The essive form of nouns in Akhvakh
and other Caucasian languages

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1. Introduction

In language descriptions, the term 'essive' is found with two different meanings. In its use as a synonym of 'locative', 'essive' is mainly found as the second formative of compound labels (*inessive, superessive*, etc.) for spatial forms of nouns expressing static location, the first formative of such terms referring to types of spatial configurations. In another use, mainly found in descriptions of Uralic languages, 'essive' is a label for cases carrying the meaning of a temporary state of being.

In descriptions of Caucasian languages, 'essive' is used exclusively as the second formative of compound labels for spatial cases encoding static location, and forms of nouns carrying the meaning of a temporary state of being are either described under other labels, or simply ignored in the discussion of noun inflection. The aim of this paper is to show that forms of nouns comparable to Uralic essives are common in the three families of indigenous languages of the Caucasus, and that Akhvakh and other Nakh-Daghestanian languages provide interesting data about the possible grammaticalization processes leading to the emergence of such forms.

2. Essive as the expression of a temporary state of being

In the literature, the existence of an *essive* (or *predicative*) case carrying the meaning of a temporary state of being, often equivalent to English 'as N', is mainly acknowledged in descriptions of Uralic languages. Ex. (1) and (2) illustrate the essive case of Hungarian and Finnish.

(1)   Hungarian (Lelkes 1967: 558)

    *Öt   év-ig   **mérnök-ként**   dolgoz-ott   egy   gyár-ban.*
    five   year-TERM   engineer-ESS   work-PST[3SG] one   factory-INESS
    'He worked five years **as an engineer** in a factory.'

(2)   Finnish (Karlsson 1999: 123)

    *Heikki   on   Jämsä-ssä   **lääkäri-nä.***
    Heikki   be.PRS.3SG   Jämsä-INESS   doctor-ESS
    'Heikki is (working **as**) **a doctor** in Jämsä.

In many languages the same cases or adpositions are used for predicative complements of verbs of change (a function for which Finnish and other Uralic languages have a special *translative* case). As illustrated by the essive postposition of Mandinka (a Mande language spoken in The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea Bissao) – Ex. (3), cases or adpositions fulfilling the essive and translative functions are also often used to express comparison, and their use in nominal predication is not necessarily

restricted to temporary states. The essive-translative-instrumental syncretism, illustrated by Russian – Ex. (4), is also common. Basque – Ex. (5) – illustrates the use of bare NPs in essive and translative function.

(3) Mandinka (field notes)

    a. *Ŋ́ ŋa até le lóŋ ŋ́ faamáa ti.*
        1SG PF.POS 3SG:EMPH FOC know 1SG father:DEF ESS
        'It is him that I knew **as my father**.'

    b. *Jíyo yelemá-ta dolóo ti.*
        water:DEF change-PF.POS wine:DEF ESS
        'The water changed **into wine**.

    c. *Sánoo kúlíyáa-ta kódoo ti.*
        gold:DEF be_heavy-PF.POS silver:DEF ESS
        'Gold is heavy **in comparison with silver**.

    d. *Íte mu musóo le ti.*
        2SG:EMPH COP woman:DEF FOC ESS
        'You are **a woman**.'

(4) Russian

    a. *On rabotaet inžener-om.*
        3SG:M work:PST:3SG engineer-SG.INSTR
        'He is working **as an engineer**.'

    b. *On breet-sja èlektričesk-oj britv-oj.*
        3SG:M shave:PST:3SG-REFL electric-SG.F.INSTR rasor-SG.INSTR
        'He shaves **with an electric razor**.'

(5) Basque (Hualde & Ortiz de Urbina 2003: 133; Céline Mounole, p.c.)

    a. *Amerik-etara joan zen artzai.*
        America-PL.ALL go:PF AUX:PST:3SG shepherd
        'He went to America **as a shepherd**.'

    b. *Printze-a igel bilakatu zen.*
        prince-SG frog change:PF AUX:PS:3SG
        'The prince changed **into a frog**.'

3. Essive forms of nouns in South Caucasian languages

With the only exception of Laz, South Caucasian languages have inflected forms of nouns expressing the essive function, but the forms in question are traditionally labeled *adverbial case,* probably because the same suffix serves to form manner adverbs

from adjectives.[1] Ex. (6) illustrates the Georgian suffix *-ad* in its essive / translative function and in its manner adverb formative function.

(6)   Georgian (Vogt 1971: 65)

    a. *Masc'avlebl-ad   mušaobs.*
       teacher-ADV   work:PRS:3SG
       'He/she works as a teacher.'

    b. *Ɣvino   ʒmr-ad   gadaikca.*
       wine   vinegar-ADV change:PRF:3SG
       'The wine changed into vinegar.'

    c. *Rusul-ad   tavisupl-ad   lap'arak'obs.*
       Russian-ADV free-ADV   speak:PRF:3SG
       'He/she speaks Russian fluently.'

4. Essive forms of nouns in North West Caucasian languages

The existence of an essive form of nouns marked by a suffix also used to derive manner adverbs from adjectives is a feature common to South and North West Caucasian languages, and the label 'adverbial case' is used in descriptions of North West Caucasian languages too.

For example, as illustrated by Ex. (7), Adyghe has an 'adverbial case' *-ew* with a range of functions quite similar to that of the Georgian adverbial.

(7)   Adyghe (Arkad'ev & al. 2009: 55)

    a. *Sjezdəm   djeljegat-ew   wəqeḳʷaʁeš'tən.*
       to_the_meeting delegate-ADV   you_probably_came
       'You probably came to the meeting as a delegate.'

    b. *Aš' əš-ew   se   səχʷəʁ.*
       his brother-ADV   I   I_became
       'I became his brother.'

    c. *Dax-ew   matxe.*
       beautiful-ADV   he_writes
       'He writes beautifully.'

5. (Lack of) essive forms of nouns in North East Caucasian languages?

Cases functionally similar to the 'adverbial' cases of South and North West Caucasian languages are never mentioned in the case inventories of North East Caucasian languages, and the possible existence of cases fulfilling the essive function as defined above is not even discussed in Daniel and Ganenkov's recent survey of Daghestanian case systems (Daniel & Ganenkov 2009). However, suffixed forms of

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[1] As discussed by Harris 1991: 23-26, the adverbial case suffix **-d* reconstructed for Common Kartvelian has obvious reflexes in Georgian, Mingrelian, and Svan, and there is evidence that Laz had an adverbial case too, which was subsequently lost.

nouns equivalent to English 'as N' are clearly present at least in Lezgi and in Avar-Andi-Tsez languages. The only question is whether they are part of the case inflection of nouns, or have another status in the morphosyntax of the languages in which such forms are found.

Before turning to the essive forms of nouns in Avar-Andi-Tsez, which will be discussed in Sections 6 & 7, it is interesting to quote a passage from Haspelmath's description of Lezgi about a derivational suffix *-wal* forming abstract nouns:

> "The suffix *-wal* on nouns denoting a profession or function is also so regular and common that it could perhaps be regarded as an inflectional suffix. In order to express 'work as an X', one has to use it: *X-wal awun* (lit. 'do X-hood'), or *X-wile k'walaxun* (lit. 'work in X-hood'), e.g. *muallimwal awun* 'work as a teacher', *reǧuxbanwile k'walaxun* 'work as a miller'. That *-wile* in such constructions is a sort of "functive case" suffix can be seen in examples like (230), where *-wile* is added to a plural noun."
>
> (Haspelmath 1993: 105)

The example mentioned in this quote includes a form *sopresedatel-ar-wil-e* 'as co-chairmen' in which the plural suffix *-ar-* precedes *-wil-* (allomorph of the suffix of abstract nouns *-wal*) and *-e* (inessive), which can be viewed as evidence that *-wile* has been reanalyzed as a case suffix.

Haspelmath's observation about the emerging 'functive' case of Lezgi suggests that the lack of any mention of cases similar to Uralic essives or South and North West Caucasian 'adverbials' in descriptions of Nakh-Daghestanian languages, rather than really reflecting the situation of North East Caucasian, may simply be due to a descriptive tradition that does not include them among the cases whose existence is expected in the languages of this family. This will be corroborated by the data analyzed in Section 6, which will show that similar observations can be made about languages belonging to another branch of the North East Caucasian family.

6. The essive form of nouns in Northern Akhvakh

Example (8) illustrates the essive form of Northern Akhvakh nouns, formed by adding to the nominative a complex ending consisting of an invariable element *-ł-* glossed ESS and an agreement marker showing the following forms:

masculine	*-ō(he)*
feminine and neuter	*-ē(he)*
human plural	*-ī(hi)*
neuter plural	*-erē(he)*

The second formative of the essive ending expresses agreement with the nominative argument of the clause representing the entity a property of which is predicated by the noun in the essive case. It is glossed ADV for 'adverbial agreement' because the same set of agreement marks is found in other adverbial forms: the general converb, the progressive converb, the mediative case of nouns (historically derived from the ablative), plus isolated adverbs such as *huštē(he)* 'thus'.

(8)   Northern Akhvakh (Magomedova & Abdulaeva 2007 and field notes)

a. *Aqiᵭa-ł-ō*   *w-ošaᵭ-erē*   *gudi*   *hu-du-we.*
   gardener-ESS-ADV.M   M-work-PROG   COP₁.M   DIST-SL-M
   'He works as a gardener.'

b. *Jaše imo-līr-a išʷada-ɬ-ē j-ešeq̄-u j-ā̃he gidi.*
girl father$_o$-CFG$_2$-ALL shepherd-ESS-ADV.F F-work-INF F-go.ADV.F COP$_1$.F
'The girl went to her father's to work as a shepherd.'

c. *Du dada čʷi-ɬ-ō w-ošaq̄-er-ō gʷida?*
2SG$_o$ father what-ESS-ADV.M M-work-PROG-ADV.M COP$_2$.M
'What is your father's profession?' lit. 'Your father works as what?'

d. *Di-be maχšara ũdada-ɬ-ēhe b-uх̄-ari hu-du-s̄ʷ-a.*
1SG$_o$[GEN]-N joke real-ESS-ADV.N N-occur-PF$_1$ DIST-SL-M$_o$-DAT
'He took my joke seriously.' lit. 'My joke occurred to him as real.'

e. *Di-La hu-be čaka χirada ʕadati-ɬ-ē harigʷ-ari.*
1SG$_o$-DAT DIST-N very dear custom-ESS-ADV.N see-PF$_1$
'I considered this (lit. I saw this as) a very good custom.'

As already mentioned above, the second formative of the essive ending is the adverbial agreement marker, which also constitutes the ending of the general converb (compare for example *toχtoro-ɬ-ōhe* 'as a doctor', essive of *toχtoro* 'doctor' with masculine agreement, with *w-oq'-ōhe* 'having come (M)', masculine form of the general converb of *-eq'-* 'come'). Moreover, the first formative of the essive ending *-ɬ-* coincides with a derivative suffix productively used to derive verbs from adjectives, as illustrated by *ĩk'a* 'large' > *ĩk'a-ɬ-uruLa* 'enlarge' (*-uruLa* is the infinitive suffix).

There are also a few verbs derived from nouns by means of the same derivative suffix *-ɬ-*. Of course, if the ending analyzed here as an essive case were only found with such nouns, if it were incompatible with plural inflection and with the presence of noun dependents, and if such forms were found exclusively in adjunct role, the notion of essive case could be dispensed with, and the forms under consideration should be identified as the converbial form of verbs derived from nouns. The recognition of *-ɬ-* followed by adverbial agreement as a case form of nouns relies on the following three pieces of evidence:

(a) The essive ending is used productively with nominals for which the derivation of a verb by means of the suffix *-ɬ-* is not possible. For example, as illustrated by Ex. (8c) above, the interrogative pronoun *čʷi* is compatible with the essive ending, whereas the possibility to derive a verb whose meaning would be 'become what' is categorically rejected by speakers.

(b) As illustrated by Ex. (9a-c), the essive ending is found attached to nouns in the plural, and nouns in the essive can combine with noun dependents.

(c) Nouns with the essive ending are not only found in adjunct role: the essive is also used to encode predicative arguments of the following verbs: *boLuruLa* 'become' – Ex. (9a-b), *buх̄uruLa* 'fall' in the sense of 'happen to be', *bišilōruLa* 'choose, elect', *beɬuruLa* 'leave' in the sense of 'nominate'; the essive is even found instead of the nominative in the construction of *bik'uruLa* 'be' – Ex. (9d).

(9) Northern Akhvakh (Magomedova & Abdulaeva 2007 and field notes)

a. *Hu ā̃L'oda waša-li b-oL̄-ī goli žab-idi ã̄d-o-ɬ-īhi.*
DIST all boy-PL H*-become-ADV.H* COP$_1$.H* learn-PF$_2$.H* person-PL-ESS-ADV.H*
'All these boys became learned men.'

b. *Hu-gu-s̄ʷ-e   mik'e-lo-we   toχtoro-ɬ-ōhe   w-oɫ-uruɫa   χija   gʷ-ēre   godi.*
DIST-LL-M$_o$-ERG   child-H$^*_o$-M   doctor-ESS-ADV.M   M-become-INF   dream   do.N-PROG   COP$_1$.N
'He dreams of becoming a pediatrician (lit. children's doctor).'

c. *Di-ɫa   hu-we   di-da   ima-ɬ-ō   harigʷ-er-ō   gudi.*
1SG$_o$-DAT DIST-M   1SG$_o$[GEN]-INT   father-ESS-ADV.M   see-PROG-ADV.M   COP$_1$.M
'I consider him as my father.'

d. *Ĩč'a-ɬ-ē   j-ikʷ-ari   hu-du-je.*
stone-ESS-ADV.N   F-be-PF$_1$ DIST-SL-F
lit. 'She was a stone.' → 'She obstinately refused.'

In addition to its transparent etymology, the main obstacle to the recognition of the essive as a case is its morphology, which departs from that of the forms traditionally recognized as cases in grammars of North-East Caucasian languages. As a rule, with nouns that have an oblique stem distinct from the nominative form, the stem to which North East Caucasian case markers attach is not the nominative form, but the oblique stem. In the examples above, this is illustrated by *imo-ɫir-a* 'to (her) father's', in which the complex case ending *-ɫir-a*[2] attaches to *imo-*, oblique stem of *ima* 'father'. By contrast, the stem to which the essive ending attaches is always identical to the nominative form, as illustrated by *(di-da) ima-ɬ-ō* 'as (my own) father' in Ex. (9c).

This however should not hinder the recognition of the essive as a case. Variations in the morphophonological properties of markers belonging to the same paradigm are common in the languages of the world, and they reflect the fact that the individual markers that constitute a paradigm may have grammaticalized at different periods in the history of the language.[3] The fact that the essive marker of Northern Akhvakh attaches to a stem coinciding with the nominative form can be viewed as evidence of its relatively recent grammaticalization in a construction whose original meaning was 'having become X' in which a noun in the nominative preceded the converbial form of a verb *ɬ- 'become'. This verb has ceased existing as an autonomous word but still subsists as a derivative converting adjectives into verbs expressing change of state.

7. Essive forms of nouns in other Avar-Andi-Tsez languages

The reconstruction of a verb *ɬ- 'become' whose converb may have grammaticalized into an essive marker is confirmed by data from the other Avar-Andi-Tsez languages.

The existence of a suffix *-ɬun* functionally similar to the essive suffix of Akhvakh and lending itself to the same decomposition is acknowledged in some descriptions of Avar, although this suffix is never included in the inventory of Avar cases. According to Ebeling 1966: 72, Čikobava & Cercvadze 1962: 166f. mention it as a 'case-like' 'predicative' form of nouns, with the following illustration:

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[2] This ending consists of the configuration marker *-ɫir-* 'in the vicinity of' and the allative marker *-a*.
[3] See for example Creissels 2006 for a discussion of the morphophonological heterogeneity of Hungarian case markers.

(9)   Avar (Čikobava & Cercvadze 1962, quoted by Ebeling 1966: 72)

> *Do-w   bet'ér-ɬun   w-íš̆-ana.*
> DEM-M   head-ESS   M-elect-PF
> 'He was elected head.'

The descriptions of Avar mentioning this suffix decompose it as *-ɬ-un,* where *-ɬ-* is a suffix used to derive verbs from nouns or adjectives, and *-un* is the past converb (or 'past gerund') suffix, and Alekseev 1988: 35 explicitly states that this 'predicative' suffix of nouns originates from a formerly independent verb **ɬ-ize* 'become' (*-ize* is the infinitive suffix of Avar verbs).

A similar suffix is briefly signaled in Bagvalal (Andic) by Daniel & al. 2001: 193. This suffix is illustrated by *hak'uj-li-j-o* 'as (his) wife', and the ending of this form is decomposed as follows: *-li-* is a derivative suffix with the same function as *-ɬ-* in Akhvakh, *-j-* marks feminine agreement, and *-o* is the converbial ending. However, as discussed above for Akhvakh, the mere possibility of this segmentation does not ensure that *hak'uj-li-j-o* can really be analyzed as the converbial form of a verb derived from a noun, since this analysis also implies that such forms exist only for nouns from which a verb can be derived, are incompatible with plural marking and noun dependents, and are not found in predicative argument function. Unfortunately, these questions are not discussed in the Bagvalal grammar.

I have not found explicit mentions of similar suffixes in other descriptions of Andic or Tsezic languages, but they sporadically occur in sentences illustrating other grammatical phenomena, and in dictionary examples. In most cases, they lend themselves to an obvious decomposition into a first formative *-ɬ-* also found with the derivative function mentioned above for Akhvakh and Avar *-ɬ-,* and a second formative identical with a converbial ending of the language in question: Karata (Andic) *axiₐan-ɬe* 'as a gardener', *ušter-ɬe* 'as a teacher' (Magomedova & Xalidova 2001: 27 & 78), Godoberi (Andic) *savetiɪ̄i pirsidatel-ɬu* 'as the president of the Council' (Saidova 2006), Khwarshi (Tsezic) *dibir-ɬin* 'as a mullah' (Khalilova 2009: 76), etc. Note that, in the Godoberi example, the genitive dependent provides decisive evidence that *pirsidatel-ɬu* is a case form of *pirsidatel* rather than the converbial form of a derived verb.

We can therefore safely conclude that a verb root **ɬ-* 'become' can be reconstructed at least at Proto-Avar-Andi-Tsez level, and that the converbial form of this verb has grammaticalized into an essive case ending at least in Northern Akhvakh, and probably in several other languages of this branch of East Caucasian.[4]

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[4] I have not tried to find cognates of Proto-Avar-Andi-Tsez **ɬ-* 'become' in other branches of North East Caucasian, because this would necessitate solving first a question I am not in a position to solve. The point is that, in addition to grammaticalized reflexes of an old root **ɬ-* 'become', Andic languages also have verbs with lateral consonants in their roots and 'become' among their possible meanings, like Akhvakh *b-oɪ̄-uruʟa* (see Ex. (9a-b) above). Any attempt at enlarging the comparative data summarized here should therefore be very careful with phonetic correspondences involving Andic laterals. For example, Bagvalal has a verb *b-uɬu-la* including 'become' among its possible meanings, but Bagvalal *ɬ* regularly corresponds to *ɪ̄* in other Andic languages, whereas *ɬ* in other Andic languages regularly corresponds to Bagvalal *l(h),* and the derivative suffix attested as *-ɬ* in other languages is in Bagvalal *-l(h)i;* consequently, Bagvalal *b-uɬu-la* 'become' is probably not a reflex of **ɬ-* and is rather cognate with Akhvakh *b-oɪ̄-uruʟa,* Tindi *b-uɪ̄-iɬʲa,* Karata *b-oɪ̄-aɬa,* or Godoberi *b-uɪ̄-i.*

8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to show that, in spite of a descriptive tradition that marginalizes or even ignores them, case suffixes comparable to Uralic 'essives' or South and North West Caucasian 'adverbials' can be identified in some North East Caucasian languages. Moreover, even on the basis of the existing documentation, it is possible to find in North East Caucasian languages interesting data about the possible emergence of essive cases as the result of the grammaticalization of a construction meaning 'in X-hood', as in Lezgi, or of a construction meaning 'having become X', as in Avar-Andi-Tsez languages. One may therefore suspect that a systematic inquiry about the expression of essive and related meanings in North East Caucasian might give interesting insights into this question.

Abbreviations

$_o$: oblique stem, ADV: adverbial, ALL: allative, AUX: auxiliary, CFG: spatial configuration, COP: copula, DAT: dative, DEF: definite, DEM: demonstrative, DIST: distal, EMPH: emphatic, ERG: ergative, ESS: essive, F: feminine, FOC: focus, GEN: genitive, Hʼ: human plural, INESS: inessive, INF: infinitive, INSTR: instrumental, INT: intensive, LL: lower level, M: masculine, N: neuter, Nʼ: neuter plural, PF: perfective, PL: plural, POS: positive, PRF: perfect, PROG: progressive, PRS: present, PST: past, REFL: reflexive, SG: singular, SL: same level, TERM: terminative.

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