dative marking.

(118) {*it-ti* / ??*it-ti-li-s*} *ca-li-s* *ca* *b-ig-uwe* *le-b.*
DEM-PL(ABS) DEM-PL-OBL-DAT one-OBL-DAT one(ABS) HPL-love:IPF-CONV COP-HPL
'They love each other.'

(119) {*it-ti* / ??*it-ti-li-s*} *ca-li-s* *ca* *eba* *b-uh-ub.*
DEM-PL(ABS) DEM-PL-OBL-DAT one-OBL-DAT one(ABS) bore HPL-become:PF-AOR
'They got bored with each other.'

The absolutive marking of the overt antecedent is also possible in reciprocal constructions with two core (subject and absolutive direct object) arguments of two-place verbs.

(120) *uz-be* *ca-li-ni* *ca* *b-aʕbʔ-ib.*
brother-PL(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:PF-AOR
'The brothers killed each other.'

(121) *uz-be* *ca-li-ze* *ca* {*g-ub* / *b-ah-ur* /
brother-PL one-OBL-INTER one(ABS) see:PF-AOR HPL-know:PF-AOR
b-arg-ib / *qumart-ur*}.
HPL-find:PF-AOR forget:PF-AOR
'The brothers {saw / recognized / found / forgot} each other.'

We therefore have two possibilities of overt antecedent marking in constructions with the two core arguments of two-place verbs. The antecedent can be marked by the morphological case of the higher argument (i.e. the subject) or by the absolutive case, even though the absolutive is the morphological case of the lower argument (i.e. the direct object) in such configurations. With dative subject verbs, the first option is severely degraded and the second option is preferred, while with other two-place verbs (transitive and locative subject), the two options are equally acceptable.

No other reciprocal construction allows the overt antecedent in the case of a lower argument. Example (122) illustrates this claim for a combination of the intransitive subject and an oblique

argument, cf. (113); example (123) shows a reciprocal construction with the transitive subject and dative recipient, cf. (115).

(122) **uz-be-če* *ca-li-če* *ca* *ħule‹b›iz-ur.*
brother-PL-SUPER one-OBL-SUPER one(ABS) ‹HPL›look:PF-AOR
'The brothers looked at each other.'

(123) **ul-e-s* *ca-li-ni* *ca-li-s* *kumak* *b-aq'-ib.*
child-PL-DAT one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR
'The kids helped one another.'

In transitive constructions where the absolutive direct object does not participate in reciprocal relation, the absolutive case cannot be used to mark the overt antecedent either.

(124) **ul-e* *ca-li-ni* *ca-li-s* *kumak* *b-aq'-ib.*
child-PL(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:PF-AOR
'The kids helped one another.'

Gender agreement in reciprocal constructions works according to the general rule of agreement with the absolutive argument. In structures with an overt absolutive NP, this is straightforward, see examples (113) and (118)-(121). In structures with no overt absolutive NP, as in (114) and (117), the verb shows the gender and number features of the overt antecedent.

Person agreement also works normal in constructions where the overt antecedent is in the morphological case of the subject; that is, first person intransitive absolutive, transitive ergative, and locative subjects trigger overt person marking on the finite verb.

(125) *nuša* *ca-li-če* *ca* *ħule‹b›iz-ur-ra.*
we(ABS) one-OBL-SUPER one(ABS) ‹HPL›look:PF-AOR-1/2
'We looked at each other.'

(126) *nuša-jni* *ca-li-ni* *ca* *b-iʕbʔ-iša.*
we-ERG one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:IPF-FUT.1/2
'We will kill each other.'

(127) *nuša-ze* *ca-li-ze* *ca* {*g-ub-ra* / *b-ah-ur-ra*}
we-PL-INTER one-OBL-INTER one(ABS) see:PF-AOR-1/2 HPL-know:PF-AOR-1/2
'We {saw / recognized} each other.'

In structures with the overt antecedent in the absolutive case corresponding to the direct object, as in (118)-(121), first person pronouns also triggers obligatory person marking.

(128) *nuša* *ca-li-ni* *ca* *b-iʕbʔ-iša.*
we(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one(ABS) HPL-kill:IPF-FUT.1/2
'We will kill each other.'

(129) *nuša* *ca-li-ze* *ca* {*g-ub-ra* / *b-aħ-ur-ra*}
we-INTER one-OBL-INTER one(ABS) see:PF-AOR-1/2 HPL-know:PF-AOR-1/2
'We {saw / recognized} each other.'

The reciprocal construction with the absolutive marking of the antecedent thus behaves like an intransitive structure with respect to person agreement.

5. Causative construction[5]

Morphologically, causative construction is formed by means of the suffix *-aq* (-aχaq) attached to an aspectual stem of the causativized verb, see Daniel (this volume). Syntactically, the causative morpheme introduces an additional participant which is interpreted as the participant causing the event described by the lexical stem to happen. The causer is always marked by ergative case. Case marking of the causee depends on the class of the causativized verb. Absolutive subjects of intransitive verbs always remain in the absolutive case; the causative construction of an intransitive verb thus features two arguments: the ergative causer and the absolutive causee, as with regular transitive verbs.

(133) a. *ʔali* *w-alħ-un.*
Ali(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-AOR
'Ali woke up.'
b. *patʼimat-i-ni* *ʔali* *w-alħ-aq-ib.*
Patimat-OBL-ERG Ali(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Patimat woke up Ali.'

Ergative subjects of transitive verbs obligatorily receive locative (inter-lative) marking in causative construction. Case marking of the causee with transitive causativized verbs does not depend on the degree of agentivity, both agentive and non-agentive transitive causees are in the inter-lative.

(134) a. *ʔali-ni* *ʁarʁa* *b-alcʼ-un.*
Ali-ERG stone(ABS) N-pick.up:PF-AOR
'Ali picked up a stone.'
b. *patʼimat-i-ni* {*ʔali-ze* / **ʔali-ni*} *ʁarʁa* *b-alcʼ-aq-ib.*
Patimat-OBL-ERG Ali-INTER Ali-ERG stone(ABS) M-pick.up:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Patimat made Ali pick up a stone.'

(135) a. *ħarkʼʷ-i-ni* *urculi* *d-erʁ-ib.*
river-OBL-ERG wood(ABS) NPL-sweep.away:PF-AOR
'The river swept away the wood.'

[5] The description of case marking in causative constructions in this section is based on Ageeva (2014).

b. *rasuj-ni* {*ħark'^{w}-i-ze* / ???*ħark'^{w}-i-ni*} *urculi*
Rasul+OBL-ERG river-OBL-INTER river-OBL-ERG wood(ABS)
d-erʁ-aq-ib.
NPL-sweep.away:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Rasul floated the wood down the river.' (lit: 'Rasul made the river sweep away the wood.'

Locative subjects of verbs 'see', 'hear, understand', 'find', 'know', and 'forget' are marked with inter-lative case when occur as a causee in causative construction. This is the same marking as they have in the baseline construction.

(136) *rasuj-ni di-ze sune-la-l qali g^{w}-aχaq-ib.*
Rasul+OBL-ERG I-INTER SELF-GEN-EMPH house(ABS) see:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Rasul showed me his house.'

(137) *t'ahil-li di-ze χabar b-ah-aq-ib.*
Tahir-ERG I-INTER news(ABS) N-know:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Tahir let me know the news.'

(138) *rasuj-ni di-ze dars arʁ-aq-ib.*
Rasul+OBL-ERG I-INTER lesson(ABS) understand:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Rasul explained the lesson to me.'

(139) *ʔali-ni di-ze urx-ne d-arg-aq-ib.*
Ali-ERG I-OBL-INTER key-PL(ABS) NPL-find:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Ali made me find the keys.'

(140) *ʔali-ni di-ze hel deh^{w} qumart-aq-ib.*
Ali-ERG I-INTER DEM word(ABS) forget:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Ali made me forget that word.'

It is not immediately clear whether the locative case of the causee in causative constructions with locative subject verbs reflects the inter-lative subject marking assigned by the lexical verb or the inter-lative causee marking assigned in the causative construction.

Causatives of two locative subject verbs exhibit special behavior as they can denote a situation with no additional causer of the event. Instead, the experiencer subject acquires a higher degree of agentivity and is marked by ergative case.

(141) *ʔali-ni q'urʔan b-alh-aq-uwe le-b.*
Ali-ERG Qur'an(ABS) N-know:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-N
'Ali is studying Qur'an.'

(142) *ʔali-ni uzi qumart-aq-ib.*
Ali-ERG brother(ABS) forget:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Ali forgot the brother (as a result of conscious intention to do so).'

When a dative subject verb is causativized, the experiencer participant can either remain in the dative, as in the original construction, or bear inter-lative marking assigned to the causee in the causative construction.

(143) a. *nab it deh^{w} urče b-ik-ib.*
I(DAT) DEM word(ABS) on.heart N-happen:PF-AOR
'I recalled that word.'
b. *abaj-ni {di-ze / nab} it deh^{w} urče b-ik-aq-ib.*
mother-ERG I-INTER I(DAT) DEM word(ABS) on.heart N-happen:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Mother reminded me that word.'

The interpretational difference between two variants of causee marking relates to the degree of control exhibited by the causer over the caused situation. The dative marking implies a lesser degree of involvement of the causer, while the inter-lative marking indicates a more direct causation on the part of the causer.

The causative form of the verb *biges* 'want, love' does not normally have a causative interpretation. Neither the number of arguments nor their case marking change. The semantics is usually conveyed as 'like' rather than 'love' as with underived forms of *biges*.

(144) *nab it dursi d-ig-aq-uwe le-r.*
I(DAT) DEM girl(ABS) F-love:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-F
'I like this girl.'

The causative reading of the causative form of the verb *biges* 'want, love' is also accepted by many speakers, though not by all of them and often not without doubts. Like in causatives of other dative subject verbs, the causee can be marked by either dative or inter-lative case (with no sharp interpretational differences between the two variants).

(145) *adaj-ni {di-ze / ʔnab} it dursi d-ig-aq-uwe le-r.*
father-ERG I-INTER I(DAT) DEM girl(ABS) F-love:IPF-CONV COP-F
'Father makes me love this girl.'

Gender and person agreement in the causative construction follows the rules operative in transitive clauses. Gender agreement on the lexical verb is always with the absolutive argument. Gender agreement on the copula in progressive verb forms is also with the absolutive argument.

(146) a. *pat'imat-i-ni ɬali w-alħ-aq-ib.*
Patimat-OBL-ERG Ali(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Patimat woke up Ali.'
b. *ɬali-ni pat'imat d-alħ-aq-ib.*
Ali-ERG Patimat(ABS) F-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Ali woke up Patimat.'

(147) a. *nu-ni urši-li-ze inc b-uk-aq-uwe le-b.*
I-ERG boy-OBL-INTER apple(ABS) N-eat:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-N
'I am making the boy eat an apple.'
b. *nu-ni urši-li-ze inc-be d-uk-aq-uwe le-r.*
I-ERG boy-OBL-INTER apple-PL(ABS) N-eat:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-N
'I am making the boy eat apples.'

Person agreement is controlled by the ergative causer according to the rules described above in Sections 3.1 and 3.3, including the restriction on overt marking in the Present Progressive, cf. example (147a) above. The inter-lative causee or the absolutive argument can never control person agreement (see also examples (136)-(140) above).

(148) *nu-ni c'a* {*d-uš-aq-i-ra* / **d-uš-aq-ib*}.
I-ERG fire(ABS) NPL-die.out:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2 NPL-die.out:PF-CAUS-AOR
'I extinguished the fire.'

(149) *pat'imat-i-ni nu* {*w-alħ-aq-ib* / **w-alħ-aq-i-ra*}.
Patimat-OBL-ERG I(ABS) M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR M-wake.up:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2
'Patimat woke up me.'

(150) *pat'imat-i-ni di-ze ʁarʁa* {*b-alc'-aq-ib* /
Patimat-OBL-ERG I-INTER stone(ABS) M-pick.up:PF-CAUS-AOR
**b-alc'-aq-i-ra*}.
M-pick.up:PF-CAUS-AOR-1/2
'Patimat made me pick up a stone.'

Note, however, that despite the absence of an overt ergative argument in causative constructions based on transitive verbs, it is possible to show that they do contain an unexpressed ergative subject of the transitive lexical verb. This is seen from case marking that appears on reciprocal pronouns. As explained in Section 4 above, the two parts of the reciprocal pronoun always bear two different morphological cases corresponding to the case marking of the arguments in the reciprocal relation. When used in causative construction describing a reciprocal relationship between the causee and the absolutive direct object, one part of the reciprocal pronoun shows up in the ergative case, even though no overt ergative argument appears on the surface.

(151) *madina-jni* {*ul-e* / *ul-e-ze*} *ca-li-ni ca*
Madina-ERG child-PL(ABS) child-PL-INTER one-OBL-ERG one(ABS)
b-az-aq-ib.
HPL-wash:PF-CAUS-AOR
'Madina made the kids wash one another.'

Note in example (151) that the causee in the causativized reciprocal construction of the transitive verb can be expressed by the absolutive or by the inter-lative. This corresponds to two possibilities observed in non-causativized reciprocals: the overt subject is marked by the absolutive,

and the whole construction behaves as an intransitive structure, or the overt subject is marked by the ergative, and the whole reciprocal construction is a transitive structure. Under causativization, the intransitive variant of the reciprocal construction yields the absolutive marking of the causee, whereas the transitive variant of the reciprocal construction yields the inter-lative marking of the causee.

6. Bi-absolutive construction

Periphrastic verbal forms with durative semantics (present and past progressive) allow for an alternative layout of argument case marking with transitive verbs. Instead of the standard transitive pattern with an ergative subject and an absolutive object, transitive verbs can participate in *bi-absolutive construction* where both the subject and the direct object are expressed by the absolutive case. Changes in argument case marking are accompanied by a change in gender agreement of the copula which is controlled by the absolutive subject; gender agreement of the lexical verb is invariably controlled by the absolutive direct object.

(152) Q: *sija* *b-iq'-uwe* *le-w-a* *rasul?*
what(ABS) N-do:IPF-CONV COP-M-Q Rasul(ABS)
'What is Rasul doing?'
A: *rasul* *kung* *luč'-uwe* *le-w.*
Rasul(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CONV COP-M
'Rasul is reading a book.'

Unlike ergative constructions with periphrastic forms, the bi-absolutive construction shows no restrictions on person agreement of the absolutive subjects: overt person marking with the absolutive subject is obligatory.

(153) *nu* *kung* *luč'-uwe* *le-w-ra.*
I(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CONV COP-M-1/2
'I am reading a book.'

Unlike what is attested in related languages (Forker 2012), there seem to be no observable difference in semantics between the ergative and bi-absolutive alignment of transitive clause. In fact, bi-absolutive construction is often used as a resort when person agreement with the subject fails in certain subject-object combinations in periphrastic forms, see Section 3.3.

Synthetic verbal forms with imperfective semantics do not allow bi-absolutive construction with transitive verbs.

(154) {*nu-ni* / **nu*} *kung-ane* *luč'-as.*
I-ERG I(ABS) book-PL(ABS) read-HAB.1/2
'I read books (every day).'

(155) {*nu-ni / *nu*} *kung-ane* *luč'-iša.*
I-ERG I(ABS) book-PL(ABS) read-FUT.1/2
'I will be reading books.'

Only clauses with agentive subjects normally participate in bi-absolutive construction, whereas clauses with non-agentive subjects are either considerably degraded or completely ungrammatical.

(156) *ʔʔʁwaʕr* *ʁut'-be* *šiš* *d-uk'-aq-uwe* *le-b.*
wind(ABS) tree-PL(ABS) move NPL-LV:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-N
'Wind is waving trees.'

(157) **c'a* *qul-le* *ig-uwe* *le-b.*
fire(ABS) house-PL(ABS) burn:IPF-CONV COP-N
'Fire is burning houses.'

(158) **zab* *mura* *d-aʕlħʷ-aʕq-uwe* *le-r.*
rain(ABS) hay(ABS) NPL-moisten:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-NPL
'The rain is moistening the hay.'

In a similar way, non-agentive subjects of locative subject verbs are not allowed to participate in bi-absolutive construction for many speakers, though some sentences are judged more acceptable. The acceptability of locative subject verbs in the bi-absolutive construction may depend on semantic and pragmatic factors and requires further investigation.

(159) **nu* *sinka* *irg-uwe* *le-w-ra.*
I(ABS) bear(ABS) see:IPF-CONV COP-M-1/2
'I am seeing a bear.'

(160) ?**urši* *d-aʕld-un-i* *arc* *d-urg-uwe* *le-w.*
boy(ABS) NPL-lose:PF-AOR-PART money(ABS) NPL-find:IPF-CONV COP-M
'The boy finds lost money.'

(161) ??*rasul* *het* *dehʷ* *b-alh-uwe* *le-b.*
Rasul(ABS) DEM word(ABS) N-know:IPF-CONV COP-N
'Rasul knows that word.'

The dative subject verb *biges* 'love, want' can occasionally participate in bi-absolutive construction.

(162) *nu* *het* *urši* *w-ig-uwe* *le-l-la.*
I(ABS) DEM boy(ABS) M-love:IPF-CONV COP-F-1/2
'I love this boy.'

Despite initial appearance, bi-absolutive construction contains an unexpressed ergative argument of the lexical verb which can be seen in reciprocal constructions. Similar to what is found

in causative constructions, one of the two components of the reciprocal pronoun in bi-absolutive always bears the ergative case licensed by the lexical verb, despite the phonological absence of an ergative argument, cf. example (115) above.

(163) *ul-e* *ca-li-ni* *ca-li-s* *kumak* *b-iq'-uwe* *le-b*.
child-PL(ABS) one-OBL-ERG one-OBL-DAT help(ABS) N-do:IPF-CONV COP-HPL
'The kids help one another.'

Syntactically, the bi-absolutive construction may thus be analyzed as consisting of two layers: the lower layer is headed by the lexical verb and contains the lexical verb itself and all of its arguments in their respective cases; the higher layer is headed by the copula and contains the absolutive subject. Bi-absolutive construction thus has two important properties: (i) it requires the subject have the agent theta-role, and (ii) it includes an unexpressed ergative argument which is obligatory interpreted as having the same reference as the overt absolutive subject. The two properties make bi-absolutive construction look like an obligatory control construction. The schematic representation of the syntactic structure of the bi-absolutive construction is given in (164).

(164) a. [*rasul*$_i$ [Δ_i *kung* *luč'-uwe*] *le-w*].
Rasul(ABS) ERG book(ABS) read:IPF-CONV COP-M
'Rasul is reading a book.'
b. [$_{\text{CopP}}$ ABS$_i$ [$_{\text{VP}}$ ERG$_i$ ABS V] COP]

The causative construction may also be transformed into a bi-absolutive construction. With causatives of intransitive verbs, the bi-absolutive construction works the same way as with bi-absolutives of ordinary transitive verbs: both the causer and the causee are in the absolutive case; the former controls gender and person agreement on the copula, while the latter controls gender agreement on the lexical verb.

(165) *rasul* *c'a* *d-uš-aq-uwe* *le-w.*
Rasul(ABS) fire(ABS) NPL-die.out:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-M
'Rasul is extinguishing the fire.'

With causatives of transitive verbs, there are three options of case marking in bi-absolutive construction. One option is to mark the causer with absolutive case, like with causatives of intransitive verbs above. Gender and person agreement on the copula are determined by features of the higher absolutive; in this case the causer. Example (166) shows the baseline causative construction in (a) and the bi-absolutive construction with the absolutive marking of the causer in (b).

(166) a. *abaj-ni urši-li-ze kung luč'-aq-uwe le-b.*
mother-ERG boy-OBL-INTER book(ABS) read:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-N
b. *abaj urši-li-ze kung luč'-aq-uwe le-r.*
mother(ABS) boy-OBL-INTER book(ABS) read:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-F
'Mother makes the boy read the book.'

The second option is to mark the causee with the absolutive case, whereas the causer bears its usual ergative case. Again, gender and person agreement on the copula are determined by features of the higher absolutive, which is the causee in this case.

(166) c. *abaj-ni urši kung luč'-aq-uwe le-w.*
mother-ERG boy(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-M
'Mother makes the boy read the book.'

Finally, the third option is to mark both the causer and the causee by absolutive case. We therefore have three absolutive arguments in the same clause. Again, gender and person agreement on the copula is determined by the highest absolutive, that is, the subject causer.

(166) d. *abaj urši kung luč'-aq-uwe le-r.*
mother(ABS) boy(ABS) book(ABS) read:IPF-CAUS-CONV COP-F
'Mother makes the boy read the book.'

The possibilities of case marking shown in (166c-d) require further investigation. In standard bi-absolutive constructions described in Section 6, the absolutive marking of the transitive subject apparently becomes available due to the presence of a second clausal layer headed by the copula. It is not quite clear how the copula in the progressive could license the absolutive marking of the transitive causee in (166c) and, especially, the absolutive marking of both the ergative causer and the transitive causee in (166d). Any syntactic speculations on this question, however, require more specific assumptions about the clause structure and mechanisms of case licensing which lay outside of the scope and goal of the present work. I, therefore, leave this issue for another occasion.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed major morphosyntactic properties of monoclausal Mehweb sentences, including case marking, gender and person agreement. The paper describes the system of Mehweb verbal (valency) classes on the basis of their arguments' morphosyntactic behavior and ability to bind reflexive pronouns and distinguishes (i) intransitive verbs with absolutive subjects, (ii) transitive verbs with ergative subjects, (iii) verbs with inter-lative subjects, (iv) verbs with dative subjects, and (v) one verb with the inter-elative subject. Gender agreement operates on the ergative-absolutive basis, whereas person agreement has nominative-accusative syntax.

Mehweb person agreement is unique in that it is sensitive to the illocutionary force of the utterance. Like in other Daghestanian languages with person agreement, verbal person marking is also sensitive to the syntactically introduced logophoric center, as in finite logophoric clauses with the complementizer *ile*. In such environments, personal pronouns undergo optional indexical shift, whereas person marking is obligatorily shifted to the perspective of the syntactic logophoric center.

Although traditionally Mehweb person agreement is considered to be purely subject-oriented, this chapter argues that several constructions, such as agreement in sentences with dative subject verbs and agreement in the Present Progressive, reveal a sensitivity of person agreement to the person feature of the absolutive direct object.

I also describe case marking and agreement in causative and bi-absolutive constructions. Despite overall semantic and syntactic difference between the two, they demonstrate a similar behavior with respect to the ergative subject of the lexical verb which, while absent from the phonological expression, still can be diagnosed by means of case marking on reciprocal pronouns. Finally, I identify a previously unattested construction with three absolutive arguments.

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