Nominal morphology of Mewheb[15]

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Abstract: This paper describes the nominal morphology of Mehweb. It deals with the following issues: noun structure, plural formation, the oblique stem, case formation and use, and irregular locatives. In this paper I analyse both the structure and the semantics of these forms.

Keywords: nominal inlfection, case, number, locative

1. Introduction

In this paper, I consider the following aspects of Mehweb grammar:

1) Word structure
2) Formation of plural
3) The oblique stem
4) Grammatical cases
5) Irregular locatives
6) The inflection of place names

2. Noun Structure

Mehweb nouns have three inflectional stems: the nominative, the oblique and the plural. Oblique and plural stems are derived from the nominative stem. Plural stems occur with plural suffixes. The rules of oblique stem formation are described in Section 4.

The paradigm consists of two parts: *grammatical*, or *functional*, cases and *locative forms*. The two types differ in their morphology: functional cases consist of one inflectional morpheme; locative forms include two inflectional slots: *localization* (LOC) and *orientation* (OR). There is also a number of forms that can be analyzed as former locatives but synchronically are monomorphemic. These are: comitative/instrumental, substitutive, replicative. Figure 1 describes the formation of plural and oblique stems:

[15] The author is grateful to the Mehweb people for being extremely generous in sharing their knowledge of the language, to his fellow fieldworkers, for their support, and to his teachers, for their careful guidance and endless patience.

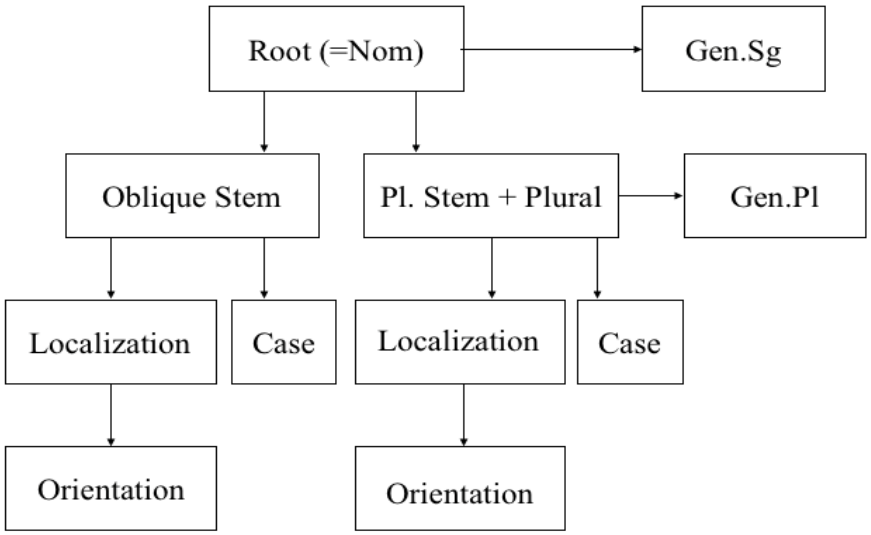

Figure 1. Plural and Oblique Stem Formation

Or, in a tabular form:

Table 1. Possible Noun Forms

STEM	**SLOT 1**	**SLOT 2**
Nominative STEM	(NOM)	
Nominative STEM	GEN	
Oblique STEM	DAT/ERG/COMIT(=INSTR)/REPL/SUBST	
Oblique STEM	LOC	OR
Plural STEM + PL	(NOM)	
Plural STEM + PL	DAT/GEN/ERG/COMIT	
Plural STEM + PL	LOC	OR

3. Plural

The description of plural formation in this chapter is based on wordlists presented in Magometov (1982) and lexical data collected by George Moroz during the 2013–2016 fieldtrips (Moroz MS).

The category of number distinguishes three values: singular, plural, and associative. Singular is not marked. Plural is marked with the following suffixes: *-t, -be, -me, -ne, -e, -le, -he, -re, -še, -nube, -tune, -urbe, -lume*. The associative plural suffix is *-qale*.

The suffixes *-t, -be, -me, -ne, -e* are frequent. The suffixes *-le, -he, -re, -še, -nube, -tune, -urbe,* and *-lume* are limited to small classes of nominal stems.

The choice of the plural suffix is lexical. In most cases, it cannot be predicted from either the formal properties of the stem or from the semantics of the noun. The plural stem formation is not always predictable either.

On the other hand, each plural suffix has some constraints on the phonotactic structure of the stem. There are different rules of plural stem formation for different affixes, which, however, involve partially similar patterns. An almost universal process is the final vowel syncope, which happens in all stems except for monosyllabic words and borrowings. Other processes may be frequent, but none of them is universal.

3.1. The Plural Suffix *-t*

The plural suffix *-t* is one of the most productive. With this suffix, the stem undergoes the following changes:

1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped. The [a] of the penultimate syllable changes to [u][16]. The rule does not apply to borrowed stems.
2) If a stem ends in a sonorant or [b], including after (1) is applied, the plural suffix *-t* can be attached directly to it.
3) If a stem is borrowed (or contains a borrowed morpheme), the plural stem is formed by attaching the morpheme *-r-*.
4) The word *uqna* 'old man' forms the plural stem by attaching -r- even though it is not borrowed.

Informally, these requirements can be described as follows: the suffix *-t* is attached after sonorants.

Table 2 illustrates vowel drop and vowel change (Rule 1):

Table 2. Rule 1

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
'a piece of firewood'	*urculi*	*urcul-t*
'broom'	*bu'škala*	*bušku-t*
'flue'	*zamari*	*zamur-t*
'border'	*durʔaˤri*	*durʔoˤr-t*
'mountain'	*dubura*	*dubur-t*
'sunny hillside'	*burhala*	*burhul-t*

Table 3 illustrates the second rule:

Table 3. Rule 2

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
'blacksmith'	*ustar*	*ustar-t*
'spoon'	*k'uc'ul*	*k'uc'ul-t*
'bridle'	*hurhur*	*hurhur-t*
'horse'	*ʔaˤbul*	*ʔaˤbul-t*
'a piece of dry dung'	*kupar*	*kupar-t*
'cauldron'	*qazam*	*qazam-t*
'sack'	*halban*	*halban-t*
'hand mill'	*ulχab*	*ulχab-t*
'waterfall'	*rurqaˤni*	*rurqoˤn-t*
'fairytale'	*χabar*	*χabar-t*
'dream'	*muʔer*	*muʔer-t*

Table 4 shows how the *-t* suffix interacts with borrowed stems ending with a vowel. The vowel drop does not apply here:

[16] If a vowel is pharyngealyzed, it changes into [oˤ], the phonetic realization of /uˤ/.

Table 4. Rules 3 and 4

Translation	Sg	Pl	Source
‘reaper’	*irχˤančі*	*irχˤančі-r-t*	Turkic suffix *–či*
‘hunter’	*awčі*	*awčі-r-t*	Turkic *avčі* ‘hunter’
‘old man’	*uqna*	*b-uqna-r-t*[17]	
‘time’	*zamana*	*zamana-r-t*	Arabic *zamaːn* ‘time’
‘sign’	*išara*	*išara-r-t*	Arabic *ʔiišara* ‘sign’
‘mine’	*šaxta*	*šaxta-r-t*	Russian *šaxta (шахта)* ‘mine’
‘car’	*mašina*	*mašina-r-t*	Russian *mašina* (*машина*) ‘car’
‘oppression’	*zulmu*	*zulmu-r-t*	Arabic *ðulm* ‘injustice’
‘carriage’	*ɬaˤraba*	*ɬaˤraba-r-t*	Arabic *ʕaraba* ‘car’

Borrowed stems that end in a sonorant attach the *-t* suffix directly:

Table 5. Borrowed stems that attach the suffix -t directly

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘sugar’	*čakar*	*čakar-t*
‘sheet of paper’	*kaʁar*	*kaʁar-t*
‘city’	*šahar*	*šahar-t*
‘a bar of soap’	*sapun*	*sapun-t*
‘person’	*insan*	*insan-t*
‘cure’	*darman*	*darman-t*
‘regent’	*ħakim*	*ħakim-t*
‘agronomist’	*agranum*	*agranum-t*
‘mem’ber’	*čilen*	*čilen-t*
‘table’	*ustul*	*ustul-t*
‘sack’	*čantaj*	*čantaj-t*

The plural suffix *-t* also forms plurals of the words that denote inhabitants of Mehweb and neighbouring villages. In (Magometov 1982) this use of the suffix *-t* is described as a separate suffix *-n-t*. However, such forms as *meħʷa-n* ‘a Mehweb person’, *surʁatla-n* ’a Sogratl’ person’ suggest that *-n* is a NMLZ suffix, and, therefore, not a part of the plural morpheme (See Table 38).

3.2. The Plural Suffix *–ne*

With the suffix *-ne*, the stem undergoes the following change:

1) If a stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
2) One-syllable words form the plural stem by attaching the morpheme *-a-*.
3) If the stem has two or more syllables and ends in a consonant, including after (1) has been applied, the plural stem is derived by attaching the morpheme *-u-*.
   Table 6 illustrates the first rule:

[17] The word *uqna* also contains a class marker, which expressed the number and the gender of this word. Thus, in the singular the marker is 'masculine singular' *w-* (dropped before the [u] of the stem), while in the plural the 'human plural' marker *b-* occurs. Several other nouns in Mehweb and other Dargwa dialects also include a class marker.

Table 6. Rule 1

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘axe’	*barda*	*bard-ne*
‘spring’	*derga*	*derg-ne*
‘dew’	*marka*	*mark-ne*
‘honey’	*warʔa*	*warʔ-ne*
‘stain’	*tˁabʁa*	*tˁabʁ-ne*
‘pile’	*bek’a*	*bek’-ne*
‘mosquito’	*k’ara*	*k’ar-ne*
‘place’	*musa*	*mus-ne*
‘cover’	*q’ap’a*	*q’ap’-ne*
‘mouse’	*waca*	*wac-ne*
‘voice’	*t’ama*	*t’am-ne*
‘bird’	*čiqʷa*	*čiqʷ-ne*
‘hedgehog’	*satkʷa*	*satkʷ-ne*

Table 7 illustrates the mechanism of the plural formation of one-syllable stems attaching the suffix *-ne* (2):

Table 7. Rule 2

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘load’	*deχ*	*deχ-a-ne*
‘herd’	*ħanq*	*ħanq-a-ne*
‘manure’	*dekʷ*	*dekʷ-a-ne*
‘wedge’	*č’ut’*	*č’ut’-a-ne*
‘fist’	*χunk’*	*χunk’-a-ne*
‘pupil (of the eye)’	*nur*	*nur-a-ne*
‘place’	*merʔ*	*merʔ-a-ne*
‘liver’	*k’ac’*	*k’ac’-a-ne*
‘lightning’	*parx*	*parx-a-ne*
‘shelter (of branches)’	*paž*	*paž-a-ne*
‘yoke’	*duk’*	*duk’-a-ne*
‘strut’	*t’al*	*t’al-a-ne*
‘month’	*baz*	*baz-a-ne*
‘drop’, ‘point’	*t’ank’*	*t’ank’-a-ne*

Table 8 illustrates (3):

Table 8. Rule 3

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘scythe’	*č’inik’*	*č’inik’-u-ne*
‘shock/stook’	*bizaq’*	*bizaq’-u-ne*
‘chain’	*raχas*	*raχas-u-ne*
‘kidney’	*urcec*	*urcec-u-ne*
‘ploughshare’	*uʔab*	*uʔab-u-ne*
‘glue’	*luʔmes*	*luʔmes-u-ne*
‘trousers’	*waχčag*	*waχčag-u-ne*
‘fork’	*χinč’ulť*	*χinč’ulť-u-ne*
‘metal tray’	*sarʁas*	*sarʁas-u-ne*
‘needle’	*bureba*	*bureb-u-ne*
‘corpse’	*žanaza*	*žanaz-u-ne*
‘pound’	*qilawka*	*qilawk-u-ne*
‘alms’	*sadaq’a*	*sadaq’-u-ne*
‘swallow’	*určuti*	*určut-u-ne*
‘nose’	*šumšut’i*	*šumšut’-u-ne*
‘whirligig’	*c’alači*	*c’alač-u-ne*
‘jug’	*burbut’i*	*burbut’-u-ne*
‘button’	*mičawi*	*mičaw-u-ne*

Rule 3 has one exception: the plural stem of the word *ʁamas* ‘box’ is formed by dropping the last vowel:

Table 9. Exception (Rule 1)

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘box’	*ʁamas*	*ʁams-ne*

The nouns given in Table 10 undergo haplology:

Table 10. Haplology

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘omelet’	*xajqane*	*xajq-u-ne*
‘moustache’	*sersit’ane*	*sersit’-u-ne*
‘lizard’	*šuršut’ani*	*šuršut’-u-ne*
‘fat tail’	*urʁadiqaˁni*	*urʁadiq-uˁ-ne*
‘bellows’	*pušduk’ani*	*pušduk’-u-ne*

The haplology here applies to the VR syllables next to each other: when after a derivation there are two VR syllables with the same R next to each other, the first is dropped, e.g. *urʁadiq**a**ˁ**n**-**u**-**n**e* → *urʁadiq-**u**ˁ-**n**e*[18].

[18] (Magometov 1982) does not treat these cases as haplology. He analyses the forms *xajq-u-ne* and *sersit’une* as follows: "There are cases, even though they are rare, when a word ending with *-e* in the plural differs [from singular] only by a vowel change in the stem. This vowel change, therefore, acquires a morphological meaning".

These words can also be analysed as attaching the suffix *-e* after dropping the final vowel. But the suffix *-e* prefers one-syllable stems, so that the analysis provided above is more accurate.

Several words form plural stems by changing the vowel in the first syllable (which is also the penultimate) into *-u-*:

Table 11. Vowel change in the root

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
'measure for grains'	*barxa*	*burx-ne*
'stomach'	*ʁaga*	*ʁug-ne*
'frog'	*ʔaˁt'a*	*ʔoˁt'-ne*

3.3. The Plural Suffix *-tune*

The words *qašqar* 'a bald man', *wakil* 'lawyer', *arab* 'Arab' and *sabab* 'reason' attach the plural suffix *-tune*. Diachronically, these words employed the suffix *-t(e)* - the same words employ the plural suffix *-te* in other Dargwa dialects, e.g. in Kubachi. Presumably, this plural marking was then doubled by *-ne*, which required the plural stem marker *-u*. Together, these suffixes formed the structure *-tune*, which is synchronically monomorphemic:

Table 12. The plural suffix *-tune*

Translation	**Mehweb Sg**	**Mehweb Pl**	**Kubachi Sg**	**Kubachi Pl**
'bald'	*qašqar*	*qašqar-tune*	*qˁaˁšqˁaˁr*	*qˁaˁšqˁaˁr-te*
'lawyer'	*wakil*	*wakil-tune*	*wakil*	*wakil-te*
'arab'	*arab*	*arab-tune*	*warab*	*warab-te*
'reason'	*sabab*	*sabab-tune*	*sabab*	*sabab-te*

3.4. The Plural Suffix *-be*

With the suffix *-be*, the stem undergoes the following change:

1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
2) After dropping the final vowel, originally two-syllable words (mostly) with [a] in the first syllable often add *-u-* to form their plural stems.
   Table 13 illustrates (1):

Table 13. Rule 1

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
'bear'	*sinka*	*sink-be*
'crust'	*wank'a*	*wank'-be*
'tooth'	*cula*	*cul-be*
'mill'	*šinq'a*	*šinq'-be*

Table 14 illustrates (2):

Table 14. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘leg’	*daga*	*dag-u-be*
‘heel’	*qaˤčʼa*	*qaˤčʼ-u-be*
‘bone’	*liga*	*lig-u-be*
‘sledge’	*čana*	*čan-u-be*
‘stone’	*ʁarʁa*	*ʁarʁ-u-be*
‘cheek’	*laˤži*	*laˤž-u-be*
‘spike’	*canzi*	*canz-u-be*
‘cradle’	*kʷahni*	*kʷahn-u-be*

Note that *liga* ‘bone’ also forms the plural stem by attaching *-u-* even though the first syllable is not an [a].

Several nouns form their plural stems by changing the root vowel to [u]. All of these words either have [e] in this syllable or contain a labial or labialized consonant:

Table 15. Vowel change in the root

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘melted butter’	*nerx*	*nurx-be*
‘cricket’	*cʼercʼ*	*cʼurcʼ-be*
‘tear’	*nerʁ*	*nurʁ-be*
‘eyebrow’	*ned*	*nud-be*
‘boar’	*tʼerħ*	*tʼurħ-be*
‘armful’	*kʷecʼ*	*kucʼ-be*
‘lip’	*kʼʷetʼ*	*kʼutʼ-be*
‘peach’	*qʼʷarč*	*qʼurč-be*
‘cattle-shed’	*derqʷ*	*durq-be*

The following assimilation occurs in the stems ending with [n]: /n + be/ → [mbe]:

Table 16. /n + be/ → [mbe]

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘stall’	*tʼeni*	*tʼum-be*
‘cooker’	*wana*	*wum-be*

If a stem ends with a labialized consonant, this consonant is delabialized:

Table 17. Delabialization

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘cattle-shed’	*derqʷ*	*durq-be*

3.5. The Plural Suffixes *-nube* and *-urbe*

The plural suffixe *-nube* forms plurals of five lexemes. The plural suffix *-urbe* forms plurals four lexemes. They are similar to the *-tune* suffix in that the suffix maybe analyzed as *-ne* or *-re* to which another plural suffix *-be* was added. The *-u-* of the suffixes *-nube* and *-urbe* may be

considered the plural stem marker. Synchronically, *-nube* and *-urbe* are monomorphemic suffixes with a very limited lexical distribution:

Table 18. The plural suffixes *-nube* and *-urbe*

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘thief’	*curku*	*curk-nube*
‘small stone’	*ħarħa*	*ħarħ-nube*
‘belt’	*irʔi*	*irʔ-nube*
‘onion’	*šerši*	*šerš-nube*
‘burned clay’	*t’arħa*	*t’arħ-nube*
‘door’	*unza*	*unz-urbe*
‘swamp’	*šinʔa*	*šinʔ-urbe*
‘grapes’	*t’ut’i*	*t’ut’-urbe*
‘wheat’	*anč’e*	*anč’-urbe*

3.6. The Plural Suffix *-me*

1) One-syllable words with CV structure usually attach the suffix *-me*.

Table 19. Rule 1

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘fire’	*c’a*	*c’a-me*
‘nit’	*q’i*	*q’i-me*
‘horn’	*qi*	*qi-me*
‘village’	*ši*	*ši-me*
‘oath’	*qʷe*	*qʷe-me*
‘blood’	*ħi*	*ħi-me*
‘name’	*ʔu*	*ʔu-me*

2) If a stem consisting of two or more syllables ends with a vowel, this vowel is dropped:

Table 20. Rule 2

Translation	**Sg**	**Pl**
‘turnip’	*q’aħa*	*q’aħ-me*
‘(female) goat’	*q’aˤca*	*q’ˤaˤc-me*
‘bolter’	*ʔula*	*ʔul-me*
‘(male) sheep’	*kʷiha*	*kʷih-me*
‘light’	*šala*	*šal-me*
‘clif’f	*šuri*	*sur-me*
‘scythe’	*čuri*	*čur-me*
‘the bottom of a dress’	*suri*	*sur-me*

Some nouns form plural stems by attaching *-u-* after dropping the last vowel. All of them contain a [u] or a labial/labialized consonant. One may notice that in most cases, after the final vowel drop has been applied, [u] is inserted to avoid a consonant cluster”. There is,

however, no consonant cluster in *uq'lah-u-me* (cf. *kʷih-me* 'sheep, PL'). Note that the Russian loanword *bidra* 'bucket' also belongs to this group.

Table 21. Plural stem formation by attaching *-u-*

Translation	Sg	Pl
'spoon'	*q'usla*	*q'usl-u-me*
'bullet'	*gulla*	*gull-u-me*
'bucket'	*bidra*	*bidr-u-me*
'window'	*uq'laha*	*uq'lah-u-me*
'shroud'	*bišri*	*bišr-u-me*
'thought'	*pikri*	*pikr-u-me*
'jewel'	*laˁwlu*	*laˁwl-u-me*
'mind'	*waq'lu*	*waq'l-u-me*

The words *laˁwlu* and *waq'lu* are also analyzed as dropping their last vowel and then attaching *-u-*:

laˁwlu →laˁwlu + me → laˁwl + me → laˁwl + -u- + -me → laˁwl-u-me

Under this analysis, the [u] in the plural form is not the same [u] as in singular.

3.7. The Plural Suffix *-lume*

The following words form the plural with the suffix *-lume,* which historically seems to be the plural suffix *-le* combined with the plural stem morpheme *-u* and the plural suffix *-me*:

Table 22. The plural suffix *-lume*

Translation	Sg	Pl
'garden'	*baxča*	*baxč-lume*
'corner'	*murʔa*	*murʔ-lume*
'shadow'	*daˁxc'i*	*daˁxc'-lume*
'ceiling'	*burxa*	*burx-lume*

3.8. The Plural Suffix *-e*

Rules for forming the plural stem:

1) The suffix *-e* attaches to one-syllable stems.
2) If a stem ends with a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
3) If a stem consists of more than one syllable, all the vowels, except for the first, undergo syncope.

The plural suffix *-e* can be attached directly to CVC(C) stems:

Table 23. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘root’	*maqʾʷ*	*maqʾʷ-e*
‘nut’	*xihʷ*	*xihʷ-e*
‘finger’	*tʾul*	*tʾul-e*
‘bread’	*tʾultʾ*	*tʾultʾ-e*
‘bull’	*unc*	*unc-e*
‘gut’	*rud*	*rud-e*
‘khinkal’	*χinčʾ*	*χinčʾ-e*
‘hand’	*naˤʁ*	*noˤʁ-e*

Table 24 illustrates (2):

Table 24. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘horse’	*urči*	*urč-e*
‘bee’	*mirqi*	*mirq-e*
‘nettle’	*nizbi*	*nizb-e*
‘ear’	*lugi*	*lug-e*
‘sparkle’	*purχi*	*purχ-e*

Table 25 illustrates the vowel syncope described in (3):

Table 25. Rule 3

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘worm’	*muleʁ*	*mulʁ-e*
‘helminth’	*šulek*	*šulk-e*
‘bull-calf’	*kʾumeš*	*kʾumš-e*
‘toe’	*gubul*	*gubl-e*
‘plank’	*ulqʾuli*	*ulqʾl-e*
‘white (of an egg)’	*šuhari*	*šuhr-e*
‘egg’	*ǯigari*	*ǯigr-e*

3.9. The Plural Suffix *-re*

This suffix has a limited lexical distribution. the rules of forming the plural stem using *-re* are similar to the rules of other "C*e*" suffixes (see also 3.4):

1) If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped.
2) One-syllable stems tend to form their plural stems by changing the vowel into [u]. Since I do not have any data concerning words consisting of more than one syllable after dropping the last vowel, I cannot say whether they do or do not undergo this vowel change.
   The suffix *-re* prefers one-syllable words and two-syllable stems ending with [i].
   Table 26 illustrates (1):

Table 26. Rule 1

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘leaf’	*k’ap’i*	*k’ap’-re*
‘cross-beam’	*duk’i*	*duk’-re*
‘mouth’	*dubi*	*dub-re*
‘nipple’	*ut’i*	*ut’-re*

Table 27 illustrates (2):

Table 27. Rule 2

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘fly’	t’ant’	t’unt’-re
‘fish’	k’as	k’us-re
‘pocket’	č’ep	č’up-re
‘paw’	k’^{w}ac	k’^{w}uc-re

However, there are exceptions to rule number two. There are stems that contain [a] but do not undergo the vowel change:

Table 28. Exceptions (Rule 2)

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘neck’	qa^{ʕ}b	qa^{ʕ}b-re
‘manure’	q^{w}a	q^{w}a-re

The [r] in the suffix *-re* can assimilate to [l]:

Table 29. Assimilation /r/ → /l/

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘house’	*qali*	*qul-le/qul-re*

3.10. The Plural Suffix *-le*

The plural suffix *-le* only occurs with four nouns. If a stem ends in a vowel, the vowel is dropped. The vowel of the stem always changes into [u]:

Table 30. The plural suffix *-le*

Translation	Sg	Pl
‘body’	*čarx*	*čurx-le*
‘handle’	*arʔ*	*urʔ-le*
‘worm’	*serh^{w}*	*surh^{w}-le*
‘rope’	*ʁ^{w}a^{ʕ}rʁo^{ʕ}*	*ʁ^{w}o^{ʕ}rʁ-le*

3.11. The Plural Suffixes *-he* and *-še*

The suffix *-he* occurs with two nouns. Both have irregular plural stems, so the plural formation may be considered to be a weak form of suppletion:

Table 31. The plural suffix *-he*

Translation	Sg	Pl
'woman'	*xunul*	*xu-he*
'dog'	*χ^{w}e*	*χur-he*

The plural suffix *-še* occurs with one noun, *qu* 'field':

Table 32. The plural suffix *-še*

Translation	Sg	Pl
'field'	*qu*	*qu-še*

3.12. The Associative Plural Suffix *-qale*

The plural suffix *-qale* is most probably the result of grammaticalization of the noun *qali* 'house'. In the case of Mehweb, this covers the so-called associative plural meaning 'X and his or her family' (in spontaneous texts also 'X and those with him/her', 'X and his/her group'). For Tanti Dargwa, Lander (Lander 2008) observes that the suffix *-qale* has developed a regular plural meaning. This evolution that is not reported for standard Dargwa. In Mehweb Dargwa, regular plural uses of *-qale* is attested on nouns for 'mother' and 'father'; for 'grandmother' and probably 'grandfather' both regular and associative plural reading is attested. Table 30 illustrates the use of this suffix:

Table 33. The plural suffix *-qale*

Translation	Sg	Pl	Translation
'mom'	*abaj*	*abaj-qale*	mums
'dad'	*adaj*	*adaj-qale*	dads
'grandma'	*baba*	*baba-qale*	grandmas *or* grandma and her family
'grandpa'	*datːa*	*datːa-qale*	grandpas *or* grandpa and his family
'Abakar (man's name)'	*Abakar*	*Abakar-qale*	Abakar and his family / his group

4. Oblique Stem

The genitive case morpheme attaches directly to the nominative stem, while other cases require an oblique stem. In the plural, all cases suffixes attach directly to the plural marker.

The oblique stem marker has 3 allomorphs: *-li*, *-j*, and *-i*. The *-li* marker is the default way to form an oblique stem and is applicable to almost any stem.

The marker *-i* occurs after consonants. In some words, both *-li* and *-i* are attested. The ability to attach both suffixes seems to be a lexically distributed:

(1) *muħammad-li-ni* *muħammad-i-ni*
Muhammad-OBL-ERG Muhammad-OBL-ERG

The oblique stem marker *-li* may undergo *-li* → *-j* assimilation. The process is not obligatory, so that the oblique stem of the same word can also be formed with the regular suffix *-li*. Table 34 contains endings that license this assimilation. The first column shows the vowel preceding the last consonant. The second column shows the consonant and the vowel that can follow it:

Table 34. Possible stem endings for the *-li* → *-j* assimilation.

Second last syllable	**Last syllable**
a	*l/li/la/n/ni*
i	*l/li/la/n/ni*
oˤ	*l/li/la*
u	*l/n*

Example (2) illustrates the *-li* → *-j* assimilation:

(2) *rasul* *rasuj-ni*
Rasul Rasul.OBL-ERG

As explained above, the oblique stem in (2) can also be formed with *-li*. See more on this assimilation in (Moroz, this volume).

5. Case System

The nominal paradigm of Mehweb Dargwa consists of two parts: *grammatical*, or *functional*, cases and *locative forms*. The two types differ in their morphology: functional cases consist of one inflectional morpheme; locative forms include one or two inflectional slots. The first morpheme of a locative form denotes the localization: an area of space where an object is located with respects to a landmark. The second morpheme within a locative marker denotes the orientation: the way the objects moves with respects to the area denoted by the localization. The core function of locative forms is to describe spatial relations between an trajector (figure) and a landmark (ground) (Langacker 1987). Functional cases are primarily used to express grammatical relations. However, in various Northeast Caucasian languages, both types (of cases) can be used in abstract as well as spatial contexts (Kibrik 2002). In Mehweb functional cases do not have any spatial uses but spatial cases do have grammatical uses.

The structure of the paradigm is shown in the two tables below. Table 35 shows functional cases, and Table 36 shows locative forms. Mehweb has five localization markers and five orientation markers. Table 36 shows the core meanings of each localization and orientation.

Table 35. Mehweb functional cases

CASE	Sg	Pl
NOM	ø	(Plural form)
ERG	-OBL-ø/*ni/iʔni/ini/ijni*	-Pl-*li/ni/iʔni/ini/ijni*
DAT	-OBL-*s*	-Pl-*s*
GEN	*-la/wa/jja*	-Pl-*la*
COMITATIVE	-OBL-*ču*	-Pl-*ču*
CAUSAL	-OBL-*čeble*	-Pl-*čeble*
SUBSTITUTIVE	-OBL-*čemadal*	-Pl-*čemadal*
REPLICATIVE	-OBL-*sum*	-Pl-*sum*

Table 36. Mehweb locative paradigm

Meaning	LAT 'to the area denoted by the localization'	ESS 'no movement'	ELAT 'away from the area denoted by the localization'	TRANS 'through the area denoted by the localization'	ALL 'in the direction of the area denoted by the localization'
SUPER 'on'	*če*	*če*-CL	*če-la* *če*-CL-*ad((-al)-a)*	*če-di*	*če-baˁH*
IN 'in a container'	*ħe* ø	*ħe*-CL ø-CL	*ħe-la* *ħe*-CL-*ad((-al)-a)* ø-*la* ø-CL-*ad((-al)-a)*	*ħe-di* ø-*di*	*ħe-baˁH* ø-*baˁH*
INTER 'in a substance'	*ze*	*ze*-CL	*ze-la* *ze*-CL-*ad((-al)-a)*	*ze-di*	*ze-baˁH*
AD 'near'	*šu*	*šu*-CL	*šu-la* *šu*-CL-*ad((-al)-a)*	*šu-di*	*šu-baˁH*
APUD 'in the functional area of a landmark'	*ʔeˁ*	*ʔeˁ*-CL	*ʔeˁ-la* *ʔeˁ*-CL-*ad((-al)-a)*	*ʔeˁ-di*	*ʔeˁ-baˁH*

5.1. Nominative

The nominative case marks the S of an intransitive verb and the P of a transitive verb:

(3) *ʔaˁli* *w-ak'-ib*
Ali(NOM) M-come.PFV-AOR
'Ali came.'

(4) *adaj-ni* *mašinka-li-ni* *muc'ur* *b-erč-ur*
father-ERG hair.cutter-OBL-ERG beard(NOM) N-cut.hair.PFV-AOR
'The father cut his beard with a hair cutter.'

Nominative is also used when addressing someone:

(5) *baba* *nab* *inc'ul* *uk-es* *ħa-d-ig-an*
granny I.DAT redundant M.eat.PFV-INF NEG-NPL-want.IPFV-PRS
'Granny, I don't want to eat anymore.'

Nominative is also used in constructions like (6):

(6) *χʷeli-če-la* *ažda* *b-uh-ub*
dog.OBL-SUPER-ELAT crocodile N-become.PFV-AOR
'The dog has become a crocodile.'

5.2. Ergative

Ergative marks the A of a transitive verb and the instrument:

(7) *adaj-ni* *mašinka-li-ni* *muc'ur* *b-erč-ur*
father-ERG hair.cutter-OBL-ERG beard(NOM) N-cut.hair.PFV-AOR
'The father cut his beard with a hair cutter.'

Ergative also marks periods of time:

(8) *k'ʷi-jal* *saʔaˤt-li-ni* *rasul* *ħule* *w-ilʒ-uwe* *le-w-re* *ši-la*
two-ORD hour-OBL-ERG Rasul(NOM) look M-LV.IPFV-CVB be-M-PST village-GEN
surt.me-če
picture.PL-SUPER(LAT)
'Rasul has been looking at the photos of his village for two hours.'

5.3. Genitive

The genitive case marker is *-la*. It can undergo the following assimilation processes:

1) when attached to words ending in [ul], the marker can change into *-wa*: e.g. *rasul* 'Rasul' — *rasu-wa* 'Rasul-GEN';
2) when attached to words ending in [Vl], the marker can be change into *-jja*: *rasul* 'Rasul' — *rasu-jja* 'Rasul-GEN'. It is the only case when [jj] occurs in Mewheb.
3) when attached to words ending in [ala], the suffix *-la* can undergo haplology: the genitive form of *č'imič'ala* 'eyelash' can be either *č'imič'**ala**-la* or *č'imič'**a**-la.*

The genitive morpheme of place names is *-aja*, the *-la* form of the same words is elative:

Table 37. The Genitive of Place Names.

Placename	Translation	Genitive	Elative
meħʷe	Mehweb	*meħʷ-aja*	*meħʷe-la*
surʁatli	Sogratl'	*surʁatl-aja*	*surʁatli-la*
haˤnnuqara	Keger	*haˤnnuqar-aja*	*haˤnnuqara-la*
žixatli	Rugudzha	*žixatl-aja*	*žixatli-la*

The main function of the genitive case is to mark a noun which is dependent on another noun (possessive construction):

(9) *rasuj-ni* *ar-d-uk-ib* *muħammad-la* *kʷih.me*
rasul.OBL-ERG away-NPL-lead.PFV-AOR Muhammad-GEN sheep.PL
'Rasul took Muhammad's sheep.'

In possessive predication, the possessor genitive is "free" in that it does not make one constituent with the possessum.

(10) *nuša-la* *d-iq'-an* *qulle* *ʁarʁu-be-la*
we-GEN NPL-do.IPFV-PRS house.PL stone-PL-GEN
'In our village, they build houses of stones.'

In predicative possessive construction, Mehweb distinguishes two types of possessors: locative possessor and genitive possessor. Locative possession is only possible in predicative constructions, while genitive possession can both be adnominal and predicative. The semantical difference between the two is that the locative possessor simply keeps an object by herself even though it may belong to someone else, while the genitive possessor actually possesses an object, i.e. it belongs to her:

(11) *muħammad-la* *kʷih.me*
Muhammad-GEN sheep.PL
'Muhammad's sheep (PL)'

(12) *musa-la* *qali* *le-b*
Musa-GEN house be-N
'Musa has got a house.'

(13) *rasuj-ze-b* *di-la* *dis* *le-b*
Rasul.OBL-INTER-N(ESS) I-GEN knife be-N
'Rasul has got my knife.'

This difference does not apply to adnominal possessive constructions, where the possessor is always marked by genitive. It is impossible to use the localization INTER in an adnominal possessive construction:

(14) * *rasuj-ze-b* *di-la* *dis*
Rasul.OBL-INTER-N(ESS) I-GEN knife
'My knife that Rasul has got.'

5.4. Dative

The dative case marker is *-s*. It attaches to the oblique stem. Its basic function is to mark the recipient in a 'give' construction:

(15) *abaj-ni* *gi-b* *sadaq'ači-li-s* *t'ult'*
mother-ERG give.PFV-AOR pauper-OBL-DAT bread
'Mother gave bread to a pauper.'

Dative also marks benefactive and several other closely related roles:

(16) *har duže rasuj-ni dursi-li-s χabar-t luč'-ib*
every night Rasul.OBL-ERG girl-OBL-DAT story-PL read.IPFV-PST
'Every night Rasul read a story to his daughter.'

(17) *nuša-jni qali b-aq'-ib-i rasuj-s*
we-ERG house N-do.PFV-AOR-ADJ Rasul.OBL-DAT
'We built a house for Rasul.'

The two types of predicative possession described in Section 5.2 are paralleled by different strategies for encoding the recipient of an object, as shown in (18). The two types of transmission are encoded by dative vs. spatial form. If the rights of possession are transmitted together with the object, the recipient is encoded with the dative case. If they are not transmitted, the recipient is marked with *-ze* INTER(LAT):

(18) *rasuj-ni gi-b muħammadi-ze dis*
Rasul.OBL-ERG give.PFV-AOR Muhammad.OBL-INTER(LAT) knife
'Rasul lent a knife to Muhammad.'

Mehweb has two types of experiential verbs that have different case frames: [experiencer = INTER(LAT), stimulus = NOM] and [experiencer = DAT, stimulus = NOM]. The dative possessor is only possible with the verb *biges* 'love/want' and complex predicates:

(19) *ħu nab eba uh-ub*
you I.DAT boring M.become.PFV-PST
'You bored me.'

(20) *nu ħad eba uh-ub*
I you.DAT boring M.become.PFV-PST
'I bored you.'

(21) *jusupi-s d-ig-uwe le-r pat'imat*
Jusup.OBL-DAT F2-want-CVB be-F Patimat
'Jusup loves Patimat.'

5.5. Comitative

There is a special case form for the participant who performs an action together with the agent:

(22) *rasul urʁes w-ik-ib muħammad.i-ču*
Rasul fight.IPFV-INF M-LV.PFV-AOR Muhammad.OBL-COMIT
'Rasul fought together with Muhammad.'

This case also marks the role of an instrument and the role of a consumable substances:

(23) *rasuj-ni* *ulq'uli* *rasdisi-ču* *b-elk-un*
Rasul.OBL-ERG plank saw.OBL-COMIT N-cut.PFV-AOR
'Rasul sawed the plank with a saw.'

(24) *rasuj-ni* *ħi* *šin-ču* *d-ur?-un* *d-aʕq'-ib*
Rasul.OBL-ERG blood water-COMIT NPL-wash.off.PFV-AOR N-LV.PFV-AOR
'Rasul washed the blood off with water.'

5.6. Causal

According to Magometov (1982), there is a case that marks the cause of a situation. My consultants did not confirm Magometov's examples and declined the *-čeble/-čible* forms that I tried to construct. Therefore, I assume that this case does not exist in Mehweb anymore. Examples 25 and 26 are cited from (Magometov 1982):

(25) *ʔse-li-čible* *ħu* *tusnaq'* *w-aq'-ib-i*
what-OBL-CAUSAL you arrest M-do.PFV-AOR-ATR
'Why did you get arrested?'

(26) *ʔdi-la* *xuligan-deš-i-čible* *nu* *tusnaq'* *w-aq'-ib*
I.OBL-GEN hooligan-MSD-OBL-CAUSAL I arrest M-do.PFV-AOR
'Because of my hooliganism, I got arrested.'

5.7. Substitutive

The morpheme *-čemadal* has substitutive semantics, i.e. performing an action instead of the person who was supposed to perform it:

(27) *nu* *adaj-čemadal* *tukaj-ħe* *w-aʕq'-un-na*
I father-SUBST shop.OBL-IN(LAT) M-go.PFV-AOR-1/2
'I went to the shop instead of father.'

Diachronically, this form can be analyzed as *-če-m-ad-al*, in which *-če-* marks SUPER localization, *-m-* is a morpheme that can occupy the localization slot although it does not appear to have a spatial meaning (footnote) and *-ad-al* marks elative orientation.

5.8. Replicative

The last non-spatial case morpheme is *-sum*. It conveys the semantics of performing an action in a way someone or something else does it, or in a way it is usually done in a given area. The form attaches to an irregular oblique stem:

(28) *dilaj-sum* *b-aq'-a*
I.OBL-REPL N-do.PFV-IMP
'Repeat after me.'

The following section treats spatial suffixes.

5.9. Super

The SUPER localization *-če-* is used in contexts like the following:

(29) *ustuj-če-b* *ʁadara* *le-b*
table.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS) plate be-N
'A plate is on the table.'

CONT is a functional label or a spatial configuration in which the object, the object is located on the surface of a landmark and stays there because of the nature of contact between the object and the landmark, or because it is a part thereof. Typical CONT contexts are: '(a picture) on the wall', '(a ring) on a finger', '(wings) on the back', '(a birthmark) on the face'. Many Northeast-Caucasian languages have a separate localization marker for the CONT disposition. In Mehweb, this configuration is divided between *-če-* (labelled SUPER) and *-ze-* (labelled INTER, see below):

(30) *iχija* *b-arš-ib-i* *t'uleka* *le-b*
she.GEN N-be.beautiful.PFV-AOR-ATR ring be-N
*t'uj-če-b/*t'uj-ze-b*
finger.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS)/ finger.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)
'She has a beautiful ring on her finger.'

(31) *surat* *aqi-le* *le-b* *baʕʜi-ze-b/*baʕʜi-če-b*
picture up-ADVZ be-N wall.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)/wall.OBL-SUPER-N(ESS)
'A picture is hanging on the wall.'

SUPER can be also used in the construction 'put against' (*a tree* etc.):

(32) *ʔaʕli-ni* *mažar* *baʕʜi-če* *b-iχ-ib*
Ali-ERG rifle wall.OBL-SUPER(LAT) N-put.PFV-AOR
'Ali put the rifle against the wall.'

(33) *nu* *baʕʜi-če-la* *ʔaʕq* *ʔaʕr-aʕq'-un-na*
I wall.OBL-SUPER-EL far away-M.go.PFV-AOR-1SG
'I stepped away from the wall.'

In comparative constructions, the object of comparison is marked with SUPER(LAT):

(34) *rasul* *quwati* *le-w* *muħammadi-če*
Rasul strong be-M Muhammad.OBL-SUPER(LAT)
'Rasul is stronger than Muhammad.'

SUPER(LAT) is used to mark the target, e.g. with the verbs such as 'hit', 'bark', 'shout at', 'be angry at', 'look at', 'laugh at':

(35) *rasul* *laχu* *uk'-uwe* *le-w* *muħammadiče*
Rasul scream M.LV.IPFV-CVB be-M Muhammad-OBL-SUPER(LAT)
'Rasul is shouting at Muhammad.'

SUPER-EL is used in the frames of the verbs of avoidance: 'run away', 'hide', 'fear', etc.:

(36) *rasul* *w-aʕld-un* *muħammad-i-če-la*
Rasul M-hide.PFV-AOR Muhammad-OBL-SUPER-EL
'Rasul hid from Muhammad.'

SUPER is also used to mark periods of time:

(37) *kʼʷi-jal* *saʔaʕti-če* *rasuj-ni* *kung* *b-elč-un*
two hour.OBL-SUPER(LAT) Rasul.OBL-ERG book N-read.PFV-AOR
'Rasul read the book in two hours.'

5.10. In

The locative morpheme *-ħe-* expresses the configuration when one object is inside another one, the latter being conceptualized as a container.

(38) *ħarši* *kʼunkʼur-le-ħe-r* *le-r*
soup pot-OBL-IN-NPL(ESS) be-NPL
'The soup is in the pot.'

The IN morpheme *-ħe-* causes vowel assimilation (i → e) in the oblique stem marker.

(39) *kʼunkʼur-le-ħe-r*
pot-OBL-IN-NPL(ESS)
'In the pot.'

IN also has a zero allomorph (in which vowel assimilation occurs *i* → *e*):

(40) *ħarši* *kʼunkʼur-le-r* *le-r*
soup pot-OBL.IN-NPL(ESS) be-NPL
'The soup is in the pot.'

This localization does not have any non-locative uses in any of the Dargwa dialects, including Mehweb.

5.11. Inter

INTER denotes the configuration when an object is within a landmark and the landmark is either a substance or a set of objects (e.g. 'forest'):

(41) *kʼas* *ħarkʼʷi-ze-b* *le-r*
fish river.OBL-INTER-N(ESS) be-NPL
'The fish are in the river.'

INTER is also used in some 'CONT' contexts (for the definition of 'CONT', see Section 5.6.1 on SUPER):

(42) *surat* *aqi-le* *le-b* *baʕʜi-ze-b*
picture up-ADVZ be-N wall.OBL-INTER-N(ESS)
'A picture is hanging on the wall.'

INTER-EL marks an i*nvoluntary agent* — a participant who performs an action without the intention to do it:

(43) *di-ze-la/*di-ze-b-adala* *mašina* *b-oˁr-oˁb*
I.OBL-INTER-EL/*I.OBL-INTER-N-EL car N-break.PFV-AOR
'I accidentally broke the car.'

INTER-EL is also used in modal contexts:

(44) *rasuj-ze-la* *aq* *b-aq'-as* *b-uh-es* *ʁarʁa*
Rasul.OBL-INTER-EL up N-do.PFV-INF N-become.IPFV-FUT stone
'Rasul can lift the stone.'

INTER marks a temporary possessor/recipient and addressee with verbs of speech, as described in Section 5.4 on dative above:

(45) *rasuj-ni* *gi-b* *muħammadi-ze* *dis*
Rasul.OBL-ERG give.PFV-AOR Muhammad.OBL-INTER(LAT) knife
'Rasul lent Muhammad a knife.'

(46) *rasuj-ni* *sik'al* *ħa-ib* *muħammadi-ze*
Rasul.OBL-ERG nothing NEG-say.PFV.AOR Muhammad.OBL-INTER(LAT)
'Rasul said nothing to Muhammad.'

Note that INTER is seems to be somehow connected to the low agentivity and low control; for more detail, see (Chechuro 2016). As shown above, various constructions that imply low level of control mark their quasi-agent with INTER. More generally, INTER has a variety of grammatical uses which do not seem to be related to its spatial meaning. Its non-locative uses do not imply a spatial metaphor, or this spatial metaphor is weak.

5.12. Ad

The AD (*-šu-*) localization is used to express the fact that one object is located in close proximity to another object:

(47) *nuša* *ustuj-šu-b* *ka‹b›iʔi-ra*
we table.OBL-AD-N(ESS) sit‹HPL›LV.AOR-1/2
'We are sitting near the table.'

It is also used as a personal locative:

(48) *nu* *w-aˁq'-un-na* *aħmadi-šu*
I M-go.PFV-AOR-1/2 Ahmed.OBL-AD(LAT)
'I visited Ahmed.'

5.13. Apud

The marker *-ʔeˁ-* (APUD) denotes an area close to an object, in which the figure is located when interacting with the object. This suffix shows a very restricted compatibility: it is only compatible with words designating landmarks that have such an area: 'table' *ustul,* 'water source' *iniz,* 'house' *qali*. In different languages, the same landmark may be conceptualized as

having such an area or not. In Mehweb the set of words to which this suffix is attached varies across speakers. The following examples illustrate the difference between the AD and APUD localizations:

(49) *nuša* *ustuj-ʔeˁ-b* *ka‹b›iʔi-ra*
we table.OBL-APUD-N(ESS) sit‹HPL›LV.AOR-1/2
'We are sitting at the table.'

(50) *nuša* *ustu-j-šu-b* *ka‹b›iʔi-ra*
we table-OBL-AD-N(ESS) sit‹HPL›LV.AOR-1/2
'We are sitting near the table.'

(51) *lutʼi-le-ʔeˁ-b*
bottom-OBL-APUD-N(ESS)
'on the bottom.'

It also expresses the meaning of an exchange equivalent — one of the objects to be exchanged:

(52) *rasujni* *bars* *b-aqʼ-ib* *qʼʷaˁl* *šu-wal* *kʷiha-le-ʔeˁ-b*
Rasul exchange N-do.PFV-AOR cow five-ORD sheep.OBL-APUD-N(ESS)
'Rasul exchanged the cow for five sheep.'

The morpheme *-ʔeˁ-* may be used to designate the inner part of the landmark (similar to *-ħe*):

(53) *škaf* *unza-le-ʔeˁ-di* *b-aˁqʼ-un*
wardrobe door-OBL-APUD-TRANS N-go.PFV-AOR
'The wardrobe fitted through the door.'

In (54), *-ħe-* is used in the same meaning:

(54) *škaf* *unza-le-ħe-di* *b-aˁqʼ-un*
wardrobe door-OBL-IN-TRANS N-go.PFV-AOR
'The wardrobe went through the door.'

Also similar to *-ħe-*, *-ʔe-* causes vowel assimilation *i* → *e* in the oblique stem marker (cf. 53 and 54).

6. Irregular locatives

A limited number of nouns form locatives in an irregular way. Such irregular locatives usually mark the default location associated with the landmark. Below I provide the list of the irregular locatives attested so far:

Table 38. Irregular locatives.

Translation	Nominative	Locative
‘forest’	*duz*	*duzani*-CL
‘village’	*ši*	*ša*-CL
‘room, house’	*qali*	*quli*-CL
‘cattle-shed’	*derqʷ*	*durqe*-CL
‘field’	*qu*	*qu*-CL
‘road’	*huni*	*hunħe*-CL
‘gorge’, ‘street’	*q’aq’a*	*q’aq’a*-CL
‘grave’	*χʷaʕb* (PL = *χʷaʕrbe*)	*χʷaʕreb* — in a grave, *χʷarvezeb* — at a graveyard
‘hole’	*tarqi*	*turqe*-CL

7. Place names

Names of local villages form a separate morphological class very close to adverbs; they lack functional cases (except genitive) and attach orientation markers directly to the stem. They also form plurals (in the sense of the inhabitants of the village). Locative forms of place names are given in Table 39: