Universal Dependencies for Dargwa Mehweb

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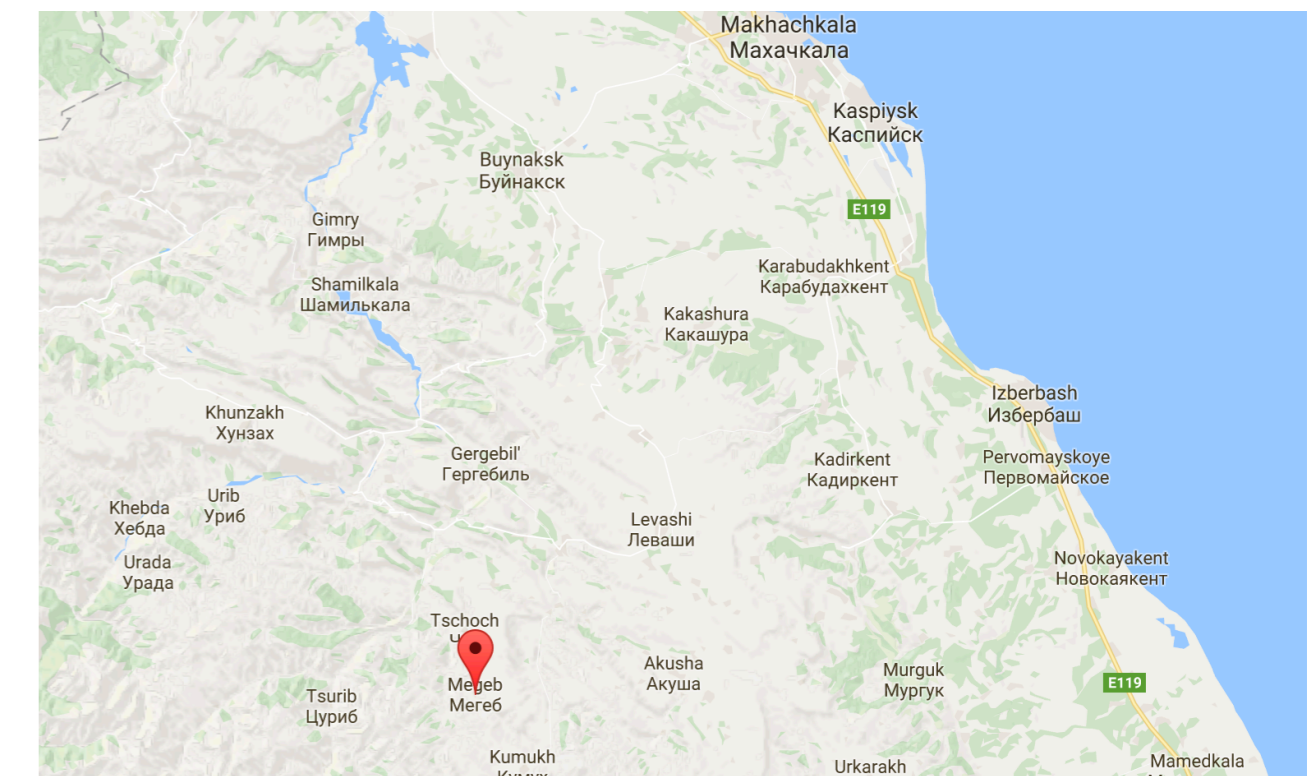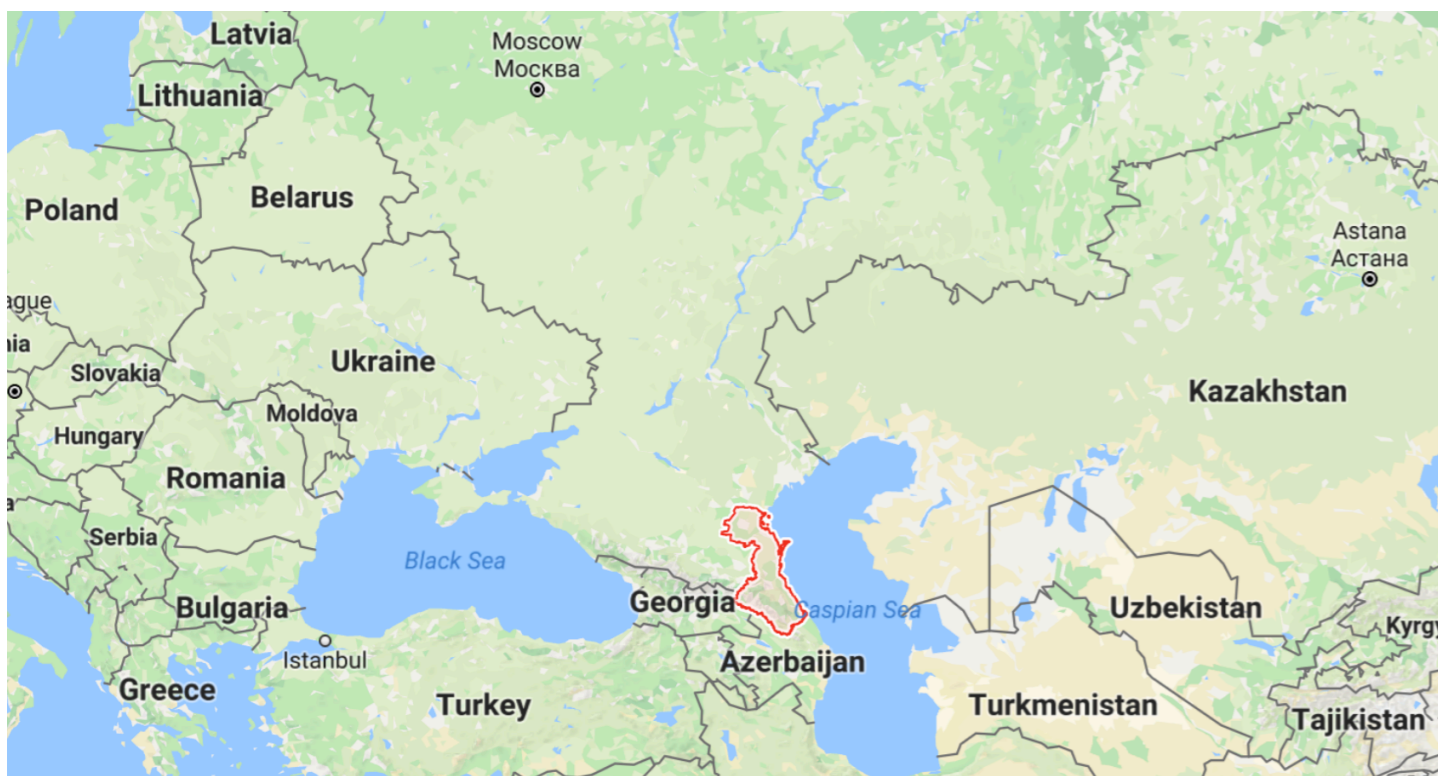Linguistic Convergence Laboratory • Moscow

1. Introduction

This project aims to provide the description for the way Dargwa Mehweb (East Caucasian language family) meets UD scheme and create a Mehweb tree bank. Dictionaries and texts were obtained during field trips to Megeb in 1990s and 2010s organized by Lomonosov Moscow State University and Higher School of Economics.

2. Dargwa Mehweb: Overview

- East Caucasian language family, Dargwa group;
- ~800 native speakers;
- One-village idiom surrounded by Laks and Avars;
- Non-literate, Avar orthography is used;
- Ergative alignment;
- Agglutinative morphology;
- SOV-order.

	Sg	Pl	
M	w		
F	d	b	HPL
F1	d-r		
N	b	d-r	NPL

Table 1. Mehweb class markers

3. POS mapping

- Strictly verbal and nominal morphemes;
- Cross-categorical morphemes are considered clitics:

(1) r=igu-l
    F1-engaged-ATR

- CCONJ and SCONJ are absent — coordination is employed by non-finite verb forms;
- Adpositions are absent — locatives marked on nouns are used instead:

(2) ʔaˤli-ni   mažar
    Ali-ERG   rifle
    baˤħi-če
    wall.OBL-SUPER(LAT)
    b-iχ-ib
    N-put.PFV-AOR
    'Ali put the rifle against the wall.'

POS	Mehweb	POS	Mehweb
ADJ	+	CCONJ	–
ADV	+	DET	+
NOUN	+	NUM	+
VERB	+	PART	+
ADP	–	SCONJ	–
AUX	+	PRON	+
INTJ	+	PROPN	+

Table 2. Overview on the POS in Mehweb

4. Feature mapping

East Caucasian specific feature:
- Rich system of locative cases. Each locative is bimorphemic and consists of localization and orientation:

Localizations: Super ('On'), In ('In'),
                Inter('Inside'), Apud ('Near');
Orientations: Lat ('Move towards'),
                Ess ('Staying in place'),
                El ('Move away from'),
                Trans ('Moving through').

Feature	Relevant Values
Animacy	Hum, Nhum
Aspect	Imp, Perf
Case	Abs, Erg, Com, Dat, Gen, Voc
Foreign	Yes
Gender	Fem, Masc, Neut
Mood	Ind, Imp, Cnd, Pot, Jus, Opt, Prp
NumType	Ord, Card
Number	Sing, Plur, Ptan
Person	1,2
Polarity	Pos, Neg
Reflexive	Yes
Tense	Fut, Past, Pres
VerbForm	Fin, Inf, Part, Conv, Vnoun
Voice	Cau
PronType	Dem, Rcp, Int, Neg, Ind

Table 3. Feature mapping in Mehweb

5. Syntactic dependencies

East Caucasian specific features:
- Syntactic ergativity;
- Experiential verbs;
- Clausal coordination is absent — non-finite subordinates are used instead.

'Ali came.'

'The father cut his beard with a hair cutter.'

'Ali knows that mother is sick.'

UD	Mehweb	UD	Mehweb
nsubj	+	acl	+
obj	+	advcl	+
iobj	+	advmod	+
csubj	not attested	aux	+
ccomp	+	cop	+
xcomp	+	mark	–
obl	+	nmod	+
vocative	+	det	+
expl	–	clf	–

Table 4. Dependency relations as attested in Mehweb

6. Unclear cases

- Biabsolutive construction — both core argument of the clause marked with absolutive;

'Ali is reading a book.'

- wa conjunction meaning 'and' which was used in older texts but is absent in the recent ones:
For cases with wa SCONJ POS label and conj dependency relation label are used, although conjoining clauses and nouns with wa is considered unnatural for Mehweb.

- Grammaticalization of the converb ile meaning 'having said':
There are two ways of treating ile. The first one is treating it as an optional citation particle, i.e. PART. The second one is considering ile a separate advcl since it is a converb. Cited phrase that precedes ile then is considered its ccomp.

References

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