

**The Present and the Future within the Lezgcic TAM systems:
synchronic and diachronic regularities**

Tense and aspect (= TAM) systems of the Lezgcic languages¹ are on the whole built on the opposition between the Perfective (PF) and the Imperfective (IPF) verbal stems. Most finite forms are analytical, at least historically, and are made of one of the non-finite forms – a participle, a converb, an infinitive, etc. – and a copula, which can appear in the present or in the past form. Thus, there are two main subdivisions within the core verbal forms of the paradigm: one is between the PF and the IPF “subsystems”, and another between the “subsystems” of the present and the past tense of the copula. The general make-up of such a system can be illustrated with the following table of Agul core verbal forms (of the verb *ruXas* ‘to read’):

	PF subsystem		IPF subsystem	
	affirmative	negative	affirmative	negative
converb + locative copula (PRS)	<u>Present Resultative</u> ruXuna(j)-a ruXun-ādaw(a)		<u>General Present</u> ruXa(j)-a ruX-ādawa	
locative copula (PST)	<u>Past Resultative</u> ruXuna-ji ruXun-āduj		<u>Imperfect</u> ruXa-ji ruX-āduj	
converb + ‘be’-copula (PRS)	<u>Perfective Past</u> ruXun-e ruXun-dawa		<u>Habitual Present</u> ruXaj-e ruXaj-dewa	
‘be’-copula (PST)	<u>Non-actual Past</u> ruXun-ij ruXun-duj		<u>Habitual Past</u> ruXaj-i ruXaj-duj	
participle + ‘be’-copula (PRS)	<u>Existential Past</u> ruXuf-e ruXuf-īawa		<u>Generic Present</u> ruXaf-e ruXaf-īawa	
‘be’-copula (PST)	<u>Non-actual Existential Past</u> ruXuf-ij ruXuf-īuj		<u>Generic Past</u> ruXaf-ij ruXaf-īuj	
infinitive + ‘be’-copula (PRS)	—		<u>General Future</u> ruXas-e ruXas-īawa	
‘be’-copula (PST)			<u>Counterfactual</u> ruXas-ij ruXas-īuj	

Note that all forms of the PF domain describe situations with past time reference; at the same time, forms of the IPF domain describe both situations with the present and the past time reference (cf. the Present vs. the Imperfect). Forms with future time reference can be usually found only in the IPF domain as well, but in some languages there is even no specialized Future, and this meaning is expressed by a polysemous (e.g. Present Habitual / Future) form. In general, forms of the IPF domain with the present copula constitute in the Lezgcic languages a separate Present/Future subsystem, which normally includes the General Present, the Habitual or Generic, the Future (sometimes with further distinctions, like the Prospective/Intentional).

There is a number of wide-spread grammatical patterns in the Present/Future subsystem, an overview of which will be given on the basis of the non-finite category which appear in the pattern.

¹ A group within the Nakh-Daghestanian (East Caucasian) family including Lezgian proper, Tabassaran, Agul, Tsakhur, Rutul, Kryz, Budugh, Archi and Udi.

1. An “IPF Converb + Locative Copula” pattern usually gives rise to the main present tense form of the language (the General Present), and its equivalent in the past is the standard Imperfect. Cf. Agul *aq'aj-a / aq'aj-i*, Lezgian *ijiz-wa / ijiz-waj*, South Tabassaran *ap'ur-a / ap'ur-aji* ‘is doing / was doing’, Rutul *kixere a / kixere aj* ‘is writing / was writing’, or a peripheral Kryz Progressive *kurac'ra řaža* ‘is slaughtering’.

2. An “IPF Converb + Existential Copula” is an interesting pattern whose behaviour is not identical in different Lezgian languages. In some of them the pattern gives rise to the General Present and the Imperfect, cf. Tsakhur *ojk'an(-wod) / ojk'an-ij* ‘is writing / was writing’, or Archi *arXarši i / arXarši edi* ‘is lying down / was lying down’. However, in other languages the structurally equivalent forms are Habituals, cf. Agul *aq'aj-e* ‘does habitually’ or Rutul *kixere (i)* ‘writes habitually’. In still other languages this gives a Future, cf. Tabassaran *ap'ur-u* ‘will do’ or “L’eventuel” in Kryz *kurac'ra* ‘will (probably) slaughter’. It is probable that the Lezgian Future/Habitual in *-da* also represents this pattern (*-da* < *-d* converb + *ja* copula), cf. *iji-da* ‘will do; habitually does’.

3. An “IPF Participle + Existential Copula” is also a pattern showing some variation along the Present~Habitual~Future scale. In Agul it gives rise to a Generic Present which can also have a modal Future meaning, cf. *aq'af-e* ‘do as a rule; (I assume) will do’; in Rutul it is also a peripheral Habitual/Generic form, cf. *ha?ad i* ‘do as a rule’. In Kryz the structurally equivalent form is the main Future form, cf. *kurac'i ja* ‘will slaughter’. What we see here is the same (like in the previous pattern) grammaticalization path from the present (progressive) meaning to habitual and generic, and then to the future meaning².

4. An “Infinitive + Existential Copula” is a pattern that usually gives rise to the main Future form of the language, cf. Agul *aq'as-e* ‘will do’, Rutul *kixis-i* ‘will write’, Tsakhur *āqas(-od)* ‘will open’; probably the Akhty Lezgian forms like *fiz-a* ‘will go’ also represent this pattern. The equivalent of such forms with a past copula is used as a Counterfactual in conditional clauses. In Archi the corresponding form is treated as expressing deontic modality, cf. *deqles di* ‘has to go’, and this (obligation / predestination) seems to be the original meaning of the pattern.

There are certainly some other, minor grammatical patterns in the Lezgian languages; e.g. Udi is unique in having a main Present form built on the Infinitive: cf. *bak-es* ‘become’ > *bak-(e)s-a* ‘becomes’ (it is probable that in the original construction the Dative/Locative case in *-a* of the infinitive was used with a copula, i.e. the meaning was ‘is in becoming’). But the analysis of the main grammatical patterns shows that one of the key evolutionary paths within the Lezgian TAM system is a drift from present tense to future tense forms, where habitual/generic meaning is a usual intermediate point. In this respect the Lezgian languages are quite different from the main European languages in which a diversity of grammaticalization patterns for the Future tense forms is attested (like constructions with various auxiliaries, e.g. motion and modal or phasal verbs); cf. Dahl 2000.

References

Dahl, Östen. The grammar of future time reference in European languages // Dahl, Östen (ed.) Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2000.

Tatevosov, Sergei. From habituals to futures: discerning the path of diachronic development // Verkuyl, Henk; De Swart, Henriette; Van Hout, Angeliek (eds.) Perspectives on Aspect. Dordrecht: Springer, 2005.

² Cf. the discussion of this grammaticalization path in Tatevosov 2005 on the basis of the Andic languages data.