

## Antipassives in Nakh-Daghestanian languages

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The Nakh-Daghestanian language family is one of the genealogical groups with a relatively dense concentration of antipassive constructions, in addition to other detransitivizing processes. If we follow the definition of antipassives given by Polinsky (2005), antipassives are attested for four Daghestanian subgroups: the Andic subgroup (Godoberi), Avar, the Tsezic subgroup (Hunzib, Bezhta, Tsez, and Hinuq), and the Dargi languages.

However, Nakh-Daghestanian antipassives differ considerably from canonical antipassive constructions. Only Dargi (obligatorily) and Bezhta (optionally) allow the patient to be expressed, in the ergative or the instrumental (less frequently, inter-essive), respectively (van den Berg 2003, Comrie et al. 2015). Dargi does not make use of overt derivational morphology. In all languages other than Dargi, the derivation is also available for intransitive verbs. The antipassive is not very productive and generally only available with a limited number of verbs, which is at least partially due to its semantics. It commonly has a durative (1b), iterative, or habitual meaning (2b). Therefore its use is (almost) entirely determined by its semantic load. Accessibility to major syntactic processes in Daghestanian languages is not generally constrained by grammatical relations, so the antipassive does not serve to feed syntactic processes as in, for instance, Dyirbal.

The goal of this presentation is to give an overview of antipassive constructions in Nakh-Daghestanian languages, with particular regard to:

- (i) productivity and semantic subclasses of verbs that can form antipassives, e.g. in Dargi languages the most common verbs to form antipassives are “eat” and “drink”, whereas many other transitive verbs do not allow for the antipassive construction
- (ii) semantics and function, in particular with respect to Tatevosov’s (2011) proposal to analyze antipassives in Godoberi as “a by-product of a more general mechanism of detelicization”
- (iii) syntactic properties
- (iv) the relation to other valency changing process such as the formation of potential verbs (“be able to do X”) or causativization and possible combinations of the antipassive with those processes

Bezhta

(1a *ōždi*      *bābā*      *m-ūiq-čä*

)

boy.ERG bread(III III-eat-PRS  
)

‘The boy eats the bread.’

(1b öžö bābälä-d Ø-ürq-dä-š  
)

boy(I bread.OBL-INS I-eat-ANTIP-PRS  
)

‘The boy is busy eating the bread.’

Sanzhi Dargi

(2a it-i-l k urt b-urχ-u  
)  
i  
3SG-OBL-ERG dress N-sew.IPFV-PRS  
‘s/he sews a dress.’

(2b it kurt i-l r-urχ-u  
)

3SG dress-ERG F-sew.IPFV-PRS  
‘she is a dressmaker’ or ‘she habitually sews dresses’

## References

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