ON DISJUNCTIVE CASE REALIZATION IN EASTERN KABARDIAN

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On Disjunctive Case Realization in Eastern Kabardian

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

On Disjunctive Case Realization in Eastern Kabardian

In this thesis, I document and analyze case valuation and case realization patterns in Kabardian. The typical case alignment pattern in Kabardian singles out subjects of transitives, marking subjects of intransitives and objects of transitives alike. Hence, I argue that Kabardian exhibits ergative case, analyzed as upward dependent case under the assumptions of Dependent Case Theory. Furthermore, Kabardian exhibits an inverse pattern where the special case marker that is identified as the ergative case in the language appears on objects of some transitive verbs. I argue that these verbs assign a lexical case to their complement, which happens to be syncretic with ergative. I show that this type of disjunctive case realization is fully predicted under Dependent Case Theory, further testing the predictions in causativization structures. I additionally show that caseless nouns in Kabardian are a result of an obliteration rule that applies post-syntactically in specific environments. Overall, the thesis brings further support to the idea that the case calculus is not performed contemporaneously, yet in steps determined by the nature of the case being assigned.

ÖZET

Doğu Kabardey Dilinde Ayırıcı Hal Gerçekleşmesi Üzerine

Bu tezde Kabardey dilindeki hal değerlendirme ve hal gerçekleşme modelleri belgelenip analiz edilmektedir. Kabardey dilindeki tipik hal hizalama modeli, geçişlilerin öznelerini ayırıp geçişsizlerin öznelerini ve geçişlilerin nesnelerini işaretler. Dolayısıyla Kabardey dilinin Bağımlı Hal Kuramı varsayımları altında yukarıya bağımlı hal olarak analiz edilen ergatif hal sergilediği savunulmaktadır. Ayrıca Kabardey dili, dilde ergatif hal olarak tanımlanan özel hal işaretleyicisinin bazı geçişli fiillerin nesnelerinde görüldüğü ters bir örüntü de sergilediği gösterilmektedir. Bu fiillerin, tamamlayıcılarına fiile bağlı hal atfettiğini, bunun da ergatif ile aynı biçime sahip olduğu ileri sürülmektedir. Ettirgen yapılarındaki öngörüleri test ederek, bu tür ayırıcı hal gerçekleşmelerinin Bağımlı Hal Kuramı kapsamında tamamen tahmin edilebilir oldukları gösterilmektedir. Ayrıca Kabardey dilindeki hal eki olmayan isimlerin, belirli ortamlarda sözdizim sonrası uygulanan bir baş-silme kuralının sonucu olduğu da savunulmaktadır. Genel olarak tez, hal eki atamasının eşzamanlı olarak yapılmadığı, ancak atanan halin doğasına göre belirlenen adımlarla gerçekleştirildiği fikrine daha fazla destek sağlamaktadır.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ø	null morpheme
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
APPL	applicative
AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causativizer
DAT	dative
DET	determiner
F	feminine
GEN	genitive
IMPF	imperfective
M	masculine
NOM	nominative
OBL	oblique
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
PRF	perfective
PRT	second position particle
PST	past tense
Q	Q-morpheme

SG singular

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the thesis

This thesis explains disjunctive case realization in Kabardian. Kabardian is argued to be a language on the ergative-absolutive alignment, with implications that case assignment in the language follows a certain pattern. From field work I have conducted to examine case assignment in Kabardian, there appears to be an intriguing pattern that defies the case assignment pattern in typical ergative-absolutive alignment languages. My analysis of the data will utilize existing theories on case assignment to give an explanation as to how this dialect of Kabardian realizes case on the NP arguments in various clauses.

1.2 Language background

Kabardian is a language of the Northwest Caucasus language family. Presently, the highest concentration of speakers of Kabardian resides in the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic of Russia. As a result of the Russo-Circassian War and consequent Circassian genocide in the 19th century, historical estimations document that greater than 95% of the Circassian population residing in the Caucasus were forcibly exiled or killed (Richmond, 2013). Those that were exiled live in diaspora in Türkiye, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, among other countries. Campaigns to preserve and teach Circassian languages are on the rise, both in the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, as well as in the diaspora communities around the world.

Within the Northwest Caucasus language family, there are three major language groups split among Circassian, Ubykh, and Abkhaz-Abaza (Colarusso, 1992). The Circassian language group is further divided between Western Circassian and Eastern Circassian. Within the Eastern Circassian group are reported to be Besleney and Kabardian – the primary focus of this thesis. Generally speaking, speakers of Northwest Circassian languages refer to themselves as Adyghe, though this is a term used to represent Western Circassian languages. Speakers of Kabardian may additionally define their language as Eastern Kabardian, representing the Eastern Circassian branch of the greater Circassian language group as a whole. For the purpose of this thesis, I will refer to the Kabardian as Eastern Kabardian. The Besleney branch of Eastern Circassian shares many similarities with Kabardian, making it intelligible for Kabardian speakers; due to this, identifying how the two languages diverge was important while conducting the field work for this thesis.

1.3 Data collection

The data in this thesis was elicited from a native speaker of Eastern Kabardian from the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic. Additional judgments and support came from a village in the west of Türkiye called Yenisığırcı in the Balıkesir province where a majority of the aging population are either native speakers of Eastern Kabardian or highly proficient in the language. Due to slight differentiations between the Eastern Kabardian spoken by my language consultant from the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic and the speakers from Yenisığırcı, I predominantly relied on data collection from my language consultant from the Kabardino-Balkaria region. The primary reason as to why I collected data from this language consultant as opposed to the others was due to a number of reasons including, capabilities in using technology, being literate in

reading and writing Eastern Kabardian, and the background of the language consultant growing up speaking the language.

In conducting my field work, I used my rudimentary knowledge of the language to come up with sentences for elicitations, focusing on discovering the case patterns of the language to see how and when different cases surface. As corpora for the language are few and far between, I relied predominantly on the data I collected for this thesis and created a small bank of examples with glosses which could allow further research to be conducted on this dialect of Eastern Kabardian. I acknowledge that there are dialectical discrepancies between speakers of Eastern Kabardian, thus according to some speakers of the language the linguistic data may not be their preferred way of eliciting the sentences. However, the case distribution tends to be uniform regardless of the vocabulary, verb conjugation, or other dialectical specific factors.

1.4 Roadmap of the thesis

The following chapter of my thesis will give an overview of the data I elicited from the language consultant. In going through the data, I will present different clauses outlining intransitive verbs, transitive verbs, ditransitives and causatives, as well as a peculiar inverse case assignment pattern discovered through the data collection. The aim of this section is to introduce the reader to the basic sentence structures of Eastern Kabardian with the case suffixes used on the arguments of the NPs in the clause. The third chapter will introduce the framework of Dependent Case Theory. In doing so, I use example sentences to demonstrate how dependent case and default case are assigned and determined cross-linguistically. Additionally, this section will touch on lexical case, and how lexical case interacts with the case calculus.

Following this, I will utilize the data laid out in Chapter 2 and, to it, apply Dependent Case Theory. Through this discussion I will identify anomalous sentences which appear to go against the rules of Dependent Case Theory. I will propose an account for how these sentences in fact do not cause Dependent Case Theory to fail in Kabardian yet demonstrate how Kabardian must utilize rules of Dependent Case Theory to solve its case calculus. To further strengthen this analysis, I will propose different features for the observed case affixes and utilize the framework of Distributed Morphology to account for the distribution of the case affixes in their specific environments. The final chapter of this thesis will wrap up my claims. I will leave room for a discussion on additional research to be conducted on Eastern Kabardian that was discovered through my field work.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction to Kabardian case suffixes

Kabardian utilizes several case suffixes that are used to indicate the role of the arguments in a clause. The data collected for this study shows that case suffixes on arguments are {-r} or {-m}. Of these suffixes, it appears that only {-m} is a syncretic suffix. The syncretism behind this suffix will be explained further in the description. While case-marking in Kabardian is available and obligatory in some cases, case-dropping is sometimes possible and furthermore some contexts forbid overt case realization altogether.

2.2 Intransitive clauses

Let's start with the simplest clauses that only feature one argument, namely clauses with intransitive verbs. In the presence of intransitive verbs, the sole core argument receives the {-r} suffix. In the literature this suffix is referred to as the absolutive or nominative case – at least in the presence of an intransitive verb. However, this does not necessarily hold true for transitive verbs. For the sake of the description, this suffix will simply be referred to as the R-case (R in glosses). As shown in sentences (1), (2), and (3) in the presence of an intransitive verb, the sole core argument of the sentence gets the R-case. Notice that all three sentences are animate arguments of an intransitive verb.

(1) ħa-r ɬ’-a:ɕ

dog-R ø.3.die-PST

The dog died.

(2) ɬ’ə-r ɬ’-a:ɕ

man-R ø.3.die-PST

The man died.

(3) ɬ’ə-r ɕ'ats'apχʷ-a:ɕ

man-R ø.3.run-PST

The man ran.

According to the language consultant, having the R-case on an argument gives a specific reading. Sentence (1) for example, indicates that the dog in question is not some or other dog, but a specific dog. If the R-case is not added on the argument as in (4), the sentence is no longer talking about a specific dog. Adding the numeral *one* before the argument makes the argument indefinite. Sentences (4) and (5) show that the lack of a suffix on an argument can affect the definiteness of the argument in question. Having a caseless subject signals that the subject must be indefinite. Therefore, the absence of a case marker on the subject is utilized by speakers to indicate nonspecificity of the argument.

(4) ħa ɬ’-a:ɕ

dog ø.3.die-PST

A dog died.

(5) zə ħa ɬ’-aːɕ

one dog ø.3.die-PST

One/a dog died.

If both a numeral and the R-case are added to an argument of an intransitive verb, a specific indefinite interpretation surfaces as in (6). There is an implication that the speaker is referring to a group of dogs and only one dog of the pack, unfortunately, passed away. This is the partitive reading. The language consultant reported that there does not appear to be a felicitous use of the sentence (6) in which neither the speaker nor the participant has any knowledge of the dogs being discussed. Thus, the case added on the argument in (6) must indicate a sense of specificity on the argument. This is directly contrasted with sentence (5) in which the absence of case, the sole difference between the two examples, on the argument yields a nonspecific indefinite reading of the argument.

(6) zə ħa-r ɬ’-aːɕ

one dog-R ø.3.die-PST

One of the/these dogs died.

Some languages exhibit a difference in what suffix can be added to an argument depending on the animacy of the argument in question. Kabardian does not make such a distinction. Changing the animacy of the agent of an intransitive verb, such as a human or non-human living being to an object, does not affect the suffix applied to the NP. In sentences (7) and (8), the intransitive sentences have an inanimate core argument, and the same case pattern as observed in (1), (2), and (3) is

followed. This shows that animacy does not play a role in determining the suffix attached to the arguments in a sentence.

(7) mələ-r t'kʷ'-aːɕ

ice-R ø.3.melt-PST

The ice melted.

(8) A bardak-ər qʷt-aːɕ

that glass-R ø.3.break-PST

The glass broke.

The example sentences from (1) to (8) all demonstrate how intransitive verbs interact with their arguments in the past. Changing the tense of the verb as in (9) and (10) shows that tense does not affect the suffix of the argument of the verb. Some languages exhibit distinct cases utilized for different tenses. Comparing sentences (7) and (8) with (9) and (10), it can be seen that the R-case is used for the subject of the sentence regardless of the tense of the verb. Thus, Kabardian does not have tense-dependent case assignment.

(9) mələ-r ma-t'kʷ'

ice-R 3-melt

The ice melts.

(10) ɬ’ə-r qofa

man-R ø.3.dance

The man dances.

Pronouns in Kabardian give additional evidence of which case is assigned to the subject of intransitive constructions. Of the six pronouns Kabardian uses, only two of them receive the R-case, the third person singular and plural pronouns[1]. In sentences (11) through (18), one can see that if the pronoun is not third person, there is no visible case on the argument. In sentences (11) through (14), the subject is the first person. Comparing sentences (11) with (12) and (13) with (14), if the pronoun has case, the sentence is automatically ungrammatical. The R-case added on the pronouns in (12) and (14) results in ungrammaticality. Furthermore, comparing (15) with (16) and (17) with (18), in one sentence the R-case is utilized, in the other it is omitted. When the R-case is omitted from the third-person pronoun, it ceases to be a personal pronoun and becomes on par with nonspecific indefinites. Although the grammaticality of (16) and (18) are debatable, they are included to emphasize that the third-person pronouns must have the R-case in order to function as pronouns in Kabardian.

(11) sə so-laʑə

1.s 1.SG-work

I work. / I am working.

[1] The third person singular pronoun is argued to be constructed through using the demonstrative “that” {a} with the R-case added; the third person plural has the addition of the pluralizing suffix {-xə-}.

(12) *sə-r so-laʑə

1.s-R 1.SG-work

I work. / I am working.

(13) də do-laʑə

1.pl 1.PL-work

We work. / We are working.

(14) *də-r do-laʑə

1.PL-R 1.PL-work

We work. / We are working.

(15) a-r mə-laʑə

3-R 3-work

He/She/It works. / He/She/It is working.

(16) *a mə-laʑə

thing 3-work

Intended: He/She/It works. / He/She/It is working.

(Consultant's comment: This string means something like "A thing works.".)

(17) a-xə-r mə-laʑə[2]

3-PL-R 3-work

They work. / They are working.

(18) *a-xə mə-laʑə

thing-PL 3-work

Intended: They work. / They are working.

(Consultant's comment: This string means something like "Things work.".)

Similarly to pronouns, proper names generally do not receive case[3]. In sentences (19) and (20), the subjects both refer to third-person singular entities and are uttered without case. As aforementioned, the third-person pronouns require case. When the R- case is added to proper names, the sentences then become ungrammatical as in (21) and (22).

(19) Alij ma-kʷə

Ali 3-go

Ali goes.

(20) Lalu ma-kʷə

Lalu 3-go

Lalu goes.

[2] If the third person plural pronoun is dropped, the verb then receives the pluralizing suffix becoming məlaʑəxə.

[3] When the locative/allative case is applied to proper names, applying the case is optional.

Istanbəl(-əm) ma-kʷə

Istanbul-LOC 3-goes

She goes to Istanbul.

(21) *Alij-r ma-kʷə

Ali-R 3-go

Ali goes.

(22) *Lalu-r ma-kʷə

Lalu-R 3-go

Lalu goes.

2.3 Transitive clauses

Let us now turn to transitive clauses, where two core arguments surface. In canonical transitive clauses, the subject of the verb takes a different case suffix which I will refer to as the M-case (in glosses this is marked by M)[4] while the direct object of the verb takes the R-case. Hence, in both intransitive and transitive constructions, the R-case manifests. The typical syntax for these constructions follows the SOV sentence pattern yielding a derivation of: Subject-M Direct Object-R Verb.

In sentences (23) through (26), the pattern illustrated above is demonstrated with the verb *eat {ʃxə}*[5]. The subjects of each of these sentences receive the M-case while the direct objects of each sentence receive the R-case. This contrasts with the

[4] This is labeled ergative in the literature. I refrain from using this label to keep the discussion at a completely analysis-neutral level in this descriptive section. As it will become clear, I have good reason to avoid the term ergative for the M-case.

[5] Kabardian has distinct verbs for a transitive reading of the English verb to eat versus an intransitive reading.

sabəj-m	ma:xʷa	qas	məʔarəca	ja-ʃx
boy-M	day	every	apple	3-eat

The boy eats an apple every day.

sabəj-r	ma:xʷa	qas	ma-:ʃxə
boy-R	day	every	3-eat

The boy eats every day.

previous examples of intransitive sentences in which the subjects of those sentences all receive the R-case. However, just like what we see for the distribution of subjects in intransitive clauses, there is no case-differentiation related to tense or animacy in transitive clauses.

(23) ħa-m lə-r jə-ʃx-aːɛ
dog-M meat-R 3-eat-PST
The dog ate the meat.

(24) ħa-m lə-r ja-ʃxə
dog-M meat-R 3-eat
The dog eats the meat.

(25) ɬ'ə-m lə-r jə-ʃx-aːɛ
man-M meat-R 3-eat-PST
The man ate the meat.

(26) ɬ'ə-m lə-r ja-ʃxə
man-M meat-R 3-eat
The man eats the meat.

Kabardian additionally has a somewhat flexible sentence order. In sentence (27), the standard pattern of SOV that Kabardian utilizes is shown. Sentence (28) shows the subject and direct object reversed while maintaining the cases they had in sentence (27). If the cases were to change, the meaning of the sentence would change

as in sentence (29). The only difference between the two sentences is the prefixation of the verb. Sentence (27) has a morpheme of {q-} while sentence (28) lacks the morpheme, suggesting that the prefix, which I will simply gloss as Q, is what licenses the noncanonical word order. The peculiarities of this morpheme will be discussed further in Chapter 5. Though the arguments of the verb can be moved around in a sentence, the preferred form, according to the language consultant, is sentence (27).

(27) xaːbzəχʷmə-m dəʁəʁaːkʷʼə-r qə-jə-bəd-aːɛ
police-M thief-R Q-3-catch-PST
The police caught the thief.

(28) dəʁəʁaːkʷʼə-r xaːbzəχʷmə-m jə-bəd-aːɛ
thief-R police-M 3-catch-PST
The police caught the thief.

(29) dəʁəʁaːkʷʼə-m xaːbzəχʷmə-r qə-jə-bəd-aːɛ
thief-M police-R Q-3-catch-PST
The thief caught the police.

Similarly to pronouns with intransitive verbs, when transitive verbs have pronouns or proper names for their arguments, they do not receive case. In sentences (30) and (31) the subjects of the sentences are proper names; in sentences (32) and (33), the subjects of the sentences are pronouns. When a pronoun has case, the sentences become ungrammatical as in (34) or (35). This is to be expected as

intransitive verbs operate in the same way in regard to what case can be visible on arguments.

(30) ma:xʷə qas Alij pɕəfʔa:pʔə-r ja-ʁaqa:bza
day every Ali kitchen-R 3-clean
Ali cleans the kitchen every day.

(31) Alij d͡ʒadəw-r fʔəwa ja-ła:ʁʷ[6]
Ali cat-R good 3-see
Ali loves the cat.

(32) ma:xʷə qas sə pɕəfʔa:pʔə-r sə-ʁaqa:bza
day every I kitchen-R 1.SG-clean
I clean the kitchen every day.

(33) sə d͡ʒadəw-r fʔəwa sa-ła:ʁʷ
I cat-R good 1.SG-see
I love the cat.

(34) *ma:xʷə qas Alij-m pɕəfʔa:pʔə-r ja-ʁaqa:bza
day every Ali-M kitchen-R 3-clean
Ali cleans the kitchen every day.

[6] The phonological underlying form of sentences such as this assume that the third-person object exists merely in the underlying form. It then undergoes phonological rules and processes which results in the apparent omission of the third-person object pronominal verbal prefixation in speech.

(35) *sə-m d͡ʒadəw-r fʔəwa sa-ła:ʁʷ

I-M cat-R good 1.SG-see

I love the cat.

When both arguments of a transitive verb are pronouns, the verb reflects the pronoun in its prefixation. As pronouns do not receive case, the preferred pattern when pronouns comprise the entirety of the arguments of a sentence is either the SOV pattern outlined earlier or dropping both of the pronouns in the sentence with just the realization of the pronominal agreement prefixes on the verb. In sentences (36) and (37), the pronominal suffixes are clearly visible on the verb. Kabardian only features object pronouns for the third person, otherwise, the language relies on the position of arguments and verbal prefixation to indicate the relationship of arguments in a sentence. When both the arguments of the sentence are third-person pronouns, such as in (38), having the case marked pronoun of *ar* is needed to avoid ambiguity. In sentences (39) and (40), only when the third-person pronoun is the object of verb, is there a visible case suffix on the object as proper nouns do not receive case.

(36) sə wə fʔəwa w-zo-łaʁʷ

I you good 2.SG-1.SG-see

I love you.

(37) abə sə fʔəwa sə-ja-łaʁʷ

he/she/it I good 1.SG-3-see

He/she/it loves me.

(38) abə a-r fʔəwa ja-łaʁʷ

He/she/it he/she/it-R good 3-see

He/she/it loves him/her/it.

(39) Alij a-r fʔəwa ja-łaʁʷ

Ali he/she/it-R good 3-see

Ali loves him/her/it.

(40) abə Alij fʔəwa ja-łaʁʷ

he/she/it Ali good 3-see

He/she/it loves Ali.

2.4 Ditransitive clauses

Clauses with three core arguments feature ditransitive verbs such as *send* or *give* or transitive verbs that have undergone morphological causativization. In such clauses, there is only one argument with the R-case, and it is typically the argument closest to the verb. In sentences (41) and (42), the arguments of the ditransitive verb *give* all exhibit this pattern: Subject-M Indirect Object-M Direct Object-R Verb.

(41) ɬ'ə-m sabəj-m txəɬə-r jə-rəjt-aːɛ

man-M child-M book-R 3-give-PST

The man gave the child the book.

(42) ɬ’ə-m sabəj-m txəɬə-r jə-ra:t

man-M child-M book-R 3-give

The man gives the child the book. / The man is giving the child the book.

Sentence (43) shows that the R-case is optional; the omission of the R-case on the direct object affects the definiteness of the argument. The numeral *zə* “one” may be included to further emphasize that the argument is indefinite. Though the R-case can be omitted, the M-case appearing on the subject and indirect object of the sentence appears to be imperative to the sentence.

(43) ɬ’ə-m sabəj-m (zə) txəɬə jə-ra:t

man-M child-M (one) book 3-give

The man gives the child a book.

Sentence (44) shows that when both the R-case and M-case are omitted from the sentence, this yields an ungrammatical sentence. In (45), only the agent of the verb has the M-case which still yields an ungrammatical sentence as the indirect object also needs to have case to be understood.

(44) *ɬ’ə sabəj txəɬə jə-ra:t

man child book 3-give

Intended: A man gave a child a book.

(45) *ɬ’ə-m sabəj txəɬə jə-ra:t

man-M child book 3-give

Intended: The man gave a child a book.

However, as shown with transitive and intransitive verbs, when the arguments are pronouns or proper nouns, the realization of case is not allowed. Sentence (46) shows that the order of the arguments when all arguments are proper nouns reveals the roles of the arguments in a sentence.

(46) Alij d͡ʒajm aħmad jə-ʁat͡ʃʼw-a:ɛ

Ali Cem Ahmed 3-send-PST

Ali sent Ahmed to Cem.

2.5 Inverse case patterns

Some verbs seem to pattern differently than the typical case patterns outlined above: we have a reversal of the pattern reported so far. Instead of the direct object having the R- case, the direct object receives the M-case while the subject receives the R-case. In clauses where the verb is a member of the set of verbs that include *think, read, teach, listen, bite, sting,* and *hit,* the pattern observed is: Subject-R Direct Object-M Verb. Furthermore, in clauses where the causativized versions of these verbs are used, the pattern observed is: Subject-M Indirect Object-R Direct Object-M Verb.

Sentences (47) through (53) show these patterns with transitive verbs. These are contrasted with the transitive examples outlined earlier where the pattern features the subject with the M-case and the direct object with the R-case. Sentences (50)

through (52) demonstrate the importance of third-person object and subject pronouns. Without different forms, such as with two proper nouns, the only resolution to the ambiguity of who listened to whom, in sentence (53), would be by following the argument structure of the sentence.

(47) ɬ’ə-r txəɬə-m jə-d͡ʒ-aːɛ
man-R book-M 3-read-PST
The man read the book.

(48) ɬ’ə-r txəɬə-m jo-d͡ʒa
man-R book-M 3-read
The man reads the book. / The man is reading the book.

(49) jaʁad͡ʒaːkʷ’a-r jad͡ʒaːkʷ’a-m ja-dəʔ-aːɛ
teacher-R student-M 3-listen-PST
The teacher listened to the student.

(50) a-r abə ja-dəʔw-aːɛ
He/she/it-R he/she/it 3-listen-PST
He/she/it listened to him/her/it.

(51) Alij abə ja-dəʔw-aːɛ
Ali he/she/it 3.listen.PST
Ali listened to him/her/it.

(52) a-r Alij ja-dəʔw-aːɛ

he/she/it-R Ali 3-listen-PST

He/she/it listened to Ali.

(53) Alij aħmad ja-dəʔw-aːɛ

Ali Ahmed 3-listen-PST

Ali listened to Ahmed.

In sentences (54) and (55), when the verbs *read* and *listen* are causativized, the agent of the verb no longer has the R-case, but the causee of the sentence receives the R-case.

(54) ɬ'ə-m sabəj-r txəɬə-m jərəj-ʁa-d͡ʒə

man-M child-R book-M 3-CAUS-read

The man makes the child read the book.

(55) jaʁad͡ʒaːkʷ'a-m jad͡ʒaːkʷ'a-r wərədə-m jərəj-ʁə-dəʔw-aːɛ

teacher-M student-R song-M 3-CAUS-listen-PST

The teacher made the student listen to the song.

2.6 Summary

Kabardian utilizes two case marking suffixes which I have labelled R-case and M-case. In canonical intransitive clauses, the agent of the verb receives the R-case; in canonical transitive clauses, the agent of the verb receives the M-case while the direct object receives the R-case. When a verb is a ditransitive or is a causativized

transitive, only the direct object of the clause receives the R-case while the remaining core arguments receive the M-case. Additionally, Kabardian does not make a distinction on case assignment/realization depending on the tense of the verb or the animacy of arguments in a given clause, which is exhibited in other languages.

Though there tends to be a recognized regular pattern in the distribution of cases in Kabardian, there also exists the inverse case distribution pattern. In the example sentences listed above, instead of the canonical transitive form of Subject-M Direct Object-R Verb, we observe the pattern to be Subject-R Direct Object-M Verb. When such inverse case patterned verbs are causativized, the agent and the direct object of the causativized verb receive the M-case while the intermediary argument, the causee, receives the R-case. As noted, there appears to be a certain set of verbs which adhere to this inverse pattern.

We have seen that overt case marking is not possible on proper names and non-third person pronouns. Furthermore, we have seen that case on the direct object can be omitted to make it nonspecific. Since this does not affect case realization on other arguments, it is not included in the summary table below, which presents all attested patterns of case realization in Kabardian.

Table 1. Case Realization in Kabardian

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object
Intransitive Verb	-r	N/A	N/A
Transitive Verb	-m	N/A	-r
Ditransitive verb	-m	-m	-r
Inverse Verb	-r	N/A	-m
Causativized Inverse Verb	-m	-r	-m

CHAPTER 3

CASE ASSIGNMENT

3.1 Introduction

Before approaching an analysis of the data identified in section 2, I will first discuss the relevant theories, providing some background into case assignment and case theory. I will explain the notion of default case and how default case is approached in languages of different case alignment systems. Following this, I will suggest relevant theories of case assignment that are utilized to explain a variety of case assignment patterns and exceptions cross-linguistically. In describing these theories, I will use linguistic data to show concrete examples of how case assignment is carried out, primarily using the framework of Dependent Case Theory (Marantz, 1991; Baker & Vinokurova, 2010; Baker, 2014; Baker & Bobalijk, 2017; Baker, 2019).

3.2 Default case

As is well-known in the typological literature (Comrie, 1989; Croft, 2003; Song, 2014), most languages are split between nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive case alignment, which concerns whether transitive subjects or transitive objects are singled out for a distinct case realization. In both alignments, there is typically one case that is the default case, which appears on all NPs in transitive and intransitive clauses other than the one that is singled out. In this sense, the default case can also be considered like an "elsewhere" case. In nominative-accusative languages, the default case is said to be the nominative case, while in ergative-absolutive languages, the default case is said to be the absolutive case (de Hoop & Malchukov, 2008). It is important to acknowledge that the default case does not

equal the phonologically unmarked case, though, for many nominative-accusative languages, the default case appears to be a phonologically unmarked nominative (McFadden, 2007)[7].

What distinguishes the default case is that the default case is not assigned or derived through syntactic processes (Marantz, 1991; Schütze, 2001). The rationale behind this distinction of default case between these two alignments stems from the observed crude template of how these alignments determine case assignment according to the transitivity of a given verb in a clause. In the nominative-accusative alignment outlined in pattern (a), the nominative is the case assigned to the subject of the clause regardless of the transitivity of the verb in the clause. In pattern (b), absolutive serves as the case assigned to the subject of an intransitive verb as well as the object of a transitive verb[8].

a. Nominative-accusative alignment

nominative intransitive verb

nominative accusative transitive verb

b. Ergative-absolutive alignment

absolutive intransitive verb

ergative absolutive transitive verb

For the purpose of this thesis, I will make certain generalizations concerning the default case in nominative-accusative and ergative-absolutive languages. As

[7] McFadden (2007) argues that English is an outlier among nominative-accusative languages in that the default case is the oblique case as the nominative case appears to be dependent on certain conditions in order to surface. Schütze (2001) argues that the default case for English is the accusative case (e.g., *him* instead of *he*). Regardless, both agree that the default case in English cannot be the nominative case.

[8] These patterns are, as stated, crude frameworks for how the alignments are observed to operate in such languages. This does not assume that these are the only patterns available, however, they can be called the most general patterns used to generalize the way a given language is assumed to function.

stated, the nominative tends to be the default case in nominative-accusative languages and the absolutive tends to be the default case for ergative-absolutive languages. Explanations as to how default case emerges in these languages will be demonstrated in the following subsection on Dependent Case Theory. Generalizing the default case as such overlooks peculiarities of split-ergative languages, nominative-accusative languages in which the nominative case is not the default case, among others, yet this provides a basis for understanding uniformity in the default case cross-linguistically. By making such generalizations, seeing the commonalities between the nominative case in nominative-accusative languages and the absolutive case in ergative-absolutive languages becomes less challenging.

3.3 Dependent case theory

Marantz's proposal of how dependent case is assigned follows the rule outlined below (Marantz, 1991).

- Dependent case is assigned by V+I to a position governed by V+I when a distinct position governed by V+I s:
    - not "marked"
    - distinct from the chain being assigned dependent case

        Dependent case assigned up to subject: ergative

        Dependent case assigned down to subject: accusative

Baker and Vinokurova put Marantz's rules in simpler terms by proposing when there are two NPs in a clause, where NP1 c-commands NP2, NP2 is marked as accusative only if NP1 has not been marked for case (Baker & Vinokurova, 2010). This conversely works for ergative languages by readjusting the wording of Baker and Vinokurova's proposal. When two NPs are in a clause, where NP1 c-commands

NP2, mark NP1 as ergative only if NP2 has not been marked for case (Baker, 2014). These two rules suggest that when there are two distinct NPs in a clause, if the lowest NP is accusative, the highest NP can never be ergative and vice versa[9]. With this idea, the ergative case "flows" upwards; conversely, accusative case "flows" downwards. As several languages exhibit split ergative systems, those languages could be utilizing both upwards and downwards dependent case strategies, albeit under differ tense/aspect configurations.

Turkish, being a nominative-accusative language, the subject of a sentence receives the nominative case while the object of the sentence typically receives the accusative case. Sentences (1) and (2) demonstrate a typical pattern for transitive verbs in Turkish. In both sentences, there are two NPs, one with the nominative case and one with the accusative case. Applying the rules regarding dependent case to the Turkish sentences below, we would always expect the lowest NP to be assigned the accusative case. This raises some issues with a sentence such as sentence (3) where the object of the sentence receives the ablative case while the subject of the sentence receives the nominative case. The rules above do not appear to account for sentence (3) as one would expect, based on the fact that Turkish is a nominative-accusative language, the lowest NP of the clause to receive the accusative case as in sentence (4). Dependent case theory accounts for these divergences from the norm by acknowledging that some lexical items such as verbs can assign a lexical case to the argument that they select. The Turkish verb for *like (hoşlanmak)* lexically selects an

[9] Sahaptin is a language proposed to have both ergative and accusative NPs occurring in the same clause. The highest NP is marked with ergative while the lowest NP is marked with accusative. This occurs only under special conditions in which there is a third person subject and a first- or second-person object (Deal, 2010).

ablative object thus blocking the accusative case to be an option for the object of the verb.

(1) Can kedi-yi sev-iyor.
Can-NOM cat-ACC love-PROG
Can loves the cat.

(2) Nazmiye kitab-ı oku-du.
Nazmiye-NOM book-ACC read-PST
Nazmiye read the book.

(3) Gülden kardeş-in-den hoşlan-m-ıyor.
Gülden-NOM sibling-3.POSS-ABL like-NEG-PROG
Gülden does not like her sister.

(4) *Gülden kardeş-in-i hoşlan-m-ıyor.
Gülden-NOM sibling-3.POSS-ACC like-NEG-PROG
Gülden does not like her sister.

Causativizing sentences in Turkish additionally provide important data for understanding how case assignment and verb-assigned cases interact with the arguments in a clause. The causativization morpheme in sentences (5) and (6) below are */-t/* and */-tir/*. These necessitate the addition of one more NP argument for the role of the causer. Sentence (5) is built upon sentence (2) above. When the causativization morpheme is added to the verb *read*, a new causer NP is introduced, *Ali*. As the

lowest NP of the clause has the accusative case, thus preventing the accusative case from being added to a higher NP in the clause. Instead, the causee of the clause is assigned the dative case, indicating the role of the NP as the one being caused to do the verb *read*. However, sentence (6) shows that when a verb lexically selects the case of its argument, the pattern diverges from what would normally be expected. Similar to the verb *like* in sentences (3) and (4), the verb *hate* in sentence (6) lexically selects the ablative case for its argument *cigarette*. The causee of the sentence, *Ayşe*, does not have the dative case as in sentence (5), but the accusative case. How would dependent case theory approach such an example?

It appears that the lexical case must be assigned to the complement of the verb first, thus *hate* lexically assigns the ablative case to the lowest NP in the clause, *cigarette*. Dependent case calculus would then assign the accusative case to the lowest argument available for case assignment. In sentence (6), *Ayşe*, receives the accusative case. As the causer of the sentence has the Turkish default nominative case, no additional case would be assigned in the clause yielding a sentence in which the causee of the clause receives the accusative case in the presence of a lexically assigned case on the lowest NP argument of the clause (Butt et al., 2007; Dikmen et al., 2022, 2023).

(5)	Ali	Nazmiye'y-e	kitab-ı	oku-t-tu.
	Ali-NOM	Ayşe-DAT	book-ACC	read-CAUS-PST
	Ali made Ayşe read the book.			

(6) Ali Ayşe'y-i sigara-dan nefret et-tir-di.
Ali-NOM Ayşe-ACC cigarette-ABL hate AUX-CAUS-PST
Ali made Ayşe hate cigarettes.

Basque exhibits ergative-absolutive alignment. In the presence of intransitive verbs, the subject receives the absolutive case. With transitive verbs, the subject receives the ergative case while the object of the sentence receives the absolutive case. For ergative-absolutive languages, the intransitive subject and transitive object pattern together as opposed to the transitive subject. In sentence (7), the verb being intransitive means that the single NP of the clause receives the absolutive case. When there are two NPs and a transitive verb, dependent case theory tells us that the highest NP in the structure will be marked with the ergative case if the lower NP in the structure has not received case. As Basque does not assign the accusative case to the object of a transitive verb, the highest NP in the structure should receive the ergative case. Sentence (8) shows that this indeed happens in Basque.

(7) mutil-a etorri da eskola-ra
boy-DET.ABS come AUX school-DAT
The boy came to school.

(8) neska-k mutil-a ikusi du
girl-ERG boy-DET.ABS see AUX
The girl saw the boy. (Hualde, 1986)

Hindi is one of the few languages in the world in which there exists three different systems for case assignment depending on the verb in the clause. Subjects of a clause can either be assigned the ergative case or the nominative case. The ergative case is solely used for the perfective aspect in Hindi, while the nominative case is used elsewhere (Narasimhan, 2002). Though Hindi is not a strict ergative language, examples from the literature show that dependent case theory can work in such systems, too. In sentence (9), there seems to already be an issue with the dependent case theory. Both NPs in sentence (9) receive dependent case, though the rules of dependent case theory stipulate that one NP must be caseless for the dependent case to surface. Sentence (10), on the other hand, carries the same meaning as sentence (9) (Narasimhan, 2002), yet has the nominative case on the object instead of the accusative case or absolutive case[10]. Baker proposes that though the ergative and the accusative cases are dependent cases, their assignment occurs in different domains of the syntactic hierarchy, thus allowing their phonological realization (Baker, 2019). What is significant about this claim is that tripartite systems can also be accounted for in the realm of dependent case theory.

(9) raam-ne kapDle-ko phaaDl-aa
Raam-ERG cloth-ACC tear-PFV.SG.M
Raam tore the cloth.

[10] In Hindi, there does not appear to be an absolutive case in that the perfective aspect could be an ergative-absolutive language in the perfective aspect; however, it seems that the nominative case could be synonymous with the absolutive case for our purposes.

(10) raam-ne kapDlaa phaaDl-aa

Raam-ERG cloth-NOM tear-PFV.SG.M

Raam tore the cloth. (Narasimhan, 2002)

Additional data from Hindi provides examples of how ergative can sometimes be blocked when it would be expected to be assigned based on the patterns of the language. Recall that the ergative case surfaces on the higher NP of a transitive verb in the perfective aspect. In sentence (11), the subject of the sentence receives the dative case while the object of the sentence receives the nominative case. As this sentence is in the perfective aspect, we would expect the subject of the sentence to receive the ergative case as the object of the sentence is caseless. However, the dative case is lexically assigned by the verb *receive* to ensure the subject of the sentence has the dative case. Sentence (12) demonstrates that when the verb is *receive,* the ergative case cannot be assigned to the subject of the clause, even though the verb is in the perfective aspect. These sentences are significant in demonstrating that lexical case can trump expected case assignment in languages in which ergative case can be assigned.

(11) raam-ko ek kitaab mil-ii

Raam-DAT one book-NOM receive-PFV.SG.F

Raam received a book.

(12) *raam-ne ek kitaab mil-iii

Raam-ERG one book-NOM receive.PFV.SG.F

Raam received a book. (Narasimhan, 2002)

Baker argues in favor of the dependent case account of ergative, comparing it against an alternative theory of ergative, namely ergative as an inherent case[11]. The idea that ergative could be an inherent case assumes that the subject of both unergative verbs and transitive verbs should be assigned the ergative case since both types of arguments denote agents, while unaccusative subjects should not receive ergative case. Baker acknowledges that a couple of languages do fit into the identified split-S pattern. However, in languages like Shipibo, regardless of its thematic role, the intransitive subjects are all assigned the absolutive case (Baker, 2014). This is shown by the Shipibo examples below.

(13) Joni-bo-ra teet-ai.
person-PL-PRT work-IMPF
The people are working.

(14) Rosa-ra bewa-ke.
Rosa-PRT sing-PRF
Rosa sang.

(15) Kokti-ra joshin-ke.
Fruit-PRT ripen-PRF
The fruit ripened.

[11] Woolford expands on standard case theory by acknowledging that though case is demonstrated to be split between structural and nonstructural case, nonstructural case itself can be further divided between lexical and inherent case (Woolford, 2006). Lexical case is the lexically selected case whereas inherent case is purported to be tied to the thematic role of the argument.

(16) Maria-ra mawa-ke.

Maria-PRT die-PRF

Maria died. (Baker, 2014)

The ergative case is then seen in Shipibo only when another NP is present in the clause. In sentences (17) and (18) the subjects of the sentences are assigned the ergative case, while the objects of the transitive verb are realized as the absolutive case, which is the default case in the system. This follows the logic outlined by Baker and Vinokurova: when there are two NPs in a clause, if NP2 is not marked for case then mark NP1 with the ergative case. We see that the NP2, or object, of both of these sentences have not been marked for case; therefore, NP1 is assigned the ergative case.

(17) Maria-nin-ra ochiti noko-ke.

Maria-ERG-PRT dog find-PRF

Maria found the dog.

(18) Ochiti-nin-ra bake-bo natex-ke.

dog-ERG-PRT child-PL bite-PRF

The dog bit the children. (Baker, 2014)

More conclusive evidence against the inherent analysis of the ergative and in favor of the independence of the thematic role of the NP from the case the NP gets comes from cases where an intransitive verb is used in an applicative construction in Shipibo. Referring back to sentence (13), the clause has an intransitive verb and one

NP. The case assigned to the NP is absolutive as, due to it being an intransitive verb, there are no other NPs available in the sentence for case assignment. Building off sentence (13) with sentence (19), a new NP is introduced in the clause with the addition of the applicative marker on the verb, *-xon*. When a second NP is introduced in the clause, the case realization changes. The subject no longer has the absolutive case but is now marked as ergative (despite the fact that its thematic role stays constant) while the newly introduced NP of the clause, Rosa, has default case. Sentences (20) and (21) show that the assigned case on the subject affects the overall grammaticality of the clause. In sentence (20), the applicative introduces the second NP of the sentence which receives the absolutive case while the subject of the case has the ergative case. What can be inferred from sentence (21) is, that without the applicative and second NP in the clause, the subject of the intransitive verb would be assigned the absolutive case. However, the second NP being introduced with *-xon* on the verb, the subject must take the ergative case as in sentence (20). If ergative were truly a result of inherent case assignment, the structure of these sentences should not affect the assignment of the case, as the role of the subject NP does not change in the applicative construction.

(19) Joni-boan-ra Rosa tee-xon-ai.
person-PL.ERG-PRT Rosa work-APPL-IMPF
The people/They work for Rosa.

(20) Nokon shino-n-ra e-a mawa-xon-ke.
my.GEN monkey-ERG-PRT me-ABS die-APPL-PRF
My monkey died on me.

(21) *Nokon shino-ra e-a mawa-xon-ke.
my.GEN monkey.ABS-PRT me-ABS die-APPL-PRF
My monkey died on me. (Baker, 2014)

This does not explain all examples of case assignment in Shipibo. Baker identifies and provides exceptions to what has been shown in the language thus far. Sentence (22) shows a seemingly intransitive verb with an ergative subject. One argument to be made to explain why the ergative case surfaces is that the verb *row* in Shipibo lexically selects the ergative case for its NP. However, Baker argues that the verb *row*, as well as a few more additional identified verbs, take null NPs as their arguments. Following this logic, sentence (22) could be interpreted as "Jose rowed [the boat]." According to Valenzuela (2003), these null NPs can be overtly realized when they are elicited but are generally omitted. This provides a reasonable explanation for why certain verbs in Shipibo appear to be exceptions. Seemingly unergative verbs can have concealed transitive structures, justifying the emergence of the ergative case on the subject NP.

(22) Jose-kan-ra wina-ke.
Jose-ERG-PRT row-PRF
Jose rowed. (Valenzuela, 2003)

Given that there is compelling evidence from languages like Shipibo showing us that ergative cannot always be an inherent case, it is a legitimate question whether it is ever an inherent case. As we will see in Chapter 4, a treatment of ergative case in Kabardian which takes it to be a structural case fully explains the data. We will also

see that the puzzling inverse patterns identified also follow from the logic of dependent case theory.

CHAPTER 4

CASE CALCULUS IN KABARDIAN

4.1 Introduction

Excluding clauses with inverse verbs, case distribution in Kabardian follows the typical ergative-absolutive pattern as documented with the data in Chapter 2. This section aims to apply the rules outlined by dependent case theory delineated in Chapter 3 to the Kabardian data documented via the fieldwork I conducted from the Eastern Kabardian dialect I documented in Chapter 2. In doing so, I will demonstrate how dependent case theory, more precisely, upward dependent case assignment, can be applied to this dialect of Kabardian. I will provide data providing evidence of which case appears to be the default case. I will review the cases in Kabardian in which default case is applied to the single NP argument in the presence of intransitive verbs. Building upon this, I will outline how a single upward dependent case rule accounts for the distribution of the ergative in clauses where the verb is transitive as well as in clauses where the verb is ditransitive or a causativized transitive. Then, we turn to clauses with inverse verbs and their causativized counterparts. Finally, I discuss how caseless NPs that are interpreted as nonspecific arguments fit in the overall picture.

Recall the dialect of Eastern Kabardian we are investigating has two case markers which are productively used in the language: {-r} and {-m} whose distribution in canonical transitive clauses suggests that {-m} is ergative while {-r} is the default case. For ease of understanding the case assignment and derivations in the following subsections, I will include relevant sections from the table copied below at the beginning of each subsection.

Table 1. Case Realization in Kabardian

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object
Intransitive Verb	-r	N/A	N/A
Transitive Verb	-m	N/A	-r
Ditransitive verb	-m	-m	-r
Inverse Verb	-r	N/A	-m
Causativized Inverse Verb	-m	-r	-m

4.2 Default case in Kabardian

In order to test for what could be the default case in Kabardian, I elicited single NP answers asking for the agent or the theme of various actions. These tests follow from Schütze's (2001) analysis of the default case in English, where Schütze argues that the default case in English is the accusative case as demonstrated by bare pronoun answers to questions[12]. With the questions and answers listed in dialogs (1), (3), and (4), we observe that the R-case uniformly appears on the sole NP answer for both the third-person singular pronoun, as well as the noun. For dialog (1), the transitive verb *help* exhibits the canonical transitive pattern of M-R. However, eliciting a bare pronoun response to the question of "Who will help us tomorrow?", instead of seeing the M-case on the answer *woman* (*fəzə*), the answer uses the R-case. If the answer were to be the full declarative sentence with two NPs and the verb, the subject of the sentence would no longer have the R-case but the M-case, following the expected case pattern of canonical transitives as shown in sentence (2). In dialog (3), the verb *listen*, which follows the inverse verb pattern of R-M, has the R-case on both the

[12] An example of such a test for English would be: "Who is going?" "Me." The bare pronoun answer here is not "I" which provides evidence that the default case cannot be the nominative case whereas in many nominative-accusative languages it is the nominative case (Schütze, 2001).

third-person singular pronoun and on the answer *student* (*jad͡ʒa:kʷ'ə*). Dialog (4) asks for the object argument of the verb *listen* which, as a bare pronoun, it still receives the R-case. When the answer is a declarative sentence, the R-case is no longer seen on object, but the M-case as shown in sentence (5); this is expected as *listen* follows the inverse verb pattern. As the R-case appears as a response to questions using verbs of varying case patterns, this gives an indication that the R-case in this dialect of Eastern Kabardian is indeed the default case in the language.

(1) Pɕədaj xət də qə-d-əʔəpəkʷ'-nu-rʔ
tomorrow who we/us Q-1.pl-help-FUT-INT
Who will help us tomorrow?
Fəzə-r
woman-R
The woman.
A-r.
she-R
Her.

(2) Pɕədaj fəzə-m də qə-d-əʔəpəkʷ'-nuɕ
tomorrow woman-M we/us Q-1.pl-help-FUT
The woman will help us tomorrow.

(3) xət jaʁəd͡ʒa:kʷ’ə-m jə-dəʔw-a:-r

who teacher-M 3-listen-PST-INT

Who listened to the teacher?

jad͡ʒa:kʷ’ə-r

student-R

The student.

A-r.

a-R

Him/Her.

(4) jad͡ʒa:kʷ’a-r xət jə-dəʔw-a:-r

student-R teacher-M 3-listen-PST-INT

Who did the student listen to?

jaʁəd͡ʒa:kʷ’ə-r

teacher-r

The teacher.

A-r.

He-r

Him.

(5) jad͡ʒa:kʷ’a-r jaʁad͡ʒa:kʷ’a-m ja-dəʔ-a:ɛ

student-R teacher-m 3-listen-PST-INT

The student listened to the teacher.

4.3 Intransitive verbs

Intransitive verbs in Kabardian take the following pattern as spliced from the original Table 1. For clauses that have intransitive verbs, the sole NP argument serves as the subject of the verb. As Kabardian is a pro-drop language, when a pronoun is used, the NP is covertly realized in the clause with an overt pronominal prefix on the verb.

Table 2. Intransitive Case Pattern in Kabardian

	Subject
Intransitive Verb	-r

In sentence (6) below, we have a simple sentence of "The man ran". The default case surfaces on the sole NP. Under both ergative-absolutive alignment languages and nominative-accusative alignment languages, the case which is default surfaces in clauses with a single NP. Could the ergative case also be assigned in an intransitive sentence such as sentence (6)? According to the rules of dependent case theory outlined in Chapter 3, the ergative case can only be assigned in the presence of two caseless NPs existing in a clause. Recall that Baker and Vinokurova (2010) state that when two NPs are in a clause, the c-command relationship between the two NPs determines the dependent case assigned to the argument. Therefore, sentence (6) can only have the default case on the single NP in the clause.

(6) ɬ'ə-r ɕ'ats'apχʷ-aːɕ

man-R ø.3.run-PST

The man ran.

4.4 Transitive verbs

In clauses with transitive verbs, the subject NP has the M-case while the direct object has the default R-case. The table below shows the typical pattern that transitive verbs follow regarding case assignment.

Table 3. Transitive Case Pattern in Kabardian

	Subject	Direct Object
Transitive Verb	-m	-r

Taking the sentence from Chapter 2, sentence (7) below has two NP arguments and the transitive verb *eat*. Unlike in English with a verb such as *eat*, Kabardian has both a transitive form and an intransitive form of the verb. Acknowledging this distinction, the verb used in sentence (7) is indeed a true transitive verb which must have two NP arguments. As sentence (7) has a transitive verb with two NP arguments, we can apply dependent case theory to begin to unravel how Kabardian fits into its framework. There are two options for determining the dependent case in the language: either the M-case or the R-case. If the M-case is the dependent case in Kabardian, then Kabardian exhibits upward dependent case. If the R-case is the dependent case in Kabardian, then Kabardian exhibits downward dependent case. From sentence (7) there is not enough evidence to determine whether Kabardian exhibits one or the other. Without the intransitive clauses outlined in Chapter 2 and described in the previous section on intransitive verbs in this chapter, it would be impossible to determine the direction in which dependent case flows in Kabardian.

(7) ħa-m lə-r jə-ʃx-aːɛ

dog-M meat-R 3-eat-PST

The dog ate the meat.

To examine the direction in which the dependent case flows in Kabardian, let's examine sentence (8). Sentence (8) is an intransitive verb with the third-person singular pronoun as the sole argument of the clause. The third person singular pronoun takes the default (R-)case in the intransitive clause.

(8) a-r m-əlaʑə

3-R 3-work

He/She/It works. / He/She/It is working.

In sentence (9), there is a transitive verb with two third-person singular pronouns for the NP arguments. The pattern in Kabardian for transitive verbs assumes that subject receives the M-case and the direct object receives the R-case. In the subject position of transitive verbs, the third-person pronoun takes on a different form in that we do not see a construction such as /a-m/ but *abə*. This is distinct from the third-person pronoun *a* which gets the R-case in both intransitive sentences and as the direct object of transitive verbs. These two sentences are significant in that they show stark evidence of the alignment of Kabardian. If Kabardian were a nominative-absolutive language, the dependent case would flow downwards. With sentence (10) the R-case would not be realized on the direct object of the verb, yet on the subject of the transitive verb. The M-case suffix, or *abə* third-person singular pronoun would instead be in the direct object position so that there would be a

sentence such as in sentence (10). To force a nominative-accusative interpretation of sentence (10) yields an incorrect sentence in the language concluding that Kabardian does indeed demonstrate an ergative-absolutive alignment. Based on this conclusion, Kabardian must exhibit upward dependent case according to dependent case theory, realized by the M-case.

(9)	abə	a-r	fʔəwa	ja-łaʁʷ
	He/she/it.M	he/she/it-R	good	3-see
	He/she/it loves him/her/it.			

(10)	*a-r	abə	fʔəwa	ja-łaʁʷ
	He/she/it-R	he/she/it.M	good	3-see
	He/she/it loves him/her/it.[13]			

Revisiting the first transitive sentence example in this section with sentence (11), we can utilize dependent case theory to see how Kabardian assigns case. As it is established that Kabardian is an ergative-absolutive alignment language, and that dependent case in Kabardian is assigned upwards, this leaves us with the following rule, paraphrased from Baker, on upward dependent case – when two NPs are in a clause, where NP1 c-commands NP2, mark NP1 as ergative only if NP2 has not been marked for case. Applying this to sentence (11), there are two NPs in the transitive clause. NP1 is in a c-command relationship with NP2 as they are both arguments of the transitive verb *eat*. As the absolutive case tends to be the default case in ergative-

[13] This sentence is not necessarily incorrect in Kabardian; however, to force a different interpretation of the roles of the NP arguments of the sentence so that they exhibit a nominative-accusative pattern is incorrect.

absolutive alignment languages, the R-case cannot be the dependent case. Rather, it is the default case in Kabardian. What remains is the M-case, or the upward dependent (ergative) case. The higher NP in sentence (11) is then marked with the upward dependent case which we have referred to as the M-case. The direct object of the verb, *meat*, then gets the default R-case.

(11) ħa-m lə-r jə-ʃx-aːɛ

dog-M meat.R 3-eat-PST

The dog ate the meat.

4.5 Inverse verbs

As was shown in Chapter 2, there appears to be a set of transitive verbs, where the pattern sketched so far is not followed. These so-called inverse verbs exhibit a pattern such that the subject has the absolutive case while the direct object of the verb has the M-case which was stated in the previous paragraphs to be the upward dependent case in Kabardian.

Table 4. Inverse Case Pattern in Kabardian

	Subject	Direct Object
Inverse Verb	-r	-m

For example, sentence (12) shows one of these inverse verb patterns. Here, there is a sentence with two NP arguments in a clause that necessitates two NP arguments. According to the rule for upward dependent case, the highest NP in the

structure should be assigned the upward dependent case; however, in sentence (12) the highest NP in the structure has the default case, marked with the R-case.

(12) jaʁad͡ʒaːkʷ'a-r jad͡ʒaːkʷ'a-m ja-dəʔ-aːɛ

teacher-R student-M 3-listen-PST

The teacher listened to the student.

Since the inverse pattern only arises with a limited set of verbs, I propose that the M-case assigned to the object of inverse verbs is an oblique case lexically assigned by the verb itself. In the case of sentence (13), the complement of the verb *read* assigns an oblique case which is syncretic to that of the upward dependent case. For case derivation, there is an order in the case calculus as to which case can be assigned first. The oblique case is assigned before other cases in the case derivation rendering the lexically assigned case invisible to case computation. For sentence (13), the lexically assigned oblique marked object of *book* is then excluded from further case derivation rendering the rules of dependent case theory to see the sentence as a single NP sentence. Due to this, there is only one NP available for case assignment resulting in Kabardian using the default R-case – the upward dependent case cannot be present in the presence of transitive verbs which assign oblique lexical case.

(13) ɬ'ə-r txəɬə-m jə-d͡ʒ-aːɛ

man-R book-M 3-read-PST

The man read the book.

The M-case is observed in another context as shown in sentence (14). The NP *garden* denotes the place in which the action of the sentence occurs which is marked by the M-case. I propose that this usage of the M-case in Kabardian is an oblique case that is assigned in the PP. Cross-linguistically, the upward dependent case is seen to be homophonous with an oblique case suffix that is used in certain PP structures (Dixon, 1994; Baker, 2019). Taking this claim, when the M-case is utilized in this way, I will refer to it as an oblique case. Sentence (14) additionally demonstrates that the oblique-marked NP has no consequence on the case calculus of the clause. The subject is still assigned the default case.

(14) ħa-r xada-m ɕə-ɬ'-a:ɕ
dog-R garden-M in-ø.3.die-PST
The dog died in the garden.

4.6 Causatives and ditransitives

Ditransitive verbs in Kabardian follow the pattern shown in the table below. Based on this pattern, the direct object of the clause gets the default absolutive case. The indirect object and subject of the clause are both assigned the dependent ergative case.

Table 5. Ditransitive Case Pattern in Kabardian

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object
Ditransitive verb	-m	-m	-r

In sentence (15), only the direct object of the clause has the default case. The subject and indirect object both have the upward dependent case. Taking the framework of dependent case theory, instead of two NPs available for case derivation, there are three NPs which are necessitated by the ditransitive verb. The lowest NP in the clause requires that the two highest NPs in the structure receive the upward dependent case. As the two highest NPs still maintain a c-command relationship over another caseless NP, upward dependent case should still be available for assignment in the clause which becomes the derivation for the case assignment of ditransitive verbs in Kabardian.

(15) ɬ’ə-m sabəj-m txəɬə-r jə-ra:t
man-M child-M book-R 3-give
The man gives the child the book. / The man is giving the child the book.

Compared to Baker’s (2014) Shipibo analysis, Kabardian evidently diverges from how ditransitive constructions are assigned case. In Shipibo, ditransitive verbs only have the subject in the upward dependent case. This sort of pattern would yield an ungrammatical sentence in Kabardian, as shown in (16).

(16) *ɬ’ə-m sabəj-r txəɬə-r jə-ra:t
man-M child-R book-R 3-give
The man gives the child the book. / The man is giving the child the book.

Causativized verbs in Kabardian do not differ from the pattern outlined for ditransitives at the beginning of this subsection. Taking the example transitive

sentence from the transitive subject of this chapter, we can apply the causativizer morpheme {-ʁa} to the verb *eat* to yield sentence (17). Again, only the two highest NPs in the clause get the upward dependent case leaving the lowest NP in the clause to have the default case.

(17)	ɬ'ə-m	ħa-m	łə-r	jərəj-ʁa-ʃx-aːɛ
	man-M	dog-M	meat-R	3-CAUS-eat-PST
	The man made the dog eat the meat.			

4.7 Causatives of inverse verbs

As we saw in the previous sections, ditransitives and causativized verbs follow an M-M-R pattern, or the two highest NPs in the clause receive upward dependent case and the lowest NP in the clause has the default case. In subsection 4.4, examples of an inverse pattern were given showing that lexically marked case blocks the assignment of the upward dependent case on the agent of the transitive verb. If an inverse verb is causativized, the result is not an M-M-R pattern as demonstrated by causativizing transitive verbs with a canonical M-R pattern, yet, a new pattern emerges as presented in the table below.

Table 6. Causativized Inverse Case Pattern in Kabardian

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object
Causativized Inverse Verb	-m	-r	-m

Sentence (18) shows one such pattern. As shown in the previous section, the M-case denoting the upward dependent case normally gets assigned to the highest two NPs in causative and ditransitive constructions. However, for the causatives of inverse verbs, the lexically case marked NP retains the M-case as expected. Furthermore, only the causee argument has the default case.

(18)	ɬ'ə-m	sabəj-r	txəɬə-m	jərəj-ʁa-d͡ʒə
	man-M	child-R	book-M	3-CAUS-read
	The man makes the child read the book.			

Applying the logic thus far to the sentence at hand makes the correct prediction about the distribution of the case markers that surface. The rule for upward dependent case necessitates that whenever there is a caseless NP in the clause which c-commands another caseless NP in the same clause, the highest NP in the clause receives the upward dependent case. Recall that the verb *read* falls under the category of inverse verbs which assign the lexical oblique case to their complements. Lexically marked arguments are assigned case before dependent case calculus occurs. For that reason, the lexically marked oblique NP is invisible to the dependent case calculus due to it being marked for case before dependent case assignment is initiated in the case calculus. As a result, the causativized inverse verb sentence with three NPs only appears as a two NP clause, resembling a typical transitive verb pattern for dependent case theory.

Sentence (18) could then be visualized as sentence (19) after the lexical oblique case is applied to the complement of the verb. Since the direct object received the lexical case, the highest two arguments appear as the only two NPs in

the clause. Dependent case theory applies the upward dependent case to the highest argument among the two NPs, the causer *man*. This leaves the lower of the two NPs, the causee *child* to get the default case.

(19)	ɬ'ə-m	sabəj-r	txəɬə-m	jərəj-ʁa-d͡ʒə
	man-M	child-R	book-M(OBL)	3-CAUS-read
	The man made the child read the book.			

With this approach in proposing that inverse verbs have lexically assigned oblique case on their complements allows dependent case theory to derive the correct pattern in the case calculus as seen in sentence (19) above.

4.8 Environment of dependent case assignment

From the examples of Kabardian we have seen so far, we now see a clearer picture of how case is distributed in Kabardian. However, what remains to be explained is the process in which Kabardian determines which NP(s) in the phrase can receive which case. Following the logic of dependent case theory, there are three NPs in sentence (20) available for case assignment. The case realized is a pattern of M-M-R, where the M-case is the upward dependent case and the R-case is the default case. In contrast to Baker's analysis of Shipibo (2014), Shipibo exhibits a pattern of the highest NP marked with the upward dependent case while the lowest two NPs in the structure get the default case; in terms of Kabardian case assignment, this would be akin to M-R-R. I argue that there is a contextual difference in the phases in which dependent case is assigned in Kabardian and Shipibo.

(20) ɬ’ə-m ħa-m ɬə-r jərəj-ʁa-ʃx-aːɕ

man-M dog-M meat-R 3-CAUS-eat-PST

The man made the dog eat the meat.

Baker introduces the notion of soft and hard VP phases (Baker, 2014, 2019), adapted from Chomsky’s weak and strong VP phases (Chomsky, 2001). Soft VP phases allow a higher NP in a clause to look into the arguments of the VP for the intent of further case derivation. Hard VP phases disallow this from taking place. For the scope of this analysis, I will focus on examining and applying the notion of the soft VP phase.

From Baker’s (2014) Shipibo analysis, he presents the ditransitive sentence (21). The aforementioned pattern of this sentence contrasts with that of Kabardian due to only the highest NP receiving the upward dependent ergative case with the remaining two NPs getting the default case.

(21) Yobe-kan-ra mayan niwe xontako a-ma-ke.

sorcerer-ERG-PRT whirlwind unmarried.girl do-CAUS-PRF

The sorcerer caused the whirlwind to harm the unmarried girl.

(Valenzuela, 2003)

Pattern (A) listed below shows sentence (21) as syntactic units within their respective phases – where NP1 is the highest NP in the structure (yobe-kan-ra), NP3 is the lowest (xontako), UDC refers to the upward dependent case, and DEF refers to the default case.

A.	[CP	NP1	[VP	NP2	NP3]]
		UDC		DEF	DEF

As proposed, dependent case theory relies on hierarchical c-command relationships between NPs in a clause to determine which case is assigned and where. Further, let's apply Baker's proposal that Shipibo has the notion of a soft VP phase, allowing NP1 to form c-command relationships with the two NPs in the VP. With the ditransitive sentence (21) modeled by the pattern in (A), and the assumption that Shipibo has a soft VP phase, there are three NPs with three instances of c-command relationships, namely three pairs of NPs in a c-command relationships: <NP1,NP2>, <NP1,NP3>, and <NP2,NP3>. Applying dependent case theory to Shipibo, which exhibits upward dependent case, we would then expect a pattern to surface as in (B). In the VP, NP2 checks its c-command relationship and finds that it has a relationship with NP3 so that <NP2,NP3> yielding a case value on NP2 as UDC. As NP3 is being c-commanded by both NP2, and NP1, as a result of the soft VP, NP3 gets the default case. NP1 has two relationships, <NP1,NP2> and <NP1, NP3>. As it is c-commanding both of the NPs in the VP, it is assigned the upward dependent case. However, this application of dependent case theory poses an issue with the actual case realization of ditransitives in Shipibo.

B.	[CP	NP1	[VP	NP2	NP3]]
		UDC		UDC	DEF

Based on the pattern in (B), it assumes that the dependent case is assigned in both the CP and the VP and the realization of the dependent case on NP1 and NP2 is a combination of both Shipibo having a soft VP phase and the existing c-command relationships between all of the arguments. Baker demonstrates that languages contrast in the phases in which the dependent case is assigned. For Shipibo, the dependent case must be assigned higher in the structure, in the CP, thus, the dependent case in Shipibo is contextually specified to be assigned only in the CP phase (Baker, 2014, 2019). This yields the correct derivation as in sentence (21) and pattern (A).

Kabardian, however, has a pattern as shown in (B), alluding that the dependent case is not contextually specified to be assigned in the CP phase. Yet, if the dependent case is assigned in the CP phase in Shipibo, can it be said that Kabardian can assign the upward dependent case in both the CP and VP phases? Looking at further linguistic data from Serbian, we see that the VP can also be a domain for upward dependent case assignment.

Similar to the Turkish examples shown in Chapter 3, for ditransitive verbs in Serbian, the indirect object NP receives the dative case. In sentence (22), there is both a downward dependent case exhibited by NP3 *(Marka)* and an upward dependent dative case with NP2 *(sestri)*.

(22) Slavica je predstavila sestri Marka.
Slavica.NOM is presented sister.DAT Marko.ACC
Slavica presented Marko to her sister.

(Puškar & Müller, 2017)

Puškar and Müller's analysis of Serbian data shows that the upward dependent case, marked by the dative case must be assigned in the VP phase (Puškar & Müller, 2017). Serbian upward dependent case is contextually specified to only be assigned in this phase, otherwise, without this contextual specificity for the upward dependent case in Serbian, the data would resemble that of Kabardian. This example is worth noting to demonstrate that the dependent case does not necessarily apply to only one phase in the structure, yet can be assigned in multiple phases depending on how the language contextually specifies the dependent case. Furthermore, it is clear that the contrast between languages such as Serbian, Shipibo, and Kabardian is not a morphological contrast but a syntactic contrast. If the contrast were purely morphological, we would expect commonalities between which case is assigned in each phase, meaning dative is assigned in the VP or ergative is assigned in the CP. Instead, this syntactic contrast is demonstrated by Shipibo assigning the upward dependent case in the CP phase while Serbian assigns the upward dependent case in the VP phase. Kabardian assigns the upward dependent case in both the VP and CP phases as shown in sentence (20) and pattern (B). Therefore, Kabardian has a general upward dependent case while Shipibo and Serbian have phase-specific upward dependent case.

4.9 Caseless nouns and indefinites

In this section, we turn to NPs that, according to the outlined patterns, normally bear the overt M-case or R-case yet appear completely caseless on the surface. Sentence (23) gives an example where the subject of the sentence does not have the default case, realized by the R-case. Dropping the case on the subject of an intransitive sentence such as sentence (23) gives an indefinite reading to the subject.

(23) ħa ɬ’-aːɛ

dog ø.3.die-PST

A dog died.

Additionally, there appears to be no distinction between unergative and unaccusative verbs when it comes to case dropping. The unaccusative verb *fall* in sentence (24) can have a caseless subject. The unergative verb *dance* in sentence (25) can similarly have a caseless subject, too.

(24) ħa dʒəl-aːɛ

dog ø.3.fall-PST

A dog fell.

(25) ɬ’ə qəf-aːɛ

man ø.3.dance-PST

A man danced.

This case-dropping is also possible for direct objects, again dependent on the definiteness of the direct object. For sentence (26), the subject of the transitive clause is assigned the upward dependent case while the object appears caseless. If the direct object in the clause is marked with the R-case, then the NP is interpreted as being definite. When the R-case is dropped, it gets an indefinite reading.

(26) ħa-m lə jə-ʃx-aːɛ

dog-M meat 3-eat-PST

The dog ate meat.

In ditransitives, such as sentence (27), only the direct object of the clause can be caseless. The two highest NPs in the clause are still assigned the upward dependent case. The numeral *one (zə)* can additionally be included to further emphasize that the NP is indefinite.

(27)	ɬ'ə-m	sabəj-m	(zə) txəɬə	jə-ra:t
	man-M	child-M	(one) book	3-give
	The man gives the child a book.			

The importance of case assigned to the NPs in the ditransitive clause is further outlined with sentences (28) and (29). A sentence without any overtly marked case as in sentence (28) leads to an unacceptable sentence in Kabardian. Only marking the highest NP for the upward dependent case while leaving the indirect object and the direct object caseless is also impossible. The upward dependent case must be assigned to the two highest NPs of a ditransitive structure in order to yield a grammatical sentence in Kabardian.

(28)	*ɬ'ə	sabəj	txəɬə	jə-ra:t
	man	child	book	3-give
	Intended: A man gave a child a book.			

(29)	*ɬ'ə-m	sabəj	txəɬə	jə-ra:t
	man-M	child	book	3-give
	Intended: The man gave a child a book.			

Interestingly, in the inverse verb patterns, the lexically assigned oblique case on the complement of the verb, i.e. the direct object, can also exhibit caselessness to indicate an indefinite reading. In sentence (30), the subject of the clause has the default case due to the verb *read* assigning the oblique lexical case to the direct object. However, as the direct object of the verb is not marked for a definite reading, the case is not phonologically realized otherwise the interpretation of the direct object would be a definite object. This constitutes evidence that the direct object of clauses exhibiting the inverse case pattern still assigns lexical case to its complement, regardless of the phonological realization of the case on the direct object. If this were not the case, the upward dependent case would be expected to be assigned to the subject of the clause, just like it is in clauses with regular transitive verbs that do not assign lexical case to their complements.

(30) ɬ’ə-r/*-m txəɬə jə-d͡ʒ-aːɛ

man-R/-M book 3-read-PST

The man read a book.

Additionally, a causativized inverse verb demonstrated with sentence (31), the complement of the verb which would be assigned the lexical oblique case can also be caseless to indicate indefiniteness identical to the other sentences in this section. This sentence corroborates the idea that even when the lexical case is not phonologically realized on the direct object, it still carries the same case value, which renders the NP invisible to dependent case assignment.

(31) jaʁad͡ʒa:kʷ'a-m jad͡ʒa:kʷ'a-r wərəd jərəj-ʁə-dəʔw-a:ɛ

teacher-M student-R song 3-CAUS-listen-PST

The teacher made the student listen to a song.

Similar to the ditransitive sentence examples referenced in this section, sentence (32), with two caseless NPs yields an ungrammatical sentence in Kabardian. Though in a transitive sentence, the direct object of the verb *listen* can be a caseless NP, if the verb is causativized, then only the direct object of the verb is able to be marked with case, the default case on the intermediary NP cannot also be caseless. An option to show indefiniteness on an NP that must be case marked is again to use the numeral *zə*, though, more research on numerals and definiteness in Eastern Kabardian is required to analyze the entire picture.

(32) *jaʁad͡ʒa:kʷ'a-m jad͡ʒa:kʷ'a wərəd jərəj-ʁə-dəʔw-a:ɛ

teacher-M student song 3-CAUS-listen-PST

The teacher made the student listen to a song.

The question still remains whether the caseless NP in these constructions could be a matter of incorporation. According to previous research conducted on Kabardian by Matasović (2010) and Colarusso (1992), Kabardian does feature incorporated nouns. A majority of the nouns that are available for incorporation are related to body parts. Further, with an incorporated noun, Kabardian applies the verbal prefixes on the incorporated unit rather than solely on the verb. Sentence (33) shows how an incorporated noun would expect to be inflected if the direct object of the verb was caseless as a result of incorporation. Sentence (34) is an example of a

grammatical noun incorporation structure in Kabardian. The verb of the sentence incorporated the noun heart with the verb say to form agree, notice that the first-person singular verbal prefix {sə-} is prefixed on the noun heart and not the verb say.

(33) *ħa-m jə-lə-ʃx-aːɕ

dog-M 3-meat-eat-PST

The dog was meat-eating.[14]

(34) sə abə sə-gʷəʁ-ʔʷ-aːɕ

I he 1.sg-heart-say-PST

I agreed with him.

The morphologically caseless bare objects that have been shown do not indicate examples of incorporation. The sentences above provide evidence that when a noun is incorporated, verbal prefixation applies to the incorporated noun. Those examples with caseless bare objects show the verbal prefixes being applied to the verb itself, rather than the NPs themselves.

Our discussion so far implies that direct objects, bearing the theme role, are subject to differential phonological realization of their case value, depending on indefiniteness. When they are indefinites, the expected overt case marker disappears, giving the impression that the NP has not received case in syntax. Yet, we have found robust evidence that these superficially caseless NPs are simply phonologically unmarked for case but still carry the expected abstract case value. The evidence for this claim came from the observation that being phonologically

[14] For additional context: "The dog was eating meat; it was meat-eating."

unmarked for case has no consequence whatsoever for the case calculus overall. Even in the case of direct objects that bear a lexical case due to the fact that they complement an inverse verb, overt caselessness does not license the upward dependent case on the subject, with the subject maintaining its default case. This state of affairs gives strong support to the idea that caselessness we find in Kabardian is purely a matter of post-syntactic realization that solely affects indefinite direct objects and subjects of intransitive clauses.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have given an analysis of the Kabardian data utilizing the discovered patterns for the different verb types. I tested for the default case using Schütze's (2001) analysis of default case in English to test for bare pronoun answers to questions to determine if the R-case can be the default case in Kabardian. These tests came from research on the nature of the default case in English showing that the bare pronoun answers to questions provide evidence that the nominative case cannot be the default case in English. The tests concluded that when the bare pronoun answer is elicited, the R-case appears on the bare pronoun uniformly. When a declarative sentence answer is given, the expected case patterns are followed.

I argue, according to the data, that the dependent case in Kabardian is the ergative case which exhibits upward dependent case based on the framework of dependent case theory (Marantz, 1991; Baker & Vinokurova, 2010; Baker, 2014; Baker & Bobalijk, 2017; Baker, 2019). The ergative case, represented by the M-case throughout this thesis is syncretic with the oblique case.

The inverse case pattern shown by the inverse verbs and causativized versions of the inverse verbs can be explained through inverse verbs assigning

lexical oblique case to their complements, i.e. the direct object. With the transitive examples of inverse verbs, instead of seeing a case pattern of Subject-M Direct Object-R Verb, we see a pattern of Subject-R Direct Object-M Verb. The M-case suffix on the direct object for inverse verbs cannot be the upward dependent case in Kabardian as upward dependent case requires the highest NP in the clause to receive the dependent case when it is in a c-command relationship with a lower NP. Additionally, it has been established that Kabardian is indeed an ergative-absolutive alignment language, thus the inverse pattern cannot be explained as a nominative-accusative pattern. To satisfy the case calculus, certain verbs must assign lexical case in order to yield the correct case derivation seen in the Kabardian sentences. This further demonstrates that case derivation does not happen contemporaneously, yet in well-defined stages, from lexical case, to dependent case, to default case.

Further, I contrasted Kabardian with another ergative-absolutive language, Shipibo to propose where Kabardian can assign dependent case. In Shipibo, ditransitives pattern distinct from Kabardian in that they exhibit a Subject-ERG Indirect Object-ABS Direct Object-ABS Verb pattern, with the dependent case solely on the highest NP (Baker, 2014). Both Kabardian and Shipibo have the concept of a weak soft VP which allows higher NP(s) in the structure to check the case of the NP(s) in the VP for case assignment. The primary difference between these two languages of the ergative-absolutive alignment is that Shipibo is contextually specified to assign the dependent case in the CP phase, while Kabardian features no such contextual specifications. Serbian, a nominative-accusative language, provided additional evidence of how languages can contextually specify where dependent case can be assigned in the clause by feature an upward dependent case solely assignable in VP phase – according to data from the literature.

Caseless NPs were examined as, though being phonologically null, featuring a case value which yields the expected case patterns observed. Regardless if the sentence features a transitive, intransitive, or ditransitive verb, in the presence of a caseless NP, the case-bearing NP(s) in the clause maintain the pattern as if the NP were not caseless. Additional evidence was shown as to how Kabardian interacts with incorporated nouns, ruling out these caseless NPs to be a result of incorporation.

In conclusion, Kabardian shows additional evidence for how dependent case theory can be applied to disjunctive case realizations and gives support for case assignment occurring in stages. In the following chapter, I will analyze the cases through a Distributed Morphology approach to present how they can be realized.

CHAPTER 5

CASE REALIZATION IN KABARDIAN

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will propose analysis within the framework of Distributed Morphology (DM) (Halle & Marantz, 1993; Bobalijk, 2000; Gouskova & Bobalijk, 2020) that models what case affixes in Kabardian realize. The analysis will explain the default nature of the R-case and the syncretic nature of the M-case. Furthermore, I will propose an analysis that accounts the environments in which caseless NPs are seen. In determining the environments, I will look into the features of the NPs which demonstrate the apparent caselessness and propose a rule within the framework of DM that can account for the data.

5.2 Cases in Kabardian and their environments

The basic inventory of cases we have seen so far includes the two overt case markers, R-case and the M-case, and the caselessness. As detailed in Chapter 4, the R-case was identified to be the default case, as also evidenced by the data that show it is the case form that arises in isolation (e.g., in fragment answers to questions). The M-case was identified to be a syncretic form for the upward dependent (ergative) case and the oblique case, which I take to be assigned in the context of a certain class of verbs and within a PP by its head. The caselessness, represented in Table 7 as {ø} is found to affect the specificity of an argument. For the sake of uniformity, these case suffixes will continue to be referred to as M-case, R-case, and ø-case unless further explanation is necessary.

Table 7. Observed Case Suffixes and Definitions

Case Suffixes	Definitions
-r	default
-m	upward dependent (ergative) & oblique case
ø	seen on non-specific indefinite object NPs and subject NPs of intransitive verbs; proper names; pronouns excluding the third-person pronoun

There are several different patterns and environments in which each of these case suffixes can be seen. To recall the environments in which we see these case suffixes appearing, Table 8 from Chapter 2 is provided below. This excludes nonspecific indefinites which are caseless in certain configurations as well as non-third person pronouns and proper names which are uniformly caseless.

Table 8. Case Patterns in Kabardian

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object
Intransitive Verb	-r	N/A	N/A
Transitive Verb	-m	N/A	-r
Ditransitive verb	-m	-m	-r
Inverse Verb	-r	N/A	-m
Causitivized Inverse Verb	-m	-r	-m

Table 9 shows the observed environments in which there can be caseless NPs. While ø can surface on an indefinite NP instead of either -m or -r, it can never show

up on transitive subjects and indirect objects, which always have to be marked overtly for case (unless they are proper names or non-third person pronouns).

Table 9. Observed Environments for Caseless NPs

	Subject	Indirect Object	Direct Object
Intransitive Verb (Caseless)	ø	N/A	N/A
Transitive Verb (Caseless)	-m	N/A	ø
Ditransitive verb (Caseless)	-m	-m	ø
Inverse Verb (Caseless)	-r	N/A	ø
Causitivized Inverse Verb (Caseless)	-m	-r	ø

For intransitive verbs, the sole NP argument is able to be caseless as shown in sentence (1). As stated in Chapter 2, the subject of the sentence in such cases are interpreted as nonspecific indefinite.

(1) ħa ɬ’-a:ɕ

dog ø.3.die-PST

A dog died.

When a location is added to sentence (1), as in sentence (2), notice that only the subject of the sentence is able to be caseless, the M-case-marked NP must be phonologically marked with the oblique case realized by the M-case. However, if the oblique argument is a proper name, it can be optionally phonologically marked with

the M-case[15]. Sentences (3) and (4) provide examples of the optionality in assigning the oblique case to the proper name.

(2) ħa xadə-m ɕə-ɬ'-aːɕ
dog garden-M in-ø.3.die-PST
A dog died in the garden.

(3) ħa Nalɕək-əm[16] ɕə-ɬ'-aːɕ
dog Nalchik-M in-ø.3.die-PST
A dog died in Nalchik.

(4) ħa Nalɕək ɕə-ɬ'-aːɕ
dog Nalchik in-ø.3.die-PST
A dog died in Nalchik.

Recall from Chapter 2, for sentences with only proper names, the order in which they appear in the sentence determines the roles of the argument. Sentence (5) demonstrates that though each of the NPs is phonologically caseless, speakers are able to parse that *Ali* is the subject, *Cem* is the indirect object, and *Ahmed* is the direct object.

[15] This optionality could additionally be the results of speaker variability in whether proper names referring to non-humans are not considered to be proper names. Further research is needed to determine whether this optionality is specific to my consultant's grammar or if it is used throughout Kabardian speaking communities.
[16] The /ə/ appearing before the M-case (oblique case) in this example is an epenthetic vowel, namely a result of the fact that the final sound of the stem to which it attaches is a consonant.

(5) Alij d͡ʒajm aħmad jə-ʁat͡ʃʼw-aːɛ

Ali Cem Ahmed 3-send-PST

Ali sent Ahmed to Cem.

In all other examples, only the lowest NP in the structure – besides the oblique-marked NP as a location – can be caseless. The lowest NP in the structure is always either the direct object or the intransitive subject.

5.3 A feature decomposition and the specification of case forms

One type of proposal given in (A) below, which I will argue to be inadequate for Kabardian, features the feature specifications for upward-dependent and default case within the theory of Lexical Decomposition Grammar (Kiparsky, 1992; Wunderlich, 1997; Puškar & Müller, 2017). As Kabardian exhibits the upward dependent and default cases, only those are included in (A).

A. Upward-dependent (ERG): [+lr]

Default case (ABS): [ ]

The upward-dependent case in this sense would indicate that there is a "lower role" (hence the feature specification +lr) in the sentence. Following dependent case theory, the upward-dependent case is assigned when there exists a c-command relationship between a higher NP and a lower NP. The presence of the lower NP or "lower role" enables the upward dependent case to be assigned. As for the default case, its feature set is argued to be null, as the presence or absence of a lower or higher NP in a sentence has no effect on its realization.

This configuration could satisfy the case assignment in Kabardian if the language only featured distinct and specific case suffixes for each case. However, as shown in Table 8, this is not the reality of how the case suffixes are used in Kabardian. Though the R-case is only assigned for the default case, the M-case is a syncretic realization for the upward dependent case and the lexical oblique case. Using only a feature of [+lr] for the M-case incorrectly predicts the environments in which it is assigned. The oblique case could then only be assigned in environments in which there exists a lower NP in the sentence. The inverse case patterned verbs should then be identical to the canonical transitives and ditransitives, which is a prediction not borne out in Kabardian.

The case features must then be reexamined to account for their distinctions. In Calabrese (2008) and Barry (2004), several features are used to express various contrasts in case. For Kabardian, the relevant cases to which features must be scribed for this discussion are the upward-dependent case, the default case, and the oblique case. In this discussion I will treat the lexical oblique case and the oblique case assigned in the PP (i.e. the locative) as sharing the same features under a general oblique case. These features that will be sufficient for our purposes are the [±Motion] and [±Peripheral] features. The [±Peripheral] feature comes from the argument that there is a distinction between what are core (also known as structural) cases (nominative, ergative, accusative) and what are peripheral cases (all other cases). With this feature, the oblique case being a peripheral case is distinguished from the upward-dependent and the default case. The feature [±Motion] is used to distinguish the upward-dependent case and oblique case from the default case. In syntax, these features would then be copied to a K(ase) head based on the KP hypothesis of Travis and Lamontagne (1992). I assume that the head of the KP ends up being realized by

the morphological case markers of either {-m} or {-r} depending on the features of the NP. The proposal is given in (B).

B. Default case = [–Motion, –Peripheral]

   Upward-dependent (ergative) case = [+Motion, –Peripheral]

   Oblique case = [+Motion, +Peripheral]

The features can be visualized as in Table 10.

Table 10. Case Features in Kabardian

	Default case	Upward-dependent case	Oblique case
Motion		+	+
Peripheral			+

From Table 10 we can conclude more general values of the R-case and the M-case. If [±Motion] and [±Peripheral] are both specified with minus values under the K head, i.e. K{–Motion, –Peripheral}, then the resulting bundle is interpreted as the default case. Likewise K{+Motion, –Peripheral} is interpreted as the upward-dependent case while K{+Motion, +Peripheral} is interpreted as the oblique case. Thus, within the DM approach to syncretism, the R-case realizing the default case hence K{–Motion, –Peripheral} is the most specific entry. Elsewhere, namely both K{+Motion, –Peripheral} and K{+Motion, +Peripheral} (mapping upward-dependent case and oblique case) are realized by M-case.

The proposed analysis is summarized below in (C). What is interesting to note here is that the default case is *not* the morphological elsewhere in the language. The language has a fully-specified entry for the R-case, the default case bundle with

respect to how case features are determined in syntax. On the other hand, the M-case which is syncretic for the oblique case and the upward-dependent case is the morphological default, namely the elsewhere pronunciation for a K head. Given the Maximal Subset Principle within DM, /-m/ is used to realize a K head a whenever /-r/ cannot be inserted.

C. /-r/ → K{–Motion, –Peripheral}

/-m/ → K

5.4 On caseless NPs and a post-syntactic analysis

Recall that caseless NPs include proper names, non-third person pronouns, and direct objects intransitive subjects that are nonspecific indefinites. In our analysis, we will need features to address the distribution of caseless NPs. The features [±Author] and [±Participant] are used to determine the distinct features among pronouns (Noyer, 1992; Halle, 1997; Nevins, 2005). The third person is essentially unvalued for [±Author] and [±Participant], while the second person is only valued for [±Participant]. As the third person pronoun is the only pronoun in Kabardian which maintains a phonological output of case, I argue that the valued feature [+Participant] is the relevant feature in determining the environment of caseless pronouns.

Table 11. Features for Pronouns

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person
Author	+		
Participant	+	+	

As it is not only pronouns that exhibit caselessness, we also need features to account for the other environments where caselessness is observed. Stated previously, indefinite subjects in an intransitive clause and indefinite objects are caseless when they are nonspecific indefinites. A [±DEF] feature will suffice to illustrate the general logic of this (Kramer, 2010). When [±DEF] the feature is minus valued as [–DEF], the indefinite NP is phonologically caseless if it is in the right syntactic configuration. Proper names also appear as phonologically caseless, which can be marked with the feature [±PROPER] (Ghomeshi & Massam, 2009). When NPs are valued as [+PROPER], the case suffix is no longer visible.

Though these features assist in determining the environments in which an NP appears caseless, they are not wholly sufficient in explaining why caseless NPs have no effect on the case assignment and realization of other NPs in the structure. Hence, I argue that caselessness is achieved post-syntactically, through the rule known as obliteration. Obliteration is a post-syntactic morphological process that eliminates an entire syntactic head, along with the features it hosts, in specific contexts (Arregi & Nevins, 2007). As proposed, the Kase head is used in Kabardian to host the morphological case marker with its copied features. Obliteration can be used to delete the Kase head, therefore bleeding the insertion of any overt or null case marker that would normally surface. This rule is always triggered in Kabardian in the context of [+Participant] and [+PROPER]. In addition, there are configurations in which [–DEF] also triggers this rule. As a first pass, a rule of this kind will be needed in Kabardian.

Obliteration Rule:

Kase head is deleted in the context of [+Participant], [–DEF], or [+PROPER]

All examples where caselessness is observed so far show evidence that the case pattern does not deviate when there is a caseless NP in the clause. As obliteration is applied after the case calculus is resolved, the fact that the object NP is caseless has no consequence on the case realization of the other NPs in the clause. To see this, consider the contrast between (6) and (7). The causativized verb in (6) is a canonical transitive verb while the one in (7) is an inverse verb. Although the object NP, if it were definite, would have the R-case in (6) and the M-case (i.e. the oblique case) in (7), the mere absence of the case exponence on the object does not affect how the case on causee is realized. As explained in Chapter 4, the upward-dependent case on the causee in (6) is predicted thanks to a lower NP being visible to the case calculus while the causee in (7) only has an NP that has received the oblique case from its complement, hence cannot be assigned the upward-dependent case. If the morphological caselessness were visible in syntax (during case calculus), this contrast could not be explained. This proves that the caselessness being derived post-syntactically through obliteration is the right solution for Kabardian.

(6)	ɬ'ə-m	ħa-m	ɬə	jərəj-ʁa-ʃx-a:ɕ
	man-M	dog-M	meat	3-CAUS-eat-PST

The man made the dog eat the meat.

(7)	jaʁad͡ʒa:kʷ'a-m	jad͡ʒa:kʷ'a-r	wərəd	jərəj-ʁə-dəʔw-a:ɕ
	teacher-M	student-R	song	3-CAUS-listen-PST

The teacher made the student listen to a song.

In the following section, I will restrict the obliteration rule to ultimately account for the distribution of caseless NPs.

5.5 The application of the obliteration rule on Kabardian

The environment in which the obliteration rule can be applied for pronouns is determined by the feature [±Participant]. Sentence (7) demonstrates the third person pronoun maintaining the phonological case marker. Recall that the same sentence without the R-case, as in sentence (8), does not work for the intended meaning in Kabardian. The obliteration rule only applies for pronouns that are valued [+Participant]. The third person pronoun is [–Participant] yielding sentence (7) as the correct derivation.

(7) a-r mə-laʑə

he/she/it-R 3-work

He/She/It works. / He/She/It is working.

(8) *a mə-laʑə

he/she/it 3-work

Intended: He/She/It works. / He/She/It is working.

(Consultant's comment: This string means something like "A thing works.".)

The transitive verb of *love* in Kabardian follows the canonical transitive case pattern of M-R. In sentence (9), the surface form is shown with only the third-person direct object being assigned the R-case. In the case calculus, the NPs each feature Kase heads with the morphological case markers of {-m} for *I* and {-r} for *he/she/it*.

Sentence (10), though incorrect as a surface form, exhibits what the underlying (or expected if there were no obliteration rule) structure of the sentence is. The obliteration rule applies to pronouns which are valued [+Participant]; in sentence (10) this is only the subject of the sentence, *I*. After the Kase head for the subject NP is deleted due to the application of the obliteration rule, we get the correct output as in sentence (9).

(9)	sə	a-r	fʔəwa	jə-zo-łaʁʷ
	I	he/she/it-R	good	3-1.SG-see
	I love him/her/it.			

(10)	*sə-M	a-r	fʔəwa	jə-zo-łaʁʷ
	I-M	he/she/it-R	good	3-1.SG-see
	I love him/her/it.			

Another environment that triggers the obliteration rule is in the context of proper names. The subject of sentence (11) is a proper name, *Ali*. We can assume the underlying form of this sentence would be as in sentence (12). The obliteration rule sees that *Ali* has the feature [+PROPER] enabling it to delete the Kase head hosting the M-case. After the obliteration rule is applied, sentence (11) has a seemingly caseless subject with a direct object marked with the R-case.

(11)	Alij	d͡ʒadəw-r	fʔəwa	jə-ła:ʁʷ
	Ali	cat-r	good	3-see
	Ali loves the cat.			

(12) *Alij-M d͡ʒadəw-r fʔəwa jə-ɬaːʁʷ

Ali-M cat-r good 3-see

Ali loves the cat.

Caseless NPs can also be found as the subject of intransitive verbs. In sentence (13), the K head on the subject of the sentence *dog* is specified as [–Motion, –Peripheral], hence interpreted as the default case, yet, valued [+DEF] to give the subject a sense of definiteness. Sentence (14) differs from sentence (13) in that the subject of sentence (14) is minus-valued for definiteness, [–DEF]. The obliteration rule specifies that in the context of [–DEF] delete the Kase head which would host the morphological case marker, in this case {-r}, correctly deriving the contrast between (13) and (14).

(13) ħa-r ɬ’-aːɕ

dog-R ø.3.die-PST

The dog died.

(14) ħa ɬ’-aːɕ

dog ø.3.die-PST

A dog died.

With transitive and ditransitive sentences, only the direct object is able to be phonologically caseless. To achieve sentence (15) from the underlying form in (16), the [–DEF] feature on the direct object *meat* triggers the obliteration rule to the Kase head in the underlying form in sentence (16). Additionally, to derive sentence (17)

with the indefinite direct object from sentence (18), the Kase head on *book* in sentence (18) is deleted due to the [–DEF] feature yielding the surface form as in sentence (17). What is notable from this data is that when the R-case is prevented from surfacing via Kase head deletion thanks to the obliteration rule, the case assigned to the two other NPs does not change.

(15) ħa-m lə jə-ʃx-aːɛ
dog-M meat 3-eat-PST
The dog ate meat.

(16) ħa-m lə-r jə-ʃx-aːɛ
dog-M meat-R 3-eat-PST
The dog ate the meat.

(17) ɬ'ə-m sabəj-m txəɬə jərəj-t-aːɛ
man-M child-M book 3-give-PST
The man gave the child a book.

(18) ɬ'ə-m sabəj-m txəɬə-r jərəj-t-aːɛ
man-M child-M book-R 3-give-PST
The man gave the child the book.

However, subjects and indirect objects of transitives and ditransitives can also be indefinite NPs. Taken from Chapter 2, sentence (19) illustrates that when all NPs in a sentence are caseless, the sentence is not correct in Kabardian. The problem that

arises with these examples is that the case suffix is not deleted in the surface form yet the indefiniteness of the NP is marked by utilizing the numeral *one (zə)* as in sentence (20). As the obliteration rule so far becomes applicable in the environment of [–DEF], it has to be revised to account for whenever the [–DEF] is the complement of the verb, the obliteration rule is applied. Adding this extra environment would prevent the Kase head of higher NPs from being deleted, making the environment for the indefinite caseless NP always to be the complement of V.

(19)	*ɬ'ə	sabəj	txəɬə	jə-ra:t
	man	child	book	3-give

Intended: A man gave a child a book.

(20)	zə	ɬ'ə-m	zə	sabəj-m	txəɬə	jə-ra:t
	one	man-M	one	child-M	book	3-give

A man gave a child a book.

Revised Obliteration Rule:

Kase head is deleted in the context of

[+Participant],

[+PROPER],

[–DEF] if KP is the complement of the Verb.[17]

[17] More research is needed to determine if Kabardian syntactically differentiates unergatives and unaccusatives. In Kabardian, the subject of unergative intransitives could also be caseless when it is a nonspecific indefinite. Hence, if an unaccusative syntax cannot be maintained for such unergative verbs, the formulation in the revised obliteration rule needs to be put as "if KP is (an extended projection of) the lowest NP in the clause." to include objects and *all* intransitive subjects including where the subject is an external argument hence not a complement of the Verb.

This revised rule can effortlessly be applied to the sentences we have seen earlier showing an intransitive verb with an indefinite subject while the location in which the action happened is marked with the oblique case. In sentence (21), the NP *garden* is assigned the M-case while the subject *dog* loses its potential R-case through the obliteration rule. As the PP hosting the NP *garden* is not the complement of V, the NP in the PP is unaffected by the revised obliteration rule.

(21) ħa xadə-m ɕə-ɬ'-aːɕ
dog garden-M in-3.die-PST
A dog died in the garden.

From this analysis, I further argue that Kabardian does not have a caseless or null morpheme marker to account for caselessness as shown in Table 9, yet the apparent caselessness is the result of the application of the post-syntactic obliteration rule. The obliteration rule shows that the caseless NPs are not syntactically caseless in the sense that the case calculus does provide the underlying feature set of either the M-case or R-case on the NP yet the obliteration rule removes the Kase head, bleeding its exponence by the M-case or the R-case which becomes caseless. That is, if the environment necessitates the application of the obliteration rule, the Kase head is deleted giving the surface form of an NP which appears caseless.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a DM approach to how case forms in the language relate to the output of the case calculus in syntax. I first tried using features related to the c-command relationship (Kiparsky, 1992; Wunderlich, 1997; Puškar & Müller, 2017)

to determine whether those features could account for the data. As they incorrectly predict the distribution of case forms in Kabardian, I proposed that the case suffixes in Kabardian are minimally marked with the features [±Motion] and [±Peripheral] adopting ideas proposed in other work (Barry, 2004; Calabrese, 2008). These features are copied over to (or assigned values on) a K(ase) head which ends up hosting the morphological case marker of either R-case or M-case (Travis & Lamontagne, 1992).

I then proposed that the environments in which caseless NPs are observed are in the presence of [+PARTICIPANT], [+PROPER], and [–DEF]. Through analyzing the data, the [–DEF] had to be further specified to account for the fact that only the NP complement of V can appear caseless. Using these features of the environment, I used an obliteration rule that deletes the Kase head along with the copied features. The obliteration rule occurs post-syntactically as the surface case patterns elsewhere in the clause does not deviate from the pattern that would be expected.

From the application of the obliteration rule, I demonstrated that the caseless NPs are not marked by a null morpheme. The NPs which necessitate the application of the obliteration rule are assigned case during the case calculus. After the obliteration rule is applied in the specified environments, the morphological case marker is prevented from surfacing through the deletion of the Kase head. This does not cause an insertion of a null morpheme but renders the NP essentially without a case suffix. Therefore, I conclude that the case affixes in Table 7 are solely the M-case and the R-case; the proposed null case is solely an appearance of the result of the application of the obliteration rule.

To conclude, Kabardian has caseless NPs which are characterized by post-syntactic removal of their K layer. Hence, caseless NPs are morphologically truly

caseless, albeit syntactically they are not. In addition, the language has a morphological default K realization, syncretic for the upward-dependent and the oblique cases, as well as a fully specified case form that is realizing the syntactic default. Hence, Kabardian highlights the modularity of morphology and syntax in the way they produce or deal with defaults and unmarkedness.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to provide an analysis of the phenomenon of disjunctive case realization in a dialect of Eastern Kabardian. In doing so, I presented the elicited data from a native speaker of the language. In presenting the data, I took an analysis-neutral approach by refraining from using terms such as ergative, absolutive, oblique, among others.

To start my analysis of the data, I described the notions of default case and dependent case theory, both of which were utilized to give an account for the data. In this description, I referenced glosses from the literature on case theory to demonstrate how case is assigned among languages on different alignments – be it on the nominative-accusative, ergative-absolutive, or a different alignment. Utilizing the framework of dependent case theory, I gave an account of how no matter the alignment of the language, dependent case theory can describe the case assignment in the reference glosses. In nominative-accusative alignment languages, downward dependent case is utilized; in ergative-absolutive alignment languages, upward dependent case (Marantz, 1991; Baker & Vinokurova, 2010).

I argue that Kabardian is a clear example of an ergative-absolutive alignment language, which consequently exhibits upward dependent case. Certain anomalous sentences found during my elicitation sessions brought about the question whether the language has an alignment shift in certain configurations. Through analyzing the data, I proposed that the M-case suffix is a syncretic form which encapsulates the upward dependent (ergative) and oblique cases. I additionally proposed that the R-

case suffix is the default case in the language by eliciting bare NP answers to questions following the discussion of the default case in English (Schütze, 2001). With this proposal, the data boils down to the phenomenon of disjunctive case realization. As case is not assigned synchronously, Kabardian gives further evidence of the hierarchy which exists in case assignment; namely, lexical case is assigned before any other case in the case calculus. In the instances of inverse transitive verbs, the lexical case blocks the assignment of upward dependent case leaving the subject to receive the default case. This follows suit for their causativized counterparts as well. Following the assignment of lexical case, the presence of caseless NPs in the structure then determines whether the default case or dependent case will surface on the subject of the clause.

Using a Distributed Morphology analysis of Kabardian, I argued that Kabardian has two distinct structural case affixes. The features [±Motion] and [±Peripheral] (Barry, 2004; Calabrese, 2008) can minimally describe the case affixes. These features are then copied to K(ase) heads which host the morphological case affix of either the M-case or the R-case (Travis & Lamontagne, 1992). I specified the R-case to be assigned in the K head with the features K{–Motion, –Peripheral} while the M-case is assigned elsewhere. An obliteration rule was shown to be necessary in order to completely delete the K head in certain specified environments, namely, in the presence of proper nouns [+PROPER], [+PARTICIPANT] pronouns, and when the complement of V is unvalued for definiteness, [–DEF]. In these environments, the K head is deleted along with the features, yielding a surface form which appears caseless. I argued that caseless NPs are reflecting true absence of a case affix on the affected NP. The obliteration rule must be applied post-syntactically in order to ensure that it has no effect on the case calculus.

There are also questions that I had to put aside in this work. For example, during my elicitation sessions, questions arose concerning the Q-morpheme briefly mentioned in Chapter 2. This Q-morpheme is used in abundance in Kabardian. Colarusso (1992) first named this morpheme as a "horizon of interest" but is additionally said to be referred to as "in the hand" according to the speakers he referenced[18]. This morpheme is said to cover directionality, kinship, and changes of state. I leave the investigation of this morpheme to future research.

Additional research into definiteness and specificity should also be examined. According to the proposed obliteration rule in Chapter 5, only when an indefinite NP is the complement of V can it appear without a case affix. Higher indefinite NPs in the structure are still marked with case yet require the numeral *one* (*zə*) to indicate that the NP is indefinite. I leave the question of why *one* (*zə*) is not optional on indefinite NPs that are not complements of V to further research.

[18] Noting that the language consultant I gathered this data from was not familiar with this term or how it would be used.

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