

Non-finite Verbal Functions in Abkhaz (North West Caucasian)

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One of the comforts for linguists as they move from one language to another within the Indo-European (IE) family is the discovery that general structural patterns familiar in one tend to be recapitulated, albeit with local variation in point of detail, in another. And so, it comes as no surprise to find utilisation of regularly conjugated finite forms of indicative, subjunctive or even, as in Ancient Greek, optative moods filling, as appropriate, the verbal slot in subordinate clauses for IE family-members. As other families are investigated, this comfort-zone is frequently left behind. The North Caucasian languages on the whole resort to other means to represent their equivalents to IE's adverbial, adjectival and nominal dependent clauses. Whether one wishes to characterise the relevant non-finite structures as 'clauses', when the classical definition of a clause is 'a sequence of words containing a finite verb-form' is a question left open in what follows. Below, then, is presented a survey of subordinate clausal-equivalents in Abkhaz, the member of the small North West Caucasian family (the other members being Circassian and the now extinct Ubykh) in which the finite vs non-finite distinction is most clearly delineated morphologically.

I have looked at subordination in Abkhaz on a number of occasions before: my doctoral thesis (published as Hewitt 1987) drew a contrast with the full clausal structures of neighbouring Georgian (from the South Caucasian, or Kartvelian, family); the equivalents of relative clauses have been examined in detail (Hewitt 1979), as has complementation (Hewitt 2005); forthcoming articles deal with comparatives (Hewitt Forthcoming a) and conditionals (Hewitt Forthcoming b). Additionally, Dumézil (1975) offered Abkhaz parallels for most (if not all) of the syntactic structures he discussed in Ubykh¹. This survey aims to present an overview for the benefit of those for whom Abkhaz is virgin-territory. Constructions based on the verbal noun (infinitive, gerund or masdar, as it is generally known to Caucasologists) in /-ra/ will not be discussed, as an expression like:

1. lə.tsa.'ra '[a.]a:mta.[a.]zə
her.go.MASD its.time.it.for

is not more out of the ordinary than its translation-equivalent 'at the time of her going' would be for such clauses as 'when she goes/was going/went'.

In order to understand the nature of the examples to be illustrated, readers need (a) to know how verbal agreement operates within the language, and (b) to be able to recognise at a glance the difference between the finite and non-finite forms

¹The Circassian parallels presented in this volume were more abundant.

of the basic tenses for the language's Dynamic verb-class (i.e. those indicating an action) and the Stative verb-class (i.e. those indicating a state), since they have somewhat different suffixal morphology. Abkhaz has no case-marking to differentiate between a verb's arguments but uses three, morphologically somewhat similar sets of pronominal agreement-prefixes, designated I, II, and III from their linear order within the verbal complex. Set I cross-references an intransitive subject (S) or transitive direct object (O or P); Set II correlates with indirect/oblique objects; Set III marks a transitive subject (A). From this patterning we see that the language displays Ergative alignment. The three sets of affixes are these:

Table 1

Pronominal Agreement-affixes in the Verb²

		<u>Singular</u>			<u>Plural</u>		
		I	II	III	I	II	III
1st		s-	s-	s-(/z-)	ħ-	ħ-	ħ-(/ɑ:-)
2nd	Masc/N-Hum	w-	w-	w-	ʃ ^w -	ʃ ^w -	ʃ ^w -(/ʒ ^w -)
2nd	Fem	b-	b-	b-	ʃ ^w -	ʃ ^w -	ʃ ^w -(/ʒ ^w -)
3rd	Masc Hum	d-	j-	j-	j-	r-(/d-)	r-(/d-)
3rd	Fem Hum	d-	l-	l-	j-	r-(/d-)	r-(/d-)
3rd	N-Hum	j-/∅-	ɑ-/∅-	(n)ɑ-	j-	r-(/d-)	r-(/d-)

When the referent of one of these affixes is the head of a relative structure, /j-/ replaces any other expected prefix, if the relevant affix belongs to Set I, whilst /z-/ is the relative substitute for Sets II and III. Table 2 sets out the finite vs non-finite tense-forms for the intransitive verbs 'stand up' and 'be standing' in both positive and negative variants. The finites are exemplified with 1st person singular subject in /s-/, whereas the relative transform (showing the /j-/ mentioned above) is selected to illustrate the non-finite equivalents:

Table 2

Finite vs Non-finite Indicative tense-forms in Abkhaz

		Dynamic Group I Tenses			
		'stand up'		'not stand up'	
		Finite	Non-finite	Finite	Non-finite
Pres		s.'gəla.wa.(j)t'	jə.'gəla.wa	s.'gəla.wa.m	'jə.m.gəla.wa
		'I stand up'	'who is...'	'I'm not...'	'who isn't...'
Aor		s.'gəla.∅jt'	jə.'gəla.∅	sə.m.'gəla.∅jt'	'jə.m.gəla.∅
Fut I		s.'gəla.p'	jə.'gəla.ra/ə	s.'gəla.rə.m	'jə.m.gəla.ra/ə

²To save space the schwa that may, depending on the stress-patterning, be associated with all the unaccompanied consonantal affixes is not indicated.

Fut II	s.'gəla.ʃ.t'	jə.'gəla.ʃa	s.'gəla.ʃa.m	'jə.m.gəla.ʃa
Perf	s.'gəla.χʲa.jt'	jə.'gəla.χʲa.w	sə.m.'gəla.ts(t)' = jə.'gəla.χʲa(ts)//	'jə.m.gəla.χʲa.w = 'jə.m.gəla.χʲa(ts)//
		jə.'gəla.ts		'jə.m.gəla.ts

Dynamic Group II Tenses

	Finite	Non-finite	Finite	Non-finite
Imperf	s.'gəla.wa.n	jə.'gəla.wa.z	s.'gəla.wa.mə.z.t'	'jə.m.gəla.wa.z
P/Indef	s.'gəla.θ.n	jə.'gəla.θ.z	sə.m.'gəla.θ.z.t'	'jə.m.gəla.θ.z
Condit I	s.'gəla.rə.n	jə.'gəla.rə.z	s.'gəla.rə.mə.z.t'	'jə.m.gəla.rə.z
Condit II	s.'gəla.ʃa.n	jə.'gəla.ʃa.z	s.'gəla.ʃa.mə.z.t'	'jə.m.gəla.ʃa.z
Plup	s.'gəla.χʲa.n	jə.'gəla.χʲa.z// jə.'gəla.tsə.z	sə.m.'gəla.tsə.z.t'	'jə.m.gəla.χʲa(tsə.z)// 'jə.m.gəla.tsə.z

Stative Pattern

	'be standing'		'not be standing'	
	Finite	Non-finite	Finite	Non-finite
Pres	s.'gəla.w.p' 'I'm standing'	jə.'gəla.w ³ 'who is...'	s.'gəla.m 'I'm not...'	jə.'gəla.m 'who isn't...'
Past	s.'gəla.n	jə.'gəla.z	s.'gəla.mə.z.t'	jə.'gəla.mə.z
[Perf	--	jə.'gəla.ts	--	'jə.m.gəla.ts]

Derived Stative Pattern

Def Fut	s.'gəla.z.a:wa.jt'	'jə.gəla.z.a:wa	s.'gəla.z.a:wa.m	'jə.gəla.m.z.a:wa
Fut I	s.'gəla.z.a:p'	'jə.gəla.z.a:ra	s.'gəla.z.a:rə.m	'jə.gəla.m.z.a:ra
Fut II	s.'gəla.z.a:t'	'jə.gəla.z.a:ʃa	s.'gəla.z.a:ʃa.m	'jə.gəla.m.z.a:ʃa
Condit I	s.'gəla.z.a:rə.n	'jə.gəla.z.a:rə.z	s.'gəla.z.a:rə.mə.z.t'	'jə.gəla.m.z.a:rə.z

Abkhaz possesses a subjunctive (in /-a:jt'/ for Dynamics vs /-z(a:jt')/ for Statives), e.g.

2. d.'gəl[a].a:jt' vs də.'gəla.mə.z (= də.'gəla.m.z.a:jt')
(s)he.stand-up.SUBJ (s)he.stand.not.SUBJ

'X is to stand up [Dynamic]!' vs 'X is not to remain standing [Stative]!'

but these verb-forms have no role to play as markers of subordination. There is also an optative (in /-nda(z)/), e.g.

3. s.tsa.'wa.nda(z) vs s.tsa.'χʲa.nda(z)
I.go.DYN[-PRES].OPT I.go.PERF.OPT

'Would that I were going!' (cf. /s.tsa.wa.jt'/ 'I am going') vs 'Would that I had gone!' (cf. /s.tsa.'χʲa.jt'/ 'I have gone')

As we shall see, there is one type of subordinate expression where the optative is permitted.

³In some contexts the final /-w/ is absent.

But before embarking on our survey of subordinate types, let us note that questions too are built on non-finite stems. Consider these examples:

4. $\int^w.tsa.'wa.ma$ vs $\int^w\text{ə}.m.tsa.'wa.j$ vs
 you-PL.go.DYN[-N/F-PRES].QU you-PL.not.go.DYN[-N/F-PRES].QU
 $\int^w\text{ə}.s.'pa.q'a.w(\text{ə}.j)$ vs $\int^w.tsa.'wa.w$
 you-PL.how.QU.be.STAT[-N/F-PRES].QU you-PL.go.DYN[-N/F-PRES]. QU
 $\int^w\text{ə}.m.tsa.'wa.w$
 you-PL.not.go.DYN[-N/F-PRES].QU
 'Are you going?' (cf. $/\int^w.tsa.wa.jt'/$ 'you are going') vs 'Aren't you going?' (cf. $/\int^w.tsa.wa.m/$ 'you aren't going') vs 'How are you?' (cf. $/\int^w\text{ə}.q'a.w.p'/$ 'you are') vs 'Are you going or not?'

And while on the topic of question-formation, we should perhaps note that Abkhaz has evidential forms in $/-za:.p'/$ for the Group 1 tenses vs $/-za:.r\text{ə}.n/$ for those of Group 2, and questions can even be formed on these too, e.g.

5. $a.\int^wq^w\text{ə}$ 'w.a.pχj a.Ø.za:.p' vs 'w.a.pχj a.Ø.za:.r\text{ə}.w(.ma)⁴
 the.book you-MASC.it.read.PAST.EVID.FIN you-MASC.it.read.PAST.
 EVID.N/F.STAT[-N/F-PRES].QU

'You have apparently read the book' vs 'Evidently you've read it, is that so?'

Note how the plosive ending that marks the finite Evidential yields to a rhotic as the forms seems to transform into the base of a Stative verb for the question in just the same way as happens when a finite derived Future I Stative shifts to its non-finite counterpart (especially when negated). With a different question-formant we have:

6. $w\text{ə}.s.'pa.s\text{ə}.za:.r\text{ə}.(w\text{ə}.j)$
 you-MASC.how.QU.create.EVID.N/F.STAT.QU

'How were you created, as it seems you were?' [said to a mythical being!]

As all the non-finite forms in Table 2 illustrate intransitive relative verb-forms, let us take an example containing the other substitute-prefix, and it is an example rather appropriate for a readership of linguists:

7. $\text{h}.\chi\text{ə}$ $j.a.'\text{h}a.r.\chi^w a.wa.jt'$ $z.t\text{ʃ}.qj.d.'k'\text{ə}.l\text{a}.\text{Ø}.n\text{ə}$
 our.head them.it.we.CAUS.aid.DYN.FIN[-PRES] whose.self.each-other.
 against.hold.SUFF.PAST.ABS
 $a.p\text{ə}(\text{.})k^w(\text{.})s\text{ə}(\text{.})l\text{a}(\text{.})ra$ $\text{Ø}.q'a.z.'ts'a.r$ $\text{Ø}.z\text{ə}.l.s\text{ə}.wa$
 ART.obstruction it.PREV.which.make.if/COMP it.which.PREV.can.
 DYN[-N/F-PRES]

⁴An alternative form of this question keeps the finite form intact, viz.

$a.\int^wq^w\text{ə}$ 'w.a.pχj a.Ø.za:.p' $[a.]'a(\text{.})k^w\text{ə}.w(.ma)$
 it.be.STAT[-N/F-PRES].QU

h.aʒ^Wa(.)h^Wa(.)t^W 'organ.k^Wa
 our.speech- organ.PL

'We use our speech-organs, which, having held themselves together, can
 create an obstruction' (cf. /jə.q'a.r.'ts'a.jt'/ 'they made it/them')

This example nicely shows how any affix within a relative structure that correlates with the head-noun can (and usually does) yield to the appropriate relative substitute, so that in this complex relative structure we have three instantiations (rather than the one expected) of the relativising /z-/. We also note in passing that a protasis form (in /-r/) can function as complement to the verb 'be able', which accounts for the alternative gloss of the protasis-suffix as COMP (= complementiser; for details, see Hewitt 2005); perhaps the simplest compromise would be to employ the gloss CONV[erb]. This iteration of relative-marking can result in the rather counter-intuitive presence of two relative-affixes within one and the same verb-form, as in the next example, which comes from a children's story about two obstinate goats reluctant to abandon any gain, viz.

8. jə.z.'k'ə.θ.z Ø.z.k'.wa.z
 which.which.grasp.PAST.N/F[-PAST/INDEF] it.which.grasp.DYN.N/F[-
 IMPERF]

ɥə.dʒma.'k'ə
 2.goat.one

'2 goats which kept a grasp on what they had grasped' (cf. /jə.r.'k'.wa.jt'/
 'they grasp it/them' and /jə.r.'k'ə.θ.jt'/ 'they grasped it/them')

This strange coupling actually seems preferable to the logically expected /'jə.r.k'ə.θ.z/ 'which they (had) grasped'.

The equivalent of an adverbial clause of time is produced by inserting /an-/ 'when' into the non-finite form of the appropriate tense, e.g.

9. 'a.mla j.an.a.'k'ə.θ a.'tsa
 the.hunger them.when.it.seize.PAST[-N/F-AOR] the.maizestore
 'j.a.d.prə.la.wa.n
 they.it.beside.fly.SUFF.DYN.FIN[-IMPERF]
 'When they got hungry, they'd fly up beside the maizestore' (cf.
 /j.a.'k'ə.θ.jt'/ 'it seized them')

The context makes clear that this event of growing hungry did not occur just once, and one can underline the indefinite nature of the event by adding the complex suffix /-la(.)k(j)'/, to give:

10. 'a.mla j.an.a.k'.θ.'la(.)k(j)' a.ɥ'nə.q'a
 the.hunger them.when.it.seize.PAST[-N/F-AOR].INDEF the.house.to

jə.'dʷə.kʷ.la.wa.n
 they.field.on.go.DYN.FIN[-IMPERF]

'When(ever) they got hungry, they would set off for home'

One may optionally add the postpositional phrase /'a.]a:mta.[a.]zə/ 'at its time' (or even /'a.]aj(.)pɕ/ 'like it') to such temporal expressions.

For the meaning 'after', add the postpositional phrase /'a.]fta.[a.a]χʲ/ 'after it' to basic temporal structures of the type just described (without /'a.]a:mta.[a.]zə/, of course), and the next example demonstrates that the temporal reference of a form built on the non-finite Aorist is not restricted to the past, viz.

11. j.a'nə.dz.ø(.la(.k(j)))⁵ 'a.]fta.[a.a]χʲ
 they.when.disappear.PAST[-N/F-AOR].INDEF its.track.it.to
 jə.sə.pɕ(.a):'wa.jt' hʷa w.'rə.fta.m.la.n
 them.I.find.DYN.FIN[-PRES] saying you-MASC.them.PREV.not.follow.PROH
 'When they disappear, do not go after them thinking that you'll find them!
 (cf. /'jə.dzə.ø.jt'/ 'they disappeared' vs /'jə.dz.wa.jt'/ 'they (will) disappear';
 the disappearance is a one-off in this folktale)

By suffixing the emphatic suffix /-tɛʷqj'a/ (optionally in combination with the postpositional phrase /'a.]aj(.)pɕ/ 'it.like') to a basic temporal expression produced as just explained, one produces the translation-equivalent for 'as soon as', e.g.

12. d.an.'tsa.ø(.la(.k(j)))tɛʷqj'a ([a.]aj(.)pɕ⁶)
 (s)he.when.go.PAST[-N/F-AOR].INDEF.EMPH it.like
 jə.'s.a.hʷ
 it.me.to.say[-IMPER]
 'As soon as (s)he goes, tell me!'

The temporal prefix /an-/ in such structures may be replaced by the prefix of manner /ɕ-/ 'as, like'⁷. Non-finite sequences containing this latter element also serve as noun-complements for certain verbs (for distribution see Hewitt 2005), e.g.

13. a.'dzə ø.ɕ.ø.'χə.ts'ə.ø.z
 the.water it.how/that.it.over.flow.PAST.N/F[-PAST/INDEF]
 ø.'gʷa.j.ta.ø.jt'
 it.PREV.he.notice.PAST.FIN[-AOR]
 'He noticed how/that the water had overflowed' (cf. /jə.ø.'χə.ts'ə.ø.jt'/ 'it overflowed')

⁵The printed text contains the suffixal material.

⁶Alternatively, /d.an.tsa.ø(.la(.k(j))) [a.]aj(.)pɕ.tɛʷqj'a/.

⁷With reference to the simple past /an-/ is preferably associated with the non-finite Aorist, /ɕ-/ preferably with the non-finite Past Indefinite.

An interrogative verb-form can even fulfil this role, and, since a protasis-form produced by suffixing the formant /-za(.)r/ to the appropriate non-finite form (for the formations see Hewitt Forthcoming b) can be used as an interrogative, this strategy can also be employed in this context, e.g.

14. a.r Ø.'tsa.Ø.ma / Ø.'tsa.Ø.za(.)r a.tʂ.'tɛ^Wa
 the.army it.go.PAST[-N/F-AOR].QU it.go.PAST[-N/F-AOR].if the.horse
(man).PL

'[a.]aʂta j.a.:Ø.'ta.l[a.Ø.j]t'
 the.yard it.hither.it.in.come.PAST.FIN[-AOR]

'As soon as the army left, the horsemen came into the yard' (cf. /jə.'tsa.Ø.jt'/
 'it/they left')

For the notion 'since (the time that)' the appropriate non-finite verb-form is coupled with one of the following suffixal compounds: /-j.zta.j/, which consists of the coördinating clitic /-j/ 'and', used as normally with both conjuncts, and /ʂta/ 'already', here voiced to [zta]; /Ø.a.:Ø.'χə.s(.nə)/ or /Ø.na.Ø.'χə.s(.nə)/, Past Absolutes, fully formed with /-nə/, based on the verb /a.'χə.s.ra/ 'passing over' and meaning 'having passed over hither/thither'; /jə.na.[a.]r.k'.nə/, which in origin is the Past Absolute of the Causative form of the root /-k'-/ 'seize' and thus literally means 'having made X hold Y'; this last element may not be used with a verb-form indicating that the action is still continuing. With any of the last three formants a protasis-form in /-za(.)r/ may replace the non-finite form otherwise employed, e.g.

15. d.χ^Wə'tʂə.j(.)zta(.)j⁸ / d.χ^Wə'tʂə Ø.(.)a:(.)Ø.(.)'χə(.)s
 (s)he.child[-N/F-STAT-PRES].since
 d.χ^Wə'tʂə jə(.)na.(.)[a(.)]r(.).k'(.).nə / d.χ^Wə'tʂə.za(.)r
(s)he.child.[-N/F-STAT-PRES].CONV
 Ø.(.)a:(.)Ø.(.)'χə(.)s / d.χ^Wə'tʂə.za(.)r jə(.)na.(.)[a(.)]r(.).k'(.).nə də.χ'ʂa.n
(s)he.shepherd.
 FIN[-STAT-PAST]

'Since X was a child (= From childhood), X was a shepherd' (cf.
 /d.χ^Wə'tʂə.w.p'/ 'X is a child/small')

16. k'ər Ø.ts'.wa.jt' ħ.aj(.)'ba.(m.)'ba.Ø.j(.).zta(.)j⁹
 much it.pass.DYN.FIN[-PRES] us.each-other.not.see.PAST[-N/F-AOR].since
 'A fair while has passed since we saw each other' (N.B. the optional negative;
 cf. /ħ.aj(.)'ba.(m.)'ba.Ø.jt'/ 'we saw/did not see each other')

⁸Note that this is one of those occasions when the non-finite Stative /-w/ is absent; cf. the interrogative /jə.q'a.da/ who.be[-N/F-STAT-PRES].who? 'Who is it?'.
⁹If the negative prefix is present, the stress precedes it; otherwise it falls on the root.

The root /-ts'-/ 'pass (of time)' seen in the main verb of the last example forms the basis of the compound suffix /-∅(.)na(.)'ts'ə/ meaning 'while'. The first element is the preverb 'thither', and holistically the form is in origin the truncated Past Absolute (sc. without suffix /-nə/) of this verb¹⁰. The suffix is used in conjunction with the non-finite Present, e.g.

17. ar(.)'a ħa.t^w'a.∅(.)na(.)'ts'ə a.wa'raş ∅.a:z^w.'la.p'
 here we.sit[-N/F-STAT-PRES].while the.beer it.we.drink.SUFF.FIN[-FutI]
 'While we sit here, let's drink beer!' (cf. /ħa.'t^w'a.w.p'/ 'we are sitting')

Like many languages, Abkhaz does not distinguish between the notions 'before' and 'until'. The compound-suffix /-a:(.)n(.)dza/ is attached to the non-finite Aorist of the Dynamic verb in question. The analysis of this suffix is not entirely transparent: is it the root /-a:-/ 'come' plus /-ndza/ 'upto', as in /a.'sa:t χ(.)'pa.ndza/ the.hour 3.upto 'upto 3 o'clock', or do we have the element /-a:n/¹¹ 'at the time of VERBing', as in /a.wa'raş 'a:z^w.ra a:n/ 'at the time of drinking beer'?
 Examples:

18. d.χə(.)n.'ħ^w.∅.a:(.)n(.)dza s.tsa.∅.jt'
 (s)he.PREV.return.PAST[-N/F-AOR].before I.go.PAST.FIN[-AOR]
 'I left before (s)he returned' (cf. /d.χə(.)n.'ħ^w∅.∅.jt'/ '(s)he returned')
19. d.χə(.)n.'ħ^w.∅.a:(.)n(.)dza s.a:n.χa.'wa.jt'
 (s)he.PREV.return.PAST[-N/F-AOR].until I.PREV.PREV.stay.DYN.FIN[-PRES]
 'I shall stay until (s)he returns' (cf. /d.χə(.)n.'ħ^w.wa.jt'/ '(s)he returns')

The equivalent of a clause of manner is produced by inserting /ş-/ 'as' into the non-finite form of the appropriate tense; this sequence may optionally be accompanied by the postpositional phrase /[a.]aj(.)pş/ 'it.like', e.g.

20. jə.ş.'j^w.a.ħ.ħ^wa.∅.z ([a.]aj(.)pş/
 it.as.you-PL.to.we.say.PAST-N/F[-PAST/INDEF] it.like
 jə.'zə.q'a.j^w∅.m.ts'a.∅.j
 it.why.PREV.you-PL.not.do.PAST[-N/F-AOR].QU
 'Why didn't you do (it) as I told you?' (cf. /jə.'j^w.a.ħ.ħ^wa.∅.jt'/ 'we said X to you')

A hypothetical manner expression is rendered by suffixing /-j^wa/ 'as if' to the appropriate non-finite form, e.g.

21. j^w.'tʃəməza.ɥə.w.j^wa j^w.'tʃə.q'a.j^w.ts'a
 you-PL.ill.person.STAT[-N/F-PRES].as-if your-PL.self.PREV.you-PL.make[-
 IMPER]

¹⁰The non-truncated form is not usual but not absolutely to be excluded.

¹¹a further puzzle is whether this is to be analysed as /∅.a:n/, assuming it to be verbal in essence, or as /[a.]a:n/, assuming it to be a simple postposition. But nothing crucial here depends on the analysis.

'Pretend to be ill [lit. make yourself/yourself as though you were ill]!' (cf. /ʃʷ.tʃəməzɑ.ɥə.w.p'/ 'you are ill')

Notice how resorting to the construction of *oratio recta* (viz. repetition of words originally spoken or, as here, thought, which results in the presence of a finite verb, followed by speech-particle /ħʷɑ/ 'saying'¹²) provides a neat alternative (as, indeed, it does for a number of other constructions) that leads the hearer/reader to decode the precise semantics of the loosely structured syntax, e.g.

22. zɑ'gǰə Ø.ɑj.'lə.w.k'.ɑ:.wɑ.z.ʃʷɑ /
 all it.each-other.PREV.you-MASC.understand.SUFF.DYN.N/F[-IMPERF].
 as-if
 Ø.ɑj.'lə.s.k'.ɑ:.wɑ.jt' ħʷɑ wə.'tʷ'ɑ.n
 it.each-other.PREV.I.understand.SUFF.DYN.FIN[-PRES] saying you-MASC.
 sit.FIN[-STAT-PAST]
 'You were sitting as if you understood everything' (cf. /j.ɑj.'lə.w.k'.ɑ:.wɑ.n/
 'you were understanding it/them')

The commonest protasis-marker for vivid conditions is the suffix /-r/ in combination with the non-finite Aorist. This morphological combination usually refers to the future but is not restricted to such a temporal reference; if anything other than the non-finite Aorist is used as base, the suffix becomes /-zɑ(.)r/. The most usual formant for vague conditions is the compound suffix /-z(.)t(.)gǰə/, which, apart from the coördinating clitic /-gǰə/ 'and, also, even', looks as though it might consist of the non-finite /-z/ coupled with the finite marker /-t'/, albeit deglottalised; cf. such a coupling in negated forms like /s.'gəla.mə.z.t'/ 'I was not standing', and see Hewitt (Forthcoming b) for details on the range of functions of protases in general. Examples:

23. sə.ʃʷ.təʷə.'ps.ɑ:(.)jt', jə.ʃʷə.m.'zʷə.Ø.r /
 I.you-PL.from.die.SUBJ it/them.you-PL.not.drink.PAST[-N/F-AOR].if
 jə.ʃʷə.m.'zʷ.'rə.zɑ(.)r
 it/them.you-PL.not.drink.N/F[-FUTI].if
 'Let me die on you = You'll be the death of me, if you don't drink it/them!' (cf. /jə.ɑʃʷə.zʷ.'wɑ.m/' 'you don't/won't drink it/them' or /jə.ʃʷə.zʷ.'rə.m/' 'you won't drink it/them then')
24. 'ts'əpχ(.)tʷ'ə(.)j s.χʷəl Ø.wə.'ba.Ø.z(.)t(.)gǰə /
 last-year's my.cabbage it.you-MASC.see.PAST[-N/F-AOR].if
 Ø.wə.'ba.Ø.r, jɑ'gǰɑ jə.'dʒɑ.w.ʃɑ.rə.n
 it.you-MASC.see.PAST[-N/F-AOR].if much it.surprise.you-MASC.deem.
 FUTI.FIN[-CONDITI]

¹²Actually this is an abbreviated form of the Past Absolute /jə.ħʷɑ.Ø.'nə/ 'having said it'.

'If you had seen my cabbage of last year, you'd have been really amazed at it!'
(cf. /jə.w.'ba.Ø.jt' / 'you saw it/them')

25. pʃ(.)ba Ø.'a.ts'a.za(.)r, jə.'bzəjə.w.p'
4 it.it.under[-N/F-STAT-PRES].if it.good.STAT.FIN[-PRES]
'If it (e.g. the horse) has 4 (sc. legs), fine' (cf. /pʃ(.)ba Ø.'a.ts'a.w.p' / 'it has 4
(legs)')
26. pʃ(.)ba Ø.'a.ts'a.z.(.)t(.)gʲə, əj(.)ħa.'gʲə jə.ɛ^wɛ^wa.χa.'wa.n
4 it.it.under[-N/F-STAT-PRES].if more.even it.strong.become.DYN.
FIN[-IMPERF]

'If it (sc. 3-legged horse) had 4 (legs), it would grow even stronger'

Concession is indicated in one of two ways: for the meaning 'although' the coördinating clitic /-gʲə/ 'and, also, even' is attached to a non-finite form containing the manner-prefix /s-/ 'as'; for the meaning 'even if', the same clitic is naturally attached to the appropriate protasis-form, e.g.

27. d.ʃə.pʃ'dza.z.gʲə, pħ^wəs.s d.a.:j.m.'ga.Ø.jt'
she.as.beautiful.N/F[-STAT-PAST].even wife.as her.hither.he.not.bring.
PAST.FIN[-AOR]

'Though she was beautiful, he did not marry her' (cf. /də.pʃ'dza.n/ 'she was beautiful')

28. də.pʃ'dza.za(.)r.gʲə, pħ^wəs.s d.a.:z.ga.'wa.m
she.beautiful[-N/F-STAT-PRES].if.even wife.as her.hither.I.bring.DYN.not[-
FIN-PRES]

'Even if she is beautiful, I'll not marry her' (cf. /də.pʃ'dza.w.p' / 'she is beautiful')

The addition of the free-standing /ja'gʲa/ 'whatever, however (much)' to a concessive sequence of the latter type produces an indefinite expression, e.g.

29. 'a.ts'la ja'gʲa jə.ħara'k'ə.za(.)r.gʲə, s.Ø.'χa.la.wa.jt'
the.tree however it.tall[-N/F-STAT-PRES].if.even I.it.up.go.DYN.FIN[-PRES]
'However tall the tree is, I'll climb it' (cf. /jə.ħara'k'ə.w.p' / 'it is tall')
30. ja'gʲa jə.'tʃə.j.^wa.Ø.r.gʲə, (j.)jə.'zə.q'a.ts'a.wa.m
however his.self.he.exert.PAST[-N/F-AOR].if.even it/them.he.POT.PREV.do.
DYN.not[-FIN-PRES]

'However much he tries, he can't do it' (cf. /jə.'tʃə.j.^wa.wa.jt' / 'he tries')

Where temporal reference is to the past, an alternative is available. This alternative associates particle /ja'gʲa/ and clitic /-gʲə/ with the Optative, the formation of which was described above, e.g.

31. ja'gʲa Ø.z.'wə.Ø.r.gʲə / Ø.z.'wə.Ø.nda((.)z).gʲə,
whatever it.I.do.PAST[-N/F-AOR].if.even it.I.do.PAST[-N/F-AOR].OPT.even

jə.s.'m.a(.)wə.θ.jt'
 it/them.I.not.get.PAST.FIN[-AOR]
 'Whatever I did/Do as I might, I didn't get it/them' (cf. /jə.z.'wə.θ.jt'/ 'I did it/them')

To produce the equivalent of a causal clause, a non-finite verb-form in the appropriate tense takes the prefix /aχj-/ and is followed by one of the postpositional phrases /a.'zə/ 'for it', /a.'q'ə(.)n(.)t^W/ or /a.'tʃ'ə(.)n(.)t^W/ 'from it = because, as a result of it'. The prefix (inside a non-finite form, of course) is found in such sentential locatives as:

32. b.aχj'.tsa.'wa.z (a.'təp) θ.z.'dər.wa.n
 you-FEM.where.go.DYN.N/F[-IMPERF] the.place it.I.know.DYN.FIN[-IMPERF]
 'I knew (the place) where you were going'

It also seems to serve as the most general marker of subordination (a role played in Georgian by the general subordinator /rəm/ 'that; if', which equates to the verbal suffix /-ni/ in Mingrelian), e.g.

33. mart' a:(.)'ba s.an j.aχj'.lə.də.s.'nəh^Wa.la.θ.z
 March 8 my.mother it.SUB.her.on.I.congratulate.SUFF.PAST.N/F[-
 PAST/INDEF]
 's.a(.)q'a(.)ra θ.'sə.ts.la.θ.z.ʃ^Wa θ.z.ba.'wa.n
 my.size it.me.with.go.PAST.N/F[-PAST/INDEF].as-if it.I.see.DYN.FIN
 [-IMPERF]

'In congratulating my mother on the 8th March (sc. International Women's Day), I seemed to grow in stature' (cf. /jə.lə.də.s.'nəh^Wa.la.θ.jt'/ 'I congratulated her on it'; /jə.'sə.ts.la.θ.jt'/ 'I grew')

And so, in causal function we have:

34. j.aχj'ə.j.tə^W.ʃ^Wa.'wa.z a.'zə / a.'q'ə(.)n(.)t^W /
 they.as.him.from.fear.DYN.N/F[-IMPERF] it.for it.from
 a.'tʃ'ə(.)n(.)t^W jə.b'na.la.θ.jt'
 it.from they.forest.enter.PAST.FIN[-AOR]
 'Because they were afraid of him, they fled' (cf. /jə.j.tə^W.ʃ^Wa.'wa.n/ 'they feared him')

If the cause gives rise to a beneficial consequence, either /j(.)a(.)bza(.)w(.)ra(.)'nə/ or /a.bza(.)w(.)'ra(.)la/¹³ 'thanks to, courtesy of it' may take the place of any of the three basic postpositional phrases. On the other hand, should the consequence be unpleasant, then /j(.)a(.)χ(.)q'a(.)'nə/¹⁴ 'consequent upon it' may substitute.

¹³Both markers are based on the stem /-bza.w.'ra/ good.do.MASD 'doing good', the former being the absolute of a Stative like /jə.sə.bza.w.'ra.w.p'/ 'it's thanks to me', the latter being the Masdar dependent on the Instrumental /-la/ 'by'.

¹⁴This is the Past Absolute of /j.a.χ.'q'a.θ.jt'/ 'X fell off from it'.

It may be appropriate at this point to explain how Abkhaz handles the notion 'the reason why/that'. Very simply, /z-/ 'why' is inserted into the prefixal structure of a non-finite verb-form, e.g.

35. wə.ps.'ra s.na(.)p'.a.'zʔs'ə jə.q'a.la.ra(.)z[ə
 your-MASC.die.MASD my.hand.it.in it.PREV.happen.PURP
 a.]'a.w.ma ar(.)'a.q'a wə.zə.s.'pə.la.Ø
 it.be.STAT[-N/F-PRES].QU here.at you-MASC.why.me.PREV.meet.
 PAST[-N/F-AOR/
 'Is it in order that your death should take place in my hands why/that you met
 me here?' (cf. /wə.s.'pə.la.Ø.jt'/ 'you met me' or 'I met you')

In passing, this example also demonstrates Abkhaz's love of clefting, seen again here:

36. jə.ʂ.a.'gʷə(.)də.r.ts'a.wa [a.]a.w.p'
 it/them.as.it.PREV.they.shoot.DYN[-N/F-PRES] it.be.STAT.FIN[-PRES]
 a(.)dzʷ d.a:rə.l.χ.Ø.'nə
 someone him/her.PREV.them.from.choose.PAST[-AOR].ABS
 'd.a.ma jə.ʂ.tsa.'wa
 him/her.it.have[-STAT-ABS] it.how.go.DYN[-N/F-PRES]
 'With them shooting at it is how it would select one from amongst them and
 go off with him/her' (of a sea-monster snatching its human sacrifice; cf.
 /j.a.'gʷə(.)də.r.ts'a.wa.jt'/ 'they are shooting at it')

A deviation from the normal Abkhaz (indeed, North West Caucasian) pattern is witnessed with causal expressions formed by means of one of the three basic postpositional phrases (and only these three). For, instead of associating them with a non-finite verb-form, they may follow a finite verb in the appropriate tense, so that an alternative to 34 is the following:

37. jə.j.təʷ.jʷa.'wa.n a.'zə / a.'q'ə(.)n(.)tʷ' /
 they.him.from.fear.DYN.FIN[-IMPERF] it.for it.from
 a.'ʔs'ə(.)n(.)tʷ' jə.b'na.la.Ø.jt'
 it.from they.forest.enter.PAST.FIN[-AOR]
 'Because they were afraid of him, they fled'

One consequence of this shift is that not only do subordinate clauses (in the full sense of the term) make their appearance but the original postpositional phrases have essentially been transformed into conjunctions, an entirely new word-class in the language(-family)¹⁵. These postpositional phrases are not the only elements in

¹⁵Interestingly, in the sister-language Ubykh an element /-αχ(ən)/ is suffixed to the finite [sic] verb-form which expresses the cause, and this clause precedes the consequence, with the result that the element concerned has been seen as the equivalent to 'and so'. Could there be a connection between this item in Ubykh and the Abkhaz prefix /-αχj(ə)/? The example below comes from Dumézil (1975.209):

the language to have undergone (or to be undergoing) such a regrammaticalisation, as we shall see. And the question to ask is whether the genesis of the construction is to be ascribed to the influence of languages (namely, in this case, Mingrelian, Georgian and Russian) where finite verbs stand in dependent clauses or put down to natural development, for, after all, such a change of construction is by no means unique to Abkhaz.

Attaching the compound suffix /-r(.)t^w/ to the non-finite Aorist of Dynamic verbs¹⁶ produces the Resultative converb, which is the commonest means of indicating a result, with or without the postpositional phrase /[[a.]aj(.)pʂ/ 'it.like', e.g.

38. s.ab s.'j.aj.χsə.θ.r(.)t^w ([a.]aj(.)pʂ)
 my.father I.him.at.shoot.PAST[-N/F-AOR].RES it.like
 s.aj(.)la.ga.'wa.ma
 I.PREV.go-mad.DYN[-N/F-PRES]-QU

'Am I so crazy as to shoot at my father?!' (cf. /s.'j.aj.χs.wa.jt'/ 'I shoot at him')

If the result indicates negative capacity, then the non-finite Present (with or without the postpositional phrase) can replace the Resultative; adding suffix /-nə/ to the non-finite Present produces the Present Absolute, but substituting this as a possible third alternative causes some hesitation as to its acceptability, e.g.

39. χaħ^w dəw.k' a.'t'əɣra a.'ta(.)la(.)rta 'j.a.d.ts'a.θ.nə
 stone big.a its.lair its.entrance it.it.against.place.PAST[-N/F-AOR].ABS
 da(.)'ra θ.z.θ.'tə.m.ts'.wa(?.nə) /
 they they.POT.it.from.not.emerge.DYN[-N/F-PRES](.ABS)
 θ.z.θ.'tə.m.ts'ə.θ.r(.)t^w ([a.]aj(.)pʂ) a.j^w
 they.POT.it.from.not.emerge.PAST[-N/F-AOR].RES it.like the.door
 θ.a.r.k'.θ.'nə jə.tsa.'wa.jt'
 it.it.CAUS.catch.PAST[-N/F-AOR].ABS it.go.DYN.FIN[-PRES]

'Having placed a huge stone against the entrance to its lair, it closes the door so that they can't get out and departs' (cf. /jə.z.θ.'tə.ts'.wa.m/ 'they can't get out of it')

The Resultative (with or without /[[a.]aj(.)pʂ/) also figures in causative constructions where Abkhaz cannot employ its synthetic causative (placing /r-/ , the causative marker, before the root, or possibly the preverb, of the lexical verb undergoing causation). Since Abkhaz prefers to avoid quadripersonal verbs, if an

'Ø.aba.jt'.qχ a.j.kj'a.fa.'q'a.ma
 X.ill.FIN[-STAT-PAST],because X.PREV.come.POT.PAST.not
 'X was ill and so could not come'.

¹⁶If the construction requires a Stative verb, then /-za(.)r(.)t^w/ attaches to the non-finite Present minus final /-w/.

already tripersonal verbs are subjected to causativisation, Abkhaz resorts to an analytical construction, utilising the verb 'make' (itself optionally causativised) in conjunction with the lexical verb marked by the Resultative converb, e.g.

40. a.'para Ø.'sə.l.ta.Ø.r(.)t^w ([a.]aj(.)pɕ)
 the.money it.me.she.give.PAST[-N/F-AOR].RES it.like
 (jə.)q'a.'ts'a / (jə.)'lə.r.q'a.ts'a
 it.PREV.do[-IMPER] it.her.CAUS.PREV.do[-IMPER]
 'Have her give the money to me'

Abkhaz attaches the Purposive converb in /-ra(.)zə/ or /-r(.)ts/ (the later possibly buttressed by the postpositional phrase /a.'zə/ 'it.for', no doubt barred from the former because it is already an integral part of that composite suffix) to the non-finite Aorist of Dynamic verbs¹⁷ in order to produce the equivalent of a purpose clause, e.g.

41. 'jə.rax^w Ø.aj.'zə.j.tsa.Ø.ra(.)zə /
 his.cattle them.each-other.for.he.gather.PAST[-N/F-AOR].PURP
 Ø.aj.'zə.j.tsa.Ø.r(.)ts (a.'zə) bzəp
 them.each-other.for.he.gather.PAST[-N/F-AOR].PURP it.for Bzyp
 a.p'şah^wa 'd.a.va.la.χ^ja.n
 its.bank he.it.along.go.PERF.FIN[-PLUP]
 'He had already passed along the bank of the Bzyp in order to gather his
 cattle' (cf. /j.aj.'zə.j.tsa.Ø.jt'/ 'he gathered it/them')

An alternative construction makes use of *oratio recta* with the speech-particle /h^wa/, as described above, e.g.

42. sələmən 'jə.ş(.)q'a jə.'tsa.Ø.jt' h.wəs
 Solomon him.to they.go.PAST.FIN[-AOR] our.affair
 Ø.h.'z.aj.lə.j.r.ga.p' h^wa
 it.us.for.each-other.from-in.he.CAUS.take.FIN[-FUT1] saying
 'They went to Solomon for him to sort out their affair(s) for them' (cf. (11))

This is reminiscent of the Latin alternative to its normal purpose-clause built on *si forte* 'if by chance' and could easily bring about a shift of speech-particle to conjunction, if only the pronominal reference here to 1st person plural were to become 3rd person plural. With this in mind, let us now turn to complementation.

In the limited space available we can do no more than sketch the wide range of possibilities for forming complements in Abkhaz. Ignoring the verbal noun

¹⁷If the construction requires a Stative verb, then /-za(.)ra(.)zə/ or /-za(.)r(.)ts/ attach to the non-finite Present minus final /-w/. Since this paper is concerned with syntax rather than morphology, I shall not discuss here alternative analyses of (a) the suffixes indicating the protasis of a condition, a result and a purpose or (b) the nature of the stem to which the respective suffixes are attached; for a discussion of that question see Hewitt (2005; Forthcoming b).

(Masdar), we find the following: (i) *oratio recta*, associating speech-particle /h^wa/ with a finite verb; (ii) insertion of the pre-radical affix /-ax̣j(ə)-/ 'where; that' into the appropriate non-finite form; (iii) insertion of the pre-radical affix /-ʒ(ə)-/ 'how; that' into the appropriate non-finite verb-form; (iv) conflation of option (i) and (iii), coupling a non-finite verb-form containing /ʒ(ə)-/ followed by the speech-particle; (v) suffixation of /-j^wa/ 'as if; (allegedly) that' to the appropriate non-finite form; (vi) appropriate absolute; (vii) Purposive converb; (viii) Protasis converb; (ix) Resultative converb; (x) simple non-finite verb-form; (xi) indirect question formations with prefix /an(ə)-/ 'when' or /z(ə)-/ 'why' in the appropriate non-finite form. Amongst these there is some degree of interchangeability, although contextual distribution is often restricted (for details see Hewitt 2005). Some of these have already been illustrated in passing; for the Protasis converb, which typically indicates an aim, wish or possibility, see example (7) – this type can also be dependent on a postpositional phrase, e.g.

43. jə.sə.m.'fə.ø.r 'a.da 'psəx^wa
 it/them.I.not.kill.PAST[-N/F-AOR].CONV it.apart means
 ø.s.'m.a(.)wə.ø.z(.)t', jə.s.'fə.ø.jt'
 it.I.not.get.PAST.FIN[-P/INDEF] it/them.I.kill.PAST.FIN[-AOR]
 'I had no alternative but to kill it/them, and I killed it/them';

since (34) illustrates /-ax̣j(ə)-/ 'that' in a non-finite structure that is dependent on a postpositional phrase, it is no great leap to imagine it serving as the complement-argument of a verb; use of the manner-prefix as complementiser has been seen in examples (13) and (36); suffix /-j^wa/ 'as if; (allegedly) that' appears in (33); prefix /z(ə)-/ 'why' occurs in (35), and the Resultative converb forms the complement in the lexical causative of (40).

The Absolute in the appropriate tense provides the complement for a few expressions of sensual perception, which, since the Absolute closely resembles the Indo-European participle, is reminiscent of Ancient Greek's Accusative and Participle construction with verbs of perception, e.g.

44. a.ħas'kĵ'ən ø.'pə.j.q'a.x̣j'a.nə ø.s.a(.)ħa.'wa.jt'
 the.grass it.PREV.he.cut.PERF.ABS it.I.hear.DYN.FIN[-PRES]
 'I hear that he has already cut the grass' (cf. /jə . 'pə.j.q'a.x̣j'a.jt'/ 'He has
 already cut it/them')

It is the non-finite form without adornment that provides the complement to the verb /a.dʒ.ʃa.'ra/ 'suppose' in (45):

45. sa((.)'ra) 's.a(.)k^wə.z ø.'dʒə.j.ʃa.ø.jt'
 I I.be.N/F[-STAT-PAST] it.PREV.he.suppose.PAST.FIN[AOR]
 'He supposed it was me' (cf. /sa((.)'ra) 's.a(.)k^wə.n/ 'It was me')

The Purposive converb is seen in (46):

46. a'rə(.)j Ø.mts.χa.Ø.r(.)ts Ø.s.ta'χə.w.p'
this it.lie.become.PAST[-N/F-AOR].PURP it.I.want.STAT.FIN[-PRES]
'I want this to turn out to be a lie' (cf. /jə.mts.'χa.Ø.jt'/ 'it proved to be a lie')

The final set of variations (copied from Hewitt 1998) demonstrates an interesting constructional development for complementation. The first variant shews simple *oratio recta*:

47. tʃ'a(.)ta(.)'χja.s jə.'lə.ma.n jə.'s.a.k^W.pa.Ø.n(ə)
oath.as it.she.have.FIN[-STAT-PAST] who.me.to.PREV.jump.PAST.ABS
s.k'a.'zə.ʒ.wa 'jə.da sə.j.ts.tsa.'wa.m
me.down.who.throw.DYN[-N/F-PRES] him.apart I.him.with.go.DYN.not[-
FIN-PRES]

h^Wa

saying

'She had vowed that she would not marry anyone other than the one who jumped on her (sc. in wrestling) and threw her to the ground'

The second variant switches pronominal reference to bring it into conformity with the matrix verb and introduces /s(ə)-/ into the verb, which results in its becoming non-finite, though the speech-particle is still retained:

- 47a. ... jə.'l.a.k^W.pa.Ø.n(ə) d.k'a.'zə.ʒ.wa
 who.her.to.PREV.jump.PAST.ABS her.down.who.throw.DYN[-N/F-PRES]
'jə.da d.'sə.j.tsə.m.tsa.wa h^Wa
him.apart she.that.him.with.not.go.DYN[-N/F-PRES] saying

The third variant switches temporal reference as well, viz.

- 47b. ... d.'sə.j.tsə.m.tsa.wa.z h^Wa
 she.that.him.with.not.go.DYN.N/F[-IMPERF] saying

The fourth variant dispenses (logically!) with the speech-particle to give:

- 47c. d.'sə.j.tsə.m.tsa.wa.z

The final variant preserves the speech-particle in combination with a finite verb-form that is shifted from the form of *oratio recta* in terms of both pronominal and temporal reference, so that in effect we have here a regular clausal complement with what in origin was the speech-particle now functioning as a fully fledged subordinating conjunction, e.g.

- 47d. ... də.j.ts.tsa.'wa.mə.z(.)t' h^Wa
 she.him.with.go.DYN.not.FIN[-IMPERF] that

Comparative clauses combine a non-finite verb in the appropriate tense with one of the language's comparative postpositions, namely /-ats'kj'əs/, /-a:sta/ and /-aj(.)ħa/ 'than', only the first of which will be illustrated below. The dependent

sequence contains the correlative /s(.)a'q'a/ 'how much' (/s(.)a'q'a.'uə/, if the comparison is on a human), e.g.

48. 'adg^wər jə.p'ħa sən't^wa ja'ħa la'ssə(.)la'ssə də.j.ba.'wa.n
 Adgur his.daughter this-year more often her.he.see.DYN.FIN[-
 IMPERF]
 ts'əpχ jə.'pa s(.)a'q'a də.j.ba.'wa.z '[a.]ats'k'əs
 last-year his.son how-much him.he.see.DYN.N/F[-IMPERF] it.than¹⁸
 'Adgur saw his daughter more often this year than (he saw) his son last year'
 (cf. /də.j.'ba.ə.jt'/ 'He saw him/her')

Abkhaz has a variant on this theme for expressions of the type 'One can no more X than Y', which seems to take the final component of /ja(?)'ħa/ 'more' and suffix this to a non-finite form containing the Potential prefix, whilst the main verb also contains this prefix and is negated, e.g.

49. a.p'sə də.w.'zə.bza.t^w.wa.ħa
 the.dead him.you-MASC.POT.alive.render.DYN[-N/F-PRES].?than
 'jə.q'a.la.ə.z ø.wə.z.χnə.r.ħ^w. 'wa.m
 which.PREV.happen.PAST.N/F[-P/INDEF] it.you-MASC.POT.PREV.CAUS.
 return.DYN.not[-FIN-PRES]
 'One can no more overturn what's happened than raise a dead man'¹⁹ (cf.
 /a.p'sə də.'bza.w.t^w.wa.jt'/ 'You raise a dead person')

The expression 'Far from VERBing, one VERBs' necessitates a non-finite verb-form (the gerund) even in English, and so Abkhaz is hardly likely to deviate from its normal path of relying on non-finite forms in producing a translation-equivalent. The element /za'ts'a/ 'not only; far from', the morphological composition of which is not transparent, stands alongside a negated non-finite Future I or Future II, assuming the introductory verb to be non-past; if the introductory verb is past, then the Conditional I or II may substitute, e.g.

50. za'ts'a a.'gəla.ra ø.jə.'g^w.a.la.m.j^wa.ra /
 not-only ART.stand.MASD it.his.heart.it.in.not.fall.FUTI[-N/F]
 ø.jə.'g^w.a.la.m.j^wa.rə.z / ø.jə.'g^w.a.la.m.j^wa.şa /
 it.his.heart.it.in.not.fall.FUTI.N/F[-CONDITI] it.his.heart.it.in.not.fall.FUTII[-
 N/F]
 ø.jə.'g^w.a.la.m.j^wa.şa.z jə.şə.j.mə.r.ts'ə'sə.ə.jt'
 it.his.heart.it.in.not.fall.FUTII.N/F[-CONDITII] his.self.he.not.CAUS.move.
 PAST.FIN[-AOR]

¹⁸It will come as no surprise that, where English has the sequence 'than if', Abkhaz can similarly associate a protasis-form with one its comparative postpositions.

¹⁹I thank Inga Shaduri for giving me this and many other examples during the lessons on Abkhaz she kindly provided during my year in Tbilisi in 1975-76.

'Far from remembering to stand up, he didn't budge' (cf.

/jə.j.'g^w.a.la.ʃ^wa.Ø.jt'/ 'he remembered it/them')

This survey has taken us through a whole gamut of non-finite usage in Abkhaz in contexts where, in the main, expectations based on knowledge of parallel structures in the Indo-European family of languages would suggest that finite verbs would be attested. This set of examples should, then, be of some interest to typologists. Attention has been drawn to two instances where in one case a postposition(al phrase) (/a.'zə/, /a.'tʃ'ə(.n(.).t^w/' or /a.'q'ə(.n(.).t^w/' 'because (of it)') and in the other the speech-particle (/h^wa/ 'having said; saying') stand in contexts where one can analyse them as members of a word-class entirely new to Abkhaz (and the family to which Abkhaz belongs), namely the class of conjunctions. This is a development that is not unknown in a range of languages. Possibly more uncommon is the passage of a dependent and thus non-finite structure essentially 'to make a sentence' by virtue of being the only verb in an utterance. Consider the following:

51. za'ts'a jə.s.'χa.mə.ʃt.ra / jə.s.'χa.mə.ʃt.ʃa
 far-from it/them.I.PREV.not.forget.FUTI[-N/F] it/them.I.PREV.not.forget.
 FUTII[-N/F]

'I shall NOT forget (it/them)!'²⁰

Of course, one can always think up an appropriate extension to such utterances that itself contains a finite verb, such as here:

- 51a. ... wəχ.'g'ə tʃən.'g'ə s.a.z.'χ^wəts.wa.jt'
 night.and day.and I.it.for.think.DYN.FIN[-PRES]
 '(Far from forgetting it,) I think about it night and day'²¹

but essentially (51), a perfectly acceptable utterance as it stands, manifests a pure non-finite verb substituting here for the finite:

- 51b. jə.s.'χa.ʃt.dza.wa.m
 it/them.I.PREV.forget.EMPH.DYN.not[-FIN-PRES]

In other words, not only are non-finite verb-forms the norm in Abkhaz for subordinate sequences (or 'clauses'), but there is at least one construction where a non-finite form is itself apparently sufficient effectively to make a main 'clause'.

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²⁰Would the English 'The very idea of my forgetting it/them!' be a close parallel in view of the absence here too of a(n overt) finite verb?

²¹'(The very idea of my forgetting it/them) is absurd'.

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Abbreviations

ABS Absolute	N-HUM Non-human
AOR Aorist	N/F Non-finite
ART Article	OPT Optative
CAUS Causative	P/INDEF Past Indefinite
COMP Complementiser	PERF Perfect
CONDIT Conditional	PL Plural
CONV Converb	PLUP Pluperfect
DEF Definite	POT Potential
DYN Dynamic	PRES Present
EMPH Emphatic	PREV Preverb
EVID Evidential	PROH Prohibition
FEM Feminine	PURP Purposive
FIN Finite	QU Question
FUT Future	RES Resultative
IMPER Imperative	STAT Stative
INDEF Indefinite	SUB Subordinator
MASC Masculine	SUBJ Subjunctive
MASD Masdar	SUFF Suffix