

# Reported Speech and Reportative Grammaticalization in Besleney Kabardian\*

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This paper focuses on reported speech in the Besleney dialect of the Kabardian language. The main reported speech strategies are given. I discuss the issue of referential ambiguity in such constructions and reach the conclusion that there is no deictic shift at hand; rather, there are two strategies that display ambiguity in certain contexts. A part of the paper is devoted to a partially grammaticalized converb used mainly for introducing reported speech. I come to the conclusion that this converb combines traits of both a fully-fledged word and a grammaticalized conjunction, thus posing a problem for the theory of grammaticalization as described by Lehmann (1995), according to whom the parameters of grammaticalization are expected to correlate.

Keywords: *Kabardian, reported speech, grammaticalization*

## 0 Introduction

Reported speech has been a topic of interest for many researchers of linguistics and philosophy in the past years. The opposition of the actual and reported speech acts, the differences between direct and indirect speech, strategies that are intermediate between direct and indirect speech, the phenomenon of so-called “indexical monsters” have been subjects of both theoretical and typological work (Coulmas 1986a; Toldova 1999; Güldeman and von Roncador 2002; Schlenker 2003).

To understand the nature of reported speech it is important to distinguish the actual and reported speech acts, and correspondingly the actual and reported speaker and hearer (Li 1986, 38-39).

(1) Joshua said to me: “I have a headache.”

In (1) Joshua is the reported speaker, and I am the reported hearer and also the actual speaker.

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Abbreviations: A – agent; ABS – absolutive; ADD – additive; ADV – adverbial; BEN – benefactive; CAUS – causative; CIT – citative; COND – conditional; DAT – dative; DEM – demonstrative; DIR – directive; ERG – ergative; F – feminine; FCT – factive; FUT – future tense; IMV – imperative; INS – instrumental; IO – indirect object; IPF – imperfective; LNK – linker; LOC – locative preverb; MAL – malefactive; MNR – manner; MSD – masdar; NEG – negation; OBL – oblique case; PL – plural; POSS – possessive; PR – possessor; PRS – present tense; PST – past tense; RE – reffective; REL – relativizer; SG – singular; TAG – tag question marker; VOC – vocative.

This work focuses on the strategies of conveying reported speech in the Besleney dialect of the Kabardian language (Circassian < Northwest Caucasian), and a phenomenon which is closely connected to this topic – a partially grammaticalized converb used mainly for introducing reported speech. Kabardian is a polysynthetic language with verbal and nominal indexing, ergative alignment and generally SOV word order (Bagov et al. 1970; Kumakhov and Vamling 2009). The data for this research were obtained mainly through elicitation. The paper contains occasional examples from spoken texts, since the studied constructions are relatively common in the spoken language.

## 0.1 Direct vs. indirect speech

The distinction between direct and indirect speech has been discussed for many years. Direct speech (or *mention* in formal semantics (Kaplan 1989)) presents the speech act through the reported speaker's viewpoint; all features of the original utterance, such as expressive interjections, exclamations etc., are retained (2a). By contrast, in indirect speech the original speech act is reinterpreted by the actual speaker, and is thus replaced by a paraphrase (2b) (Partee 1973, 410-411; Toldova 1999):

- (2) a. Joshua said: "Gee-whiz, what a headache I have!"  
 b. Joshua said that he had a headache.

There are several major distinctions between direct and indirect speech (Coulmas 1986b; Li 1986; Toldova 1999):

1) direct speech is quotation with the preservation of all original expressiveness (2a), indirect speech is paraphrase (2b);

2) the form of the predicate: subordinate form in indirect speech vs. independent form in direct speech (cf. temporal agreement in English indirect speech (3b) versus absence of it in direct speech (3a));

3) expressing coreference with the speaker of the reported speech act: deictic pronouns in direct speech (2a) vs. anaphoric or logophoric pronouns in indirect speech (2b);

4) the presence of a reportative marker or subordinate conjunction (*that* in English (2b)) in indirect speech vs. absence of such markers in direct speech;

5) temporal and spatial reference to the context of the reported speech act is deictic in direct speech (e.g. words like *here* and *now*) vs. anaphoric in indirect speech (e.g. *there* and *then*);

6) the possibility of using such categories as vocatives, imperatives, interrogative and exclamative constructions in direct speech (cf. preservation of interrogative inversion in English direct speech (4a) and absence of it in indirect speech (4b); the exclamative construction in (2a) and the absence of it in (2b)).

- (3) a. He said: "I don't want any broccoli."  
 b. He said that he didn't want any broccoli.  
 (4) a. He asked: "Where do you think you're going?"  
 b. He asked me where I thought I was going.

The opposition between direct and indirect speech isn't apparent for many languages, since strategies that are intermediate between direct and indirect speech are typologically common, and these are not only marginal strategies (e.g. the quotative *mol* in example (5) from Russian, where the deictic pronoun 'I' can refer both to the actual and reported speaker), but – for a wide selection of languages – the main way of conveying reported speech (see Schlenker 2003 for Amharic, Maier 2012 for Ancient Greek, Ljutikova 2001 for Bagvalal), as, for example, in Dargwa (6).

- (5) *A ty skazi: ja, mol, prikazal i vsjo tut.*  
 and you say.IMV I CIT ordered and all here  
 1. 'Say that I ordered it to be so and that is it.'  
 2. 'Say: "I ordered it to be so and that is it."' (Arutjunova 1992, 46)

- (6) *aħmal-li haʔib [du ʔa-ka-r=ax-an-ni]*  
 Ahmed-ERG said I NEG-DOWN-F=come.IPF-FUT-3  
*hebli du ka-r=ač'-ib-da*  
 CIT I DOWN-F=come.PF-PST-1  
 'Ahmed said that I wouldn't come, but I came.' (Xuduc dialect, field data)

In (6) we can see that there is a deictic first person pronoun in the reported speech clause that refers to the actual speaker (as in indirect speech), but the embedded predicate is in the third person (as in direct speech).

## 0.2 Reportative markers

Reported speech is often introduced by a special marker: a subordinating conjunction (*that* in English) or a reportative (or quotative) element, which most often takes the form of either a bound morpheme or a particle (e.g. enclitics in Georgian (Hewitt and Crisp 1986, 121-123), the marker *-er* in Archi (Chumakina, Daniel 2010)). It is common for partially or fully grammaticalized forms of a predicate with the meaning 'say' to be used as such a marker (e.g. reportative converbs in Agul (Merdanova 2006)).

Verbal forms used as reportative elements often undergo grammaticalization, i.e. lose some properties of a fully-fledged word; thus, they may have a restricted paradigm, function as a clitic or lose their original lexical meaning (see Lehmann 1995 on the theory of grammaticalization, Lord 1976; Heine and Kuteva 2004, 267-268 on the grammaticalization of verbs of speech). Further grammaticalization often involves a semantic shift; thus, reportative elements can sometimes be used not only with utterance predicates, but also with propositional attitude predicates, such as *believe* and *think* (e.g. in Agul, see Maisak and Merdanova 2010).

In this paper I investigate the degree of grammaticalization of a form of the Besleney verb *ž'əʔe-* 'say' – the converb *ž'jerjə*, which is used to introduce reported speech. I look for the following evidence of grammaticalization (Heine and Kuteva 2004, 2-5):

- 1) erosion, or phonetic contraction;
- 2) decategorialization, or loss of morphosyntactic features;
- 3) desemanticization, or loss of lexical meaning;
- 4) extension, or broadening of contexts of use.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 1 gives an overview of the reported speech strategies in the Beslenny dialect of the Kabardian language and addresses the issue of referential ambiguity in such constructions; section 2 is devoted to the reportative converb *ž'jerjə*. I give a conclusion in section 3.

## 1 Reported speech strategies

In this section I give an overview of the strategies of conveying reported speech in Beslenny Kabardian.

The Circassian languages employ two main reported speech strategies:

– a non-finite strategy with the predicate marked with the adverbial ending *-w(ə)* or the factive prefix *zerə-* and case markers:

- (7) *abəm qə-d-ž'-jə-l-a [a çəx<sup>w</sup>-xe-m zeč'e txəl-xe-r*  
 DEM-OBL said to us DEM person-PL-OBL all book-PL-ABS  
*zer-a-hə-ž'-a-r / ja-hə-ž'-a-w]*  
 FCT-3PL.A-carry-RE-PST-ABS 3PL.A-carry-RE-PST-ADV  
 'He said that these people took away all the books.'

– a finite strategy without markers of subordination:

- (8) *[we wə-djele] qəžž'jəla aslen*  
 you 2SG.ABS-stupid said to me Aslan  
 1. 'Aslan said to me<sub>i</sub>: "You<sub>i</sub> are stupid."  
 2. 'Aslan said to me<sub>i</sub> that you<sub>i</sub> are stupid.'

The non-finite strategy displays features of classic reported speech, i.e. deictic pronouns<sup>1</sup> cannot refer to the reported speaker or hearer:

- (9) *aslen qəžž'jəla [se sə-djel-wə]*  
 Aslan said I 1SG.ABS-stupid-ADV  
 'Aslan said that I am stupid.'  
 \*'Aslan said: "I am stupid."'

The second construction, on the other hand, exhibits "mixed" traits, as we can see in (8): deictic pronouns can refer both to the actual and reported speech acts. Anaphoric pronouns also display ambiguity – they can refer both to the actual speech act, as in direct speech (10), and the reported speech act, as in indirect speech (11):

- (10) *aslen se šhač'e qəžž'jəla [a-r deβ<sup>w</sup> me-pš'erəh]*  
 Aslan I for said DEM-ABS good.ADV PRS-cook  
 'Aslan said about me<sub>i</sub>: "She<sub>i</sub> is a good cook."'

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper I use the term *pronoun* not only for pronominal words, but also for verbal and possessive personal markers (cf. the term *bound pronouns* in Kibrik 2011).

- (11) *aslen [nwebe ž'eš'neḅ<sup>w</sup>əneč'eŋ<sup>w</sup>ex<sup>w</sup> jə-še-ne] ž'jəŋa*  
 Aslan today in.the.evening work 3SG.A-do-FUT said  
 'Aslan<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> is working tonight.'

This construction loses its “mixed” character if it contains elements characteristic of direct speech, such as vocatives, imperatives and exclamations: in this case the ambiguity disappears and there is only one meaning left – deictic elements refer only to the reported speech act, as in direct speech:

- (12) *amjənat qeg<sup>w</sup>ewa [je zarjana w-jə-ŋaleč'*  
 Aminat yelled VOC Zarina 2SG.PR-POSS-kerchief  
*qe-b-ḅe.n-a]*  
 DIR-2SG.A-leave-PST  
 'Aminat yelled (to Zarina<sub>a</sub>): “Hey, Zarina, you<sub>i</sub> left your kerchief!”  
 \*‘Aminat yelled to Zarina<sub>i</sub> (about you<sub>i</sub>) that you<sub>i</sub> left your kerchief.’

Anaphoric elements in this case cannot refer to the reported speech act:

- (13) *zarjəne marjəne ž'ərjəŋa [jə-nape fjex-jə*  
 Zarina Marina said.to.her POSS-face dirty-ADD  
*thač' ž'-je-rjə]*  
 wash.IMV mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'Zarina said to Marina<sub>i</sub>: “Her<sub>i/\*i</sub> face is dirty, wash it.”

It is important to note that other deictic elements choose what speech act to refer to in accordance with the reference of deictic pronouns. Thus, if the reported speaker and hearer are marked in the speech act with deictic elements, temporal deixis refers to the reported speech act, as in direct speech (14a); if the reported speaker and hearer are marked anaphorically, temporal deictic elements refer to the actual speech act, as in indirect speech (14b):

- (14) a. *zarjəne dəḅ<sup>w</sup>ase ž'jəŋa [jane nwebe*  
 Zarina **yesterday** said POSS+mother **today**  
*jə-mex<sup>w</sup>eč' ž'-je-rjə]*  
 POSS-holiday mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'Zarina said yesterday that her mom has a holiday today.'
- b. *zarjəne dəḅ<sup>w</sup>ase ž'jəŋa [s-jane*  
 Zarina **yesterday** said 1SG.PR-POSS+mother  
*nwebe jə-mex<sup>w</sup>eč' ž'-je-rjə]*  
**today** POSS-holiday mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'Zarina said yesterday: “My mom has a holiday today.”'

Hence we reach the conclusion that the finite reported speech strategy is in fact not mixed. Rather, there are two “unmarked” constructions which display ambiguity in certain contexts.

## 2 The converb *ž'jerjə*

This section is devoted to the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of the converb *ž'jerjə* (from the verb *ž'əʔe-* ‘say’<sup>2</sup>), the main function of which is the introduction of reported speech:

- (15) [*sekartweške-r swəpsəneqəm ž'-je-rjə*]  
 I potato-ABS I.will.not.shave mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
*qəž'jəʔa aslen*  
 said Aslan  
 ‘Aslan said: “I won’t peel the potatoes.”’

### 2.1 Morphological structure

The converb *ž'jerjə* is formed from the verb *ž'əʔe-* ‘say’ by means of the additive marker *-rjə*. This morpheme is used in the Besleney dialect to mark clauses with the semantics of preceding (16) or simultaneous (17) action:

- (16) *č'eleçəqə-r ʔə.s-rjə məʔarəse-r jəšxa*  
 boy-ABS sit-ADD apple-ABS ate  
 ‘The boy sat down and ate the apple.’
- (17) *pšaše-r sup je-šx-rjə č'ale-r š'e j-we-fe*  
 girl-ABS soup DAT-eat-ADD youth-ABS milk drinks  
 ‘The girl is eating soup and the boy is drinking milk.’

In grammars of Standard Kabardian this marker is called coordinative (Colarusso 1992, 180; Kumakhov and Vamling 1999, 55-60). In this paper we will call the form *ž'jerjə* a converb for several reasons.

Firstly, the temporal semantics of the marker *-rjə* is typical for converbs (Nedjalkov 1995, 107).

Secondly, a variety of structural features indicate that reported speech with *ž'jerjə* is subordinate with respect to the main clause; a strong argument for a subordinate structure is the behavior of this construction when one of its arguments is relativized.<sup>3</sup>

Circassian relativization is structured this way (see Lander 2012 about Adyghe): all arguments besides the absolutive, when relativized, are indexed on the verb with the relative prefix *zə-*. The head of the relative clause can be external – in this case the relative clause is preposed to the head noun – or internal, i.e. embedded into the relative clause. In the first instance the case endings marking the syntactic role of the noun phrase in the main clause attach to the head noun (18a), in the second instance the head

<sup>2</sup> The verb *ž'əʔe-* ‘say’ is formed through incorporating the nominal root *ž'ə* ‘mouth’ into the verbal root *ʔe-*, for which the only known lexical meaning is ‘be’. I will use the gloss ‘say’, since there is no apparent evidence that *ž'əʔe-* ‘say’ is a derivative of the verb *ʔe-* ‘be’.

<sup>3</sup> Relativization also serves as an argument for the subordinate relation between the converb and the reported speech clause, see 2.3.1.

noun is marked with the adverbial ending and the case of the whole noun phrase is marked on its predicate (18b).

- (18) a. *[[we wjəg<sup>w</sup> z-e-p-t-a] pšaše-r] mjəs*  
 you your heart REL.IO-DAT-2SG.A-give-PST girl-ABS this
- b. *[we wjəg<sup>w</sup> pšaš-wə z-e-p-t-a-r] mjəs*  
 you your heart girl-ADV REL.IO-DAT-2SG.A-give-PST-ABS this  
 ‘This is the girl you gave your heart to.’  
 (Arkadiev and Lander, in preparation)

Relativization can serve as evidence for the subordinate and not coordinate status of the converb clause. In the construction with the converb *ž’jerjə*, if an argument is relativized out of the main clause, it may be that no argument is relativized out of the converb clause:

- (19) *mjes č’elečək-wə [aslen jə-wəč’ə-n-wə ž’je-rjə*  
 that boy-ADV Aslan 3SG.A-kill-FUT-ADV mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
*q-je-g<sup>w</sup>ew-a-te-r]*  
 DIR-DAT-yell-PST-IPF-ABS  
 ‘That is the boy<sub>i</sub> that yelled at Aslan<sub>i</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> will kill him<sub>i</sub>.’

In (19) the absolutive argument – *č’elečək* ‘boy’ – is relativized out of the main clause; the agent of the converb *ž’jerjə* is coreferential with this argument, but it does not undergo relativization.

If the converb clause were a coordinate clause, this would be a serious violation of the Coordinate Structure Constraint, first formulated in (Ross 1967), which states that no part of a conjunct may be moved out (20a), unless it is symmetrically extracted from the second conjunct also (20b):

- (20) a. \*I wanted the apple that John ate \_\_\_ and Mary ate a pear.  
 b. I wanted the apple that John bought \_\_\_ and Mary ate \_\_\_.

Thus, we must conclude that the form *ž’jerjə* is not a conjunct to the main clause, but an embedded structure.

The last argument for the term ‘converb’ is that, although *ž’jerjə* can introduce complements, it seems that its original syntactic status is adverbial, since no other forms marked with *-rjə* can introduce complements:

- (21) *se zexesxa a-r šhan<sup>w</sup>əbže-m qə-tje-we-rjə*  
 I heard DEM-ABS window-OBL DIR-LOC-knock-ADD  
 ‘I heard him knock on the window and...’  
 \*‘I heard him knock on the window.’

In (21) the sentence remains unfinished, since the marker *-rjə* implies antecedence and cannot be used to mark a well-formed complement.

Thus, we conclude that the form *ž’jerjə*, although marked by the additive marker *-rjə*, exhibits traits typical of a converb and will use this term hereafter.

## 2.2 Contexts

This section is devoted to the types of subordinate clauses *ž'jerjə* can introduce and matrix verbs with which it can be used.

### 2.2.1 Matrix verbs

The converb *ž'jerjə* can introduce complements and adjuncts in the following contexts:

– with utterance predicates (*ž'əʎe*- ‘say’<sup>4</sup> (15), *č'ewəpč'e*- ‘ask’ (18), *jex<sup>w</sup>ene*- ‘scold’ (22), *qjež'e*- ‘call’ (29) etc.):

- (22) *[aslen jəzerəž'e q<sup>w</sup>edameqəg<sup>w</sup>etč'a ž'-je-rjə]*  
 Aslan his arrowwood branch we.broke mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
*qedex<sup>w</sup>ena*  
 scolded us  
 ‘Aslan scolded us for breaking the branches of his arrowwood.’

– with propositional attitude predicates (*qəfeše*- ‘seem’, *jeg<sup>w</sup>əšəpse*- ‘think’, *g<sup>w</sup>jewəbədə*- ‘think’ (23) etc.):

- (23) *[aw stakan-pštərə-m qjeʎabwə š'jəšteč'e ž'a-bə]*  
 but cup-hot-OBL touching if.he.takes DEM-OBL  
*ʎəve xelxjə sədek<sup>w</sup>ene ž'-je-rjə]*  
 courage is.in.him I.will.marry.him mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
*pšaše-m jə-g<sup>w</sup> r-jə-wəbəd-a*  
 girl-OBL POSS-heart DAT-3SG.A-catch-PST  
 “‘But if he takes the hot cup with his hands (lit. touching it), there is courage in him, and I will marry him,’” – she thought (lit. caught in her heart)’ (AA)

– in other contexts with speech semantics (24), (25), (26), (27), and it is not obligatory for the reported speaker to be coreferential with any argument of the matrix verb (cf. (25)).

- (24) *g<sup>w</sup>əš'əʎažš'əʎa [wəlaž'eme ləž pšxəne ž'-a-rjə]*  
 saying there.is if.you.work meat you.will.eat mouth-3PL.A+say-ADD  
 ‘There is a saying: you’ll eat meat if you work (= no sweet without sweat).’
- (25) *se zexesxa [we wədek<sup>w</sup>ene ž'-a-rjə] a-r šəpqe*  
 I heard you will.marry mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD DEM-ABS truth  
 ‘I heard that you’re getting married, is that true?’
- (26) *sjade sjəwəč't [we wə-djele ž'-je-rjə]*  
 my father beat.me you 2SG.ABS-stupid mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 ‘My father beat me with the words: “You are stupid.”’

<sup>4</sup> Some speakers consider the use of *ž'jerjə* with the verb *ž'əʎe*- ‘say’ tautological.

- (27) *pis'mo wərasə-m x<sup>w</sup>jətχ ʒ'aš'twə [bʒedəχ<sup>w</sup>jətre*  
 letter Russian-OBL wrote.to.him thus two Bzhedugs  
*adəyjəš're dweχ<sup>w</sup>ə ʒ'-je-rjə]*  
 two Adyghe we.become mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'He wrote to the Russian thus, saying: "Among us were two Adyghe and  
 three Bzhedug people"' (AT)

Hence it is evident that the converb *ʒ'jerjə* considerably broadens the use of reported speech strategies, making them possible not only as complements of utterance and propositional attitude predicates, but in a wide variety of contexts, both as complements and adjuncts.

### 2.2.2 Reported speech strategies

The converb *ʒ'jerjə* can be used with several reported speech strategies:

- non-finite strategy marked with adverbial ending *-w(ə)*:

- (28) *aslen qəzʒ'jəʔa [nwebe mə-χ<sup>w</sup>e-n-wə ʒ'-je-rjə]*  
 Aslan said.to.me today NEG-go-FUT-ADV mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'Aslan said that he won't come today.'

- finite strategy, both direct (29) and indirect (30):

- (29) *zarjəne fatjəme ʒ'ərjəʔa [twejə ʒ'ene-daxe pš'əbər*  
 Zarina Fatima said.to.her how dress-pretty you are wearing  
*ʒ'-je-rjə]*  
 mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'Zarina said to Fatima: "What a pretty dress you have!"'

- (30) *[jəsəhat qəš'əχ<sup>w</sup>əpša ʒ'-je-rjə] zarjəne marjəne jeʒ'a*  
 her watch she.forgot mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD Zarina Marina called  
 'Zarina called after Marina, saying that she forgot her watch.'

This converb does not combine with the form marked with the factive prefix *zerə-* and case endings (cf. (7)):

- (31) *aslen qəzʒ'jəʔa [nwebe **zerə-mə-χ<sup>w</sup>e-ne-ɾ** (\*ʒ'-je-rjə)]*  
 Aslan said to me today **FACT-NEG-go-FUT-ABS** mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 'Aslan told me that he won't come today.'

The selective usage of *ʒ'jerjə* is semantically motivated. The Besleney factive form has the semantics of *fact* as in (Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970; Arutjunova 1988) – an element of the mental world that most often belongs to the presupposition of an utterance, *definite truth* in the terminology of (Ransom 1986) (32a) – and is contrasted in this sense to the adverbial form (see Gerasimov and Lander 2008; Serdobolskaja and Motlokhov 2009 on this contrast in the closely related Adyghe). The adverbial form is non-factive; it denotes a non-referential element of the mental world with an indefinite truth value (*undefined* or *indefinite truth* in the terminology of Ransom 1986) (32b) (Ershova 2012, 69-73).

- (32) a. *se sšaqəm* [a-bə txələ-r zer-jə-hə-ž'-a-r]  
 I didn't know DEM-OBL book-ABS **FCT-3SG.A-carry-RE-PST-ABS**  
 'I didn't know that he brought the book (the book is already there).'
- b. *se sšaqəm* [a-bə txələ-r jə-hə-ž'-a-w]  
 I didn't know DEM-OBL book-ABS 3SG.A-carry-RE-PST-**ADV**  
 'I didn't know if he brought the book (maybe, he didn't).'

The finite strategy is used only with utterance and propositional attitude predicates – a typical context for non-factive propositions with an indefinite truth value, thus we can assume that its semantics is similar to that of the adverbial form.

Besides the adverbial and the finite strategies, propositional attitude predicates employ another type of complement, where the predicate is marked with the instrumental case marker *-č'e*. This type of subordinate clause has the semantics of a *definite occurrence* in the terminology of (Ransom 1986) or *event* in the terminology of (Arutjunova 1988; Zaliznjak 1990) – a state of affairs that has taken place in the real world (Ershova 2012, 76-83). The converb *ž'jerjə*, although acceptable for most speakers with propositional attitude predicates, cannot combine with this strategy (33a) (cf. *ž'jerjə* with the adverbial form in (33b)):

- (33) a. *məjəlesə-m* *dwənje-r* *q'wəte-ž'ə-n-č'e*  
 this.year-OBL world-ABS break-RE-FUT-**INS**  
 (\*ž'-a-rjə) *sweš'əne*  
 mouth-3PL.A+say-ADD I am frightened  
 'I am scared that the end of the world will be this year.'
- b. *məjəlesə-m* *dwənje-r* *q'wəte-ž'ə-n-wə*  
 this.year-OBL world-ABS break-RE-FUT-**ADV**  
 ž'-a-rjə *sweš'əne*  
 mouth-3PL.A+say-ADD I.am.frightened  
 'They say that the end of the world is this year, and I am scared.'

There are two possible reasons for the fact that the converb *ž'jerjə* cannot combine with the instrumental strategy: the semantically motivated selectiveness of the converb in question or the partial preservation of its original lexical meaning – complements of utterance verbs cannot be marked with the instrumental case. In any case, the fact that the converb *ž'jerjə* is unacceptable with the factive form indicates that the selectiveness of the converb is at least partially semantically motivated, i.e. it can only introduce non-factive propositions with an indefinite truth value.

In this section we saw that the converb *ž'jerjə*, on the one hand, significantly broadens the usage of reported speech strategies, but on the other hand, demonstrates a semantically motivated restriction on its compatibility with different strategies.

## 2.3 Degree of grammaticalization

In this section I investigate the degree of grammaticalization that the converb *ž'jerjə* has undergone in terms of phonology, morphology and syntax.

### 2.3.1 Erosion and decategorialization

#### *Morphological features*

The converb, like a fully-fledged word, can inflect with personal markers corresponding not only to the agentive and absolutive participants, but also to other participants; in (34) we can see that the converb contains a benefactive marker introducing an indirect object:

- (34) [*we wəçəx<sup>w</sup>ədəx<sup>w</sup> p-x<sup>w</sup>ə-ž'ə-s-ʔe-rjə*] *sə qəwex<sup>w</sup>eχ<sup>w</sup>a*  
 you are.a.good.person 2SG.IO-BEN-mouth-1SG.A-say-ADD I toasted  
 'I toasted you with the words: "You are a good person."'

On the other hand, the converb has contracted forms in the third person:

- (35) a. *ž'-jə-ʔe-rjə* → *ž'jerjə*  
 mouth-3SG.A-say-ADD  
 b. *ž'-a-ʔe-rjə* → *ž'arjə*  
 mouth-3PL.A-say-ADD

Thus we can see that the converb in question has retained a full-fledged paradigm, but some of its forms have undergone phonological attrition, i.e. erosion, which is a symptom of partial grammaticalization of form.

#### *Syntactic features*

The converb *ž'jerjə* functions as a matrix verb with respect to the clause with reported speech semantics: it occurs in rigid postposition to the dependent clause in conformity with the Kabardian SOV word order:

- (36) *\*aslen we šhač'ezəx<sup>w</sup>əž'jəʔar* [*a-bəm*  
 Aslan you for.which.he.said.about DEM-OBL  
 [*ž'-je-rjə*] *pš'erəhač'e jəçəx<sup>w</sup>əqəm]*  
 mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD how to cook she doesn't know  
 'Is it about you that Aslan said: "She cannot cook?"'

On the one hand, the strict postposition of the converb is evidence for its status as the head with respect to the reported speech clause. On the other hand, this same fact is an indication of the limitation of its abilities as an independent predicate, since word order in Besleney is relatively free and the subordinate clause usually can be both in pre- and postposition to the main predicate (cf. (13) and (31)).

Once again, the most straightforward way of proving that we are dealing with a subordinate structure, where the reported speech is embedded into the clause headed by the converb, is appealing to relativization.

I illustrated earlier the mechanisms of Circassian relativization. There is one more aspect of this process that must be noted: when a participant of the dependent clause

undergoes relativization, the coreferential participant in the main clause is also relativized (see Lander 2012 about Adyghe):

- (37) *mjəs* [*fəz-wə*            *sə-z-de-ʔapəq<sup>wə</sup>-n-wə*  
 this woman-ADV    1SG.ABS-**REL.IO**-COM-help-MSD-ADV  
*sə-z-x<sup>wə</sup>əje*                    *zəpətə-r]*  
 1SG.ABS-**REL.IO**-want        always-ABS  
 ‘This is the woman I always want to help.’  
 (Arkadiev and Lander, in preparation)

In (37) the noun *fəz* ‘woman’, relativized out of the complement, is also indexed on the matrix verb with the relative marker *zə-* in the position of the indirect object.

On the other hand, if the participant of the main clause is relativized, it does not have to be relativized in the subordinate clause. This situation can be observed with the converb *ʒʹjerjə*. The agentive argument of the converb can undergo relativization, and in this case the coreferential participant in the subordinate clause may not be relativized (38a) (note that the coreferential argument in the main clause does undergo relativization despite the absence of overt marker on the matrix verb – the argument is absolutive and thus not specially indexed); but if the argument from the subordinate clause is relativized, it is also relativized in the clause headed by the converb (38b).

- (38) a. *mjes* [[*ʃʹeleçək-wə*    *aslen*    *jə-wəçʹə-n-wə*]  
 that boy-ADV            Aslan    3SG.A-kill-FUT-ADV  
*ʒʹə-zə-ʔe-rjə*                    *q-je-g<sup>wə</sup>ew-a-te-r]*  
 mouth-**REL.A**-say-ADD    DIR-DAT-yell-PST-IPF-ABS  
 b. *mjes* [*ʃʹeleçək-wə*    *aslen*            *zə-wəçʹə-n-wə*]  
 that boy-ADV            Aslan            **REL.A**-kill-FUT-ADV  
*ʒʹə-zə-ʔe-rjə*                    *q-je-g<sup>wə</sup>ew-a-te-r]*  
 mouth-**REL.A**-say-ADD    DIR-DAT-yell-PST-IPF-ABS  
 ‘That is the boy<sub>i</sub> that yelled at Aslan<sub>i</sub> that he<sub>i</sub> will kill him.’

Thus we come to the conclusion that the reported speech is embedded in the clause headed by the converb.

From (38) we can see that the argument of the converb can undergo relativization; this is evidence for the syntactic autonomy of the form in question. Another piece of evidence is that there can be an overt agentive noun phrase in the clause headed by the converb:

- (39) [[*psənçʹwə*    *qe-k<sup>wə</sup>e-ʒʹ]*            *fəzə-m*            *ʒʹ-je-rjə]*  
 fast            come.IMV            woman-OBL    mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
*ʃʹeleçəkə-m*    *qježʹa*  
 boy-OBL    called  
 ‘The woman called to the boy: “Come home quickly!”’

In (39) the oblique case ending, which is used to mark ergative arguments, on the word *fəz* ‘woman’ is evidence that it is an argument of the transitive converb; the predicate *ježʹe-* ‘call’ is intransitive and demands an absolutive argument.

On the other hand, the converb cannot be modified by an adverbial:

- (40) \**marjəne qəzewəpčə* [[*tawe majk<sup>w</sup>ep dəzerək<sup>w</sup>ener*]  
 Marina asked.me how Maykop how.will.we.go  
*šex-wə ž'-je-rjə*  
 quiet-ADV mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 \*‘Marina asked me, quietly saying: “How will we get to Maykop?”’

It is possible that an adverbial modifier is unavailable in this construction not because of the converb’s morphosyntactic grammaticalization, but because of its partial desemantization.

Thus, we can conclude that the converb *ž’jerjə* preserves most syntactic features of a full-fledged predicate (such as the ability to inflect and to head a clause), but its partial desemantization leads to the limitation of its syntagmatic freedom, i.e. the inability to be modified by adverbials.

### 2.3.2 Desemantization

The converb in question can be used with propositional attitude predicates (23), and most speakers allow the use of it with the predicate *ž’ə?e-* ‘say’, from which it is formed (15), which is evidence for the partial loss of the lexical meaning ‘say’. In the previous section we saw that the converb *ž’jerjə* cannot be modified by an adverbial phrase (40), which is also a sign of desemantization.

It is also important to note that, besides reported speech, this converb can introduce purpose clauses with no speech semantics. The subordinate predicate in this case takes the form of an action nominal (masdar in traditional terminology (Kumakhov 2006: 163)) with the marker *-n* (41) or *-n-wə* (42) or of a finite verb in the future tense (with the marker *-ne*) (43):

- (41) *bže-r jezβetaqəm* [[*wə-qə-če-ha-n*]  
 door-ABS I.didn’t.close 2SG.ABS-DIR-LOC-enter-MSD  
*ž’ə-s-?e-rjə*  
 mouth-1SG.A-say-ADD  
 ‘I didn’t lock the door so that you could enter.’
- (42) *supə-r zeč’erjə sšxəž’aqəm* [[*zerə-p-x<sup>w</sup>ə-rjəq<sup>w</sup>ə-n-wə*]  
 soup-ABS all I didn’t eat FCT-2SG.IO-BEN-suffice-MSD-ADV  
*ž’ə-s-?e-rjə*  
 mouth-1SG.A-say-ADD  
 ‘I didn’t eat all the soup so that there was enough for you.’
- (43) [[*aslen šxe-ne*] *ž’-je-rjə* *qetəsa*  
 Aslan eat-FUT mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD sat down  
 ‘Aslan sat down to eat.’

It is worth noting that only the masdar with an adverbial ending (*-n-wə*) can be used as a purpose construction without the converb *ž’jerjə* (44); the other forms cannot be used as adjuncts.

- (44) *bže-r jezβetaqəm* [[*wə-qə-če-ha-n-wə*]  
 door-ABS I didn’t close 2SG.ABS-DIR-LOC-enter-MSD-ADV  
 ‘I didn’t lock the door so that you could enter.’

Syntactically and morphologically the converb used in these purpose constructions is similar to the same converb used with reported speech: it takes personal markers (see (41) for first person); there can be an overt agentive noun phrase in the converb clause (45); the argument of the converb can be relativized (46); the converb cannot be modified by an adverbial phrase (47b) (cf. (47a), where the adverb *dəb<sup>w</sup>ase* ‘yesterday’ modifies the main predicate *ɣəç’ə* ‘launder’).

- (45) *[[qə-z-de-ʔapəq<sup>w</sup>ə-n]*      *ç’ale-m*      *ž’-je-rjə]*      *qe-k<sup>w</sup>-a*  
 DIR-1SG.IO-COM-help-POT      youth-OBL      mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD      came  
 ‘The boy came to help me.’
- (46) *mjəs* [*ç’al-wə*      *melə-r*      *fe-zə-bzə-n-wə*  
 this youth-ADV sheep-ABS      MAL-REL.A-cut-POT-ADV  
*ž’ə-zə-ʔe-rjə]*      *qe-k<sup>w</sup>-a-r*  
 mouth-REL.A-say-ADD      DIR-go-PST-ABS  
 ‘This is the boy that came to kill the sheep’
- (47) a. *dəb<sup>w</sup>ase*      *š’əbən-xe-r*      *z-ɣəç’-a*      *[[nwebe uže*  
**yesterday** clothes-PL-ABS I.washed      today      already  
*ɸ<sup>w</sup>əše zerə-χ<sup>w</sup>ə-ž’ə-n-wə]*      *ž’ə-s-ʔe-rjə]*  
 dry FCT-become-RE-POT-ADV      mouth-1SG.A-say-ADD
- b. *\*š’ə.bə.n-xe-r*      *z-ɣəç’-a*      *[[nwebe uže*      *ɸ<sup>w</sup>əše*  
 clothes-PL-ABS      I.washed      today      already      dry  
*zerə-χ<sup>w</sup>ə-ž’ə-n-wə]*      *dəb<sup>w</sup>ase*      *ž’ə-s-ʔe-rjə]*  
 FCT-become-RE-POT-ADV      **yesterday**      mouth-1SG.A-say-ADD  
 ‘I washed the clothes yesterday, so that they would be dry today.’

Thus we can see that the converb *ž’jerjə* has undergone partial desemantization and functions as a subordinating conjunction that introduces reported speech and purpose constructions.

### 2.3.3 Extension

Let us review the functions that the converb *ž’jerjə* has obtained through grammaticalization.

Firstly, the converb in question can introduce reported speech not only as complements (18), (23), but also as adjuncts (26) (a similar situation is observed in Ewe and is considered a feature of subordinating conjunctions (Lord 1976)). We can see in (48) that if the reported speech is in an adjunct position, the converb *ž’jerjə* may not be omitted.

- (48) *rwəslan* *qəsš’ətχ<sup>w</sup>a*      *[bz-jə-pš*      *s-we-še*  
 Ruslan      praised me      ten languages      1SG.A-PRS-know  
*\*(ž’-je-rjə)]*  
 mouth-3SG.A+say-ADD  
 ‘Ruslan praised me, saying that I know ten languages.’

Secondly, the converb *ž'jerjə* is used in purpose constructions (41)-(43). This path of grammaticalization is also known in typology (Heine and Kuteva 2004, 265-267).

### 3 Conclusion

As a result of this work we arrive at several conclusions.

Firstly, we can distinguish three main strategies of reported speech in the Besleney dialect of the Kabardian language: the non-finite indirect strategy; the finite direct and indirect strategies. The presence of two finite strategies of conveying reported speech leads to ambiguity and the false impression that there is a mixed strategy.

Secondly, there is a special reportative element in the Besleney dialect which is formed from the verb *ž'əʔe*- 'say' – the converb *ž'jerjə*. This converb, on the one hand, has preserved structural features of a fully-fledged word, i.e. a morphological paradigm and the ability to head a clause, and on the other hand, has obtained some traits of a conjunction, such as the ability to introduce reported speech as both complements and adjuncts in a wide variety of contexts. This converb is also used to mark purpose constructions. Thus, we come to the conclusion that the converb *ž'jerjə* combines traits of both a fully-fledged word and a grammaticalized conjunction. This poses a problem for the theory of grammaticalization as described by Lehmann (1995): the parameters of grammaticalization are expected to correlate at least to a certain extent, but the converb *ž'jerjə* accumulates a combination of considerable extension and desemantization, slight erosion (contracted forms of the converb in third person) and almost no decategorialization, thus showing a lack of correlation between parameters.

Reported speech in Besleney Kabardian presents both a typological and theoretical interest, accumulating non-trivial traits such as the falsely “mixed” reported speech strategy and the use of a highly desemantized reportative converb that has at the same time retained most of the structural features of a fully-fledged word.

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