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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TENSE VERB FORMS IN
CHECHEN AND INGUSH LANGUAGES

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Abstract

Chechen and Ingush languages are characterized by a relatively extensive system of tense forms, especially past tenses. Both analytical and synthetic tense forms often use the linking verb *ey* (*əy*, *əy*, *ūy*) “to be”. This auxiliary linking verb in the verb forms is partially or completely desemantized. In Nakh languages the phonemes of secondary formation *yɔ*, *oɔ*, *ab*, and *e* and their long options, as well as diphthongs *ue*, *uə*, *yo*, *yoɔ* are result of phonetic changes – palatalizations and labializations of vowels of the V1 system under the influence of the vowels of the V2 system, junction of vowels and consonants, assimilations. In the modern Ingush language, palatalized rounded vowels *yɔ* and *oɔ*, characteristic of the Chechen language, are absent or observed only in the speech of the elderly, the sound *oɔ* in speech is replaced by *uə*, and the sounds *[yɔ > yū, oɔ/oy > yū, a > ab]*. In the Ingush language, the process of depalatalization and delabialization of vowels continues, which led to the diphthongization of monophthongs and the formation of new diphthongs (*a > ue, yo > ue, a > oa, a – uə*). Approximants *[w, (j)]*, which are present as prefixes in class verbs, in particular in the Chechen language, play a huge role in phonetic processes, the influence of sound *[w]* on many phonetic changes is more noticeable, while in Ingush – the influence *[i (j)]*. The sound *[u]* was widely represented in the Pranakh language as a primary vowel in the verb stems of the infinitive and the present.

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1. Introduction

The related Chechen and Ingush languages belong to the Nakh language branch of Iberian-Caucasian languages. The speakers of these languages freely understand each other without a translator. The Chechen and Ingush languages are characterized by a relatively extensive system of tense forms, especially past tenses. All tense forms coincide in the considered languages in form, semantic content and functionality, with the exception of perfect tense, which, according to many Ingush linguists (with the exception of Barakhoeva N.M.), is not included in the Ingush language (Barakhoeva, 2012).

Imnaishvili D.S., Timaev A.D., Khalidov A.I., Ireziev S.-H. distinguish primary (main) vowels (VI), contrasted with secondary vowels (V2), which “appeared during the long historical development of the Nakh languages as a result of phonetic processes” (as cited in Ireziev, 2013, p. 341).

It should be noted that the pronunciation standards have changed significantly in the Nakh languages, which urgently requires improving spelling standards, and we know that, although late, this work is being carried out by linguists regarding the Chechen language at the initiative of the Institute of the Chechen Language.

In the Ingush language the reduced sound ə [ы] corresponds to the Chechen short vowel [и] (Ingush дыга/чеч. дига, дыга/дита, тыла/тила). In other cases, the Ingush ə [ы] in the Chechen corresponds to [у] (дэза/дуза ‘fill’, дэста/дуста ‘measure’).

Gandaloeva (2019) writes about the inconsistencies of spelling with the pronunciation of sounds in oral speech in the Ingush language (which is also relevant for the Chechen language): *e* (деи, лел) is written in spelling instead of a diphthong *ue*; *o* (мон, сонa) is written instead of a diphthong *yo*, diphthong *oa* is always long: *kIoag* (pit) is written unchanged, diphthong *ai* is pronounced as *ei* in colloquial speech, but is always written as *ai* (сай, чай). We pronounce *ui* (Iyйре, зyйре, yйла [’Iyйp’иэ, з’ийр’иэ, ийла] instead of a diphthong *yй*. In diphthongs, the second element is not pronounced, but we should write: овла, ловса, дувца, нув [оула, лоуса, дууца, нуу]. According to Gandaloeva (2019), “In the Ingush language, the vowel may be weakened both in the initial and in the middle and final positions. The result of its weakening is a sound acoustically close to Russian *ы*” (p. 63).

The situation is similar with spelling standards in the Chechen language: long and short sounds are equally reflected in spelling, diphthong *yo* is written with *o*, diphthongs *ue*, *иэ* – with *e*.

2. Problem Statement

The study shows that in the considered languages there is a variety of verb forms, primarily synthetic, although to a lesser extent, there are also analytical forms, in a complex composite and future actual tense. According to Barakhoeva (2011), “a verb in the Nakh languages, being the most capacious part of speech, shows a very rich system of forms and an equally rich system of meanings” (p. 184). It should be noted that in different textbooks of both Chechen and Ingush languages the authors differently define not only the names, but also the composition of tense forms. In the Chechen language, Aliroev (2005) identifies nine tense forms of a verb: present simple / цхьалхе карара хан, complex (compound) present, recently passed, obvious past tense, past (perfect) tense, pluperfect tense, past multiple (imperfect) tense, future possible, future actual. Ozdoeva et al. (2018) define the following composition

of the verb tense forms: “The Ingush verb changes according to seven tense forms: present, past imperfective, past obvious, past perfect, pluperfect, future actual, future possible” (p. 143).

3. Research Questions

The subject of the study includes verbs of all tense forms in the Chechen and Ingush languages, as well as phonetic processes observed in verb formation.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to compare the tense forms of a verb in the Chechen and Ingush languages taking into account the identified phonetic changes and discrepancies in verb formation, including the definition of the composition of tense forms in Chechen and Ingush, as well as the description of formal means of expressing the tense category of a verb.

5. Research Methods

The results of the study were obtained by a comparative method. An inductive analysis was used in the practical part of the study.

6. Findings

The indefinite verb form in both languages may be said to be identical in spelling: *вала / вала* ‘die’, *дахьа / дахьа* ‘carry’, *дала / дала* ‘give ь’, *вахьа / вахьа* ‘go’. Imperative mood: *гIо / гIо* ‘go’, *ле / луо* ‘give’ *ле / лие* ‘die’, *хьо / хьуо* ‘carry’. (**In all examples the verb form is first given in Ingush, then in Chechen).

1. **Present Tense** (habituality, repeatability; answers the question: what does smb do?) is formed by attaching the suffix *-y* to the infinitive of a verb, which subsequently, as a result of regressive-distance assimilation, led to the labialization of a root vowel (V1). In the Ingush language, as a result of reduction, the final vowel fell out, which led to the narrowing and diphthogization of vowels of the initial syllable (V1).

For example:

дада / дадан ‘run’ – *дод / доду*,
лаца / лацан ‘catch’ – *лоац / лоцу*,
тиега / тиега ‘sew’ – *тиег / тоьгу*,
хьла / хилан ‘be’ – *хул / хуьлу*,
ахка / ахкан ‘dig’ – *оахк / охку*.

According to Ireziev (2013), in the Ingush language, the present forms are not formed from the basis of the infinitive, but from more archaic foundations. Instead of remote assimilation characteristic of the Chechen language, contact assimilation occurs in the Ingush language, **a:+y – ow**: Ing. *xay* – *xow* ‘know’, *лай* – *лоу* ‘wish’.

2. **Past imperfect (multiple) tense** (imperfect, answers the question: what did you do?) is formed using the suffix **ap(a)** attached to the basis of the present tense. In case when the basis of the present tense is monosyllabic, the verb takes the affix **-pa**: Ing. лу / Ch. ло ‘gives’ – луо:-па / луо:па ‘gave’, ду / до ‘does’ – дуо:-па / дуо:па ‘did’, хьуо / хьо ‘carries’ – хьуо:-па / хьу:опа ‘carried’. Moreover, the vowel sound in a closed syllable is short, and in an open syllable is long: vie:la / vie: виэ:ла / вие:ла ‘laugh’ – виэл / воблу ‘laughs’ – виэ:лар / воб:лара ‘laughed’, лувча / лийча ‘bath’ – лувч / луй:ча ‘takes a bath’ – лувчар / луй:чар ‘took a bath’.

Compare:

оах-ар / о:хара ‘ploughed’,
дахар / де:хар/ве:хар ‘lived’,
водар / вобдара ‘went’,
ду:цар / дуйцар ‘told’.

3. **Past obvious tense** / (aorist, what did?) is formed by joining the indeterminate form of the verb suffix **-p** in the Ingush language, while in the Chechen language the suffix **-p/-йр** joins the basis of the just past tense, where **-йр** joins monosyllabic words with a long vowel of the type да:н – дайра, та:н – тайра, ва:н – вайра (compare: monosyllabic with a short vowel: ган – гира, дан – дира).

In the Ingush language [a] is replaced by [aь] in the first two conjugations, and in the Chechen language, the root vowel of the first syllable is palatalized and narrowed, i.e. [a>э]. For example, Ing. ала / Ch. алан ‘say’ – Ing. аьл-ар / Ch. эли-ра ‘said’, хада/хадан ‘break’ – хаьд-ар/хедира ‘broke’, дихьар/дехьира ‘carried’, далар/делира ‘gave’, вахар/вахара ‘went’, велар/велира ‘died’.

Ingush: [-a] changes into [иэ]: in spelling it is written as [-e]. Chechen: [-a>аь/-e].

For example: кхарза / кхарза ‘fry’ – кхиэрз-ар / кхьэрзир ‘fried’,
длататта/длататтан ‘remove’ – длатетта-р/длатетт-ир ‘removed’.

Ingush: [иэ] turns into [-ий]. Chechen: [-ие>-ий/и] and [-э>-e].

For example: Ing. миэла / Ch. малан ‘drink’ – мийл-ар / мелира ‘drank’,
иэха / ийехан / диехан ‘ask’ – иййх-ар / иййхира / дийхира ‘asked’,
виэста / виеста ‘swell’ – вийст-ар / вистира ‘swelled’;
хетта/хеттан ‘ask’ – хийтт-ар / хиттира ‘asked’.

Ingush: [yo>иэ]. Chechen: [yo>оь].

For example: муотта / ‘seem’ – Ing. миэтт-ар / Ch. моьттира ‘seemed’,
хуотта/хуоттан ‘connect’ – хиэтт-ар / хоьттира ‘connected’.

Ingush: [ов>эй], in spelling is written as [-ай]. Chechen: [ов>оьв].

Ing. довза / Ch. довзан ‘learn’ – дайзар / доьвзира ‘learned’,
длакьовла ‘close’ – длакьайл-ар / длакьовлира ‘closed’; Ch. ловза – ловьзира.

Ingush: [ув>ий]. Chechen: [ов>оьв].

For example: Ing. хийцар / Ch. хийцира ‘changed’,
Къувкьа / къовкьа ‘roar’ – къийкь-ар / къоьвкьира ‘roared’.

In the first syllable of the past obvious tense, the vowels are palatalized due to the regressive assimilation of vowels V1 to the vowel [н] of the second syllable (Ch. *сатта* ‘break’ (one-time action) – *сеттира*).

4. **Past perfect tense** (perfect, what is done?) emphasizes that the result of the action that took place in the past is associated with present (at the moment the result is evident).

The **past perfect tense** in the Ingush language is formed by attaching the class indicators ((й, б, в, д) of the auxiliary verb *да* (*ва, ба, йа*) to the basis of the past obvious tense, and in Chechen, the suffix *-на* is attached to the basis of the same tense, which, as a result of contact assimilation, goes into *-лла*, for example: Ch. *а:лан – а:лина – аьлна – аьлла* – progressive contact assimilation. In colloquial speech, the suffix consonant [н] assimilates with many preceding consonants,

For example: Ch. *ведна – ведда, сецна – сецца, дешна – дешша, летна – летта, лехна – лехха, дебна – дебба*. In the Ingush language this is regressive-contact assimilation: *а:ла – а:лина – аьлна – аьнна*. Past perfect tense means action, which already happened by the moment of speech,

For example: (past obvious tense) Ing. *вийрзар /чеч. вирзира* ‘recovered’

вийрза-в/вирзина ‘recovered’

йийрза-й/йирзина ‘recovered’

лайзав/левзина ‘played’ – *дийшад/дешна* ‘read’.

Infinitive. Past Perfect Tense

<i>А:ха</i> ‘plough’	Ing. <i>аьхад/чеч. аьхна</i>
<i>да:жа</i> ‘pasture’	Ing. <i>даьжад/чеч. даьжна</i>
<i>ла:ца</i> ‘catch’	Ing. <i>лаьцад/чеч. лаьчна/лаьцца</i>
<i>ха:да</i> ‘break’	Ing. <i>хаьдад/чеч. хаьдна/хаьдда</i>
<i>кха:ба</i> ‘contain’	<i>кхаьбад/кхаьбна</i>
<i>дакха</i> ‘suckle’	<i>даькхад/декхна</i> .

The given examples show that both languages demonstrate the features of palatalization of the root vowel when forming the form of the past perfect tense, however, in the Chechen language, when the root vowel is short, palatalization and narrowing of a vowel occurs [a>аь; а>е:], as well as reducing the duration of a vowel in a closed syllable along with palatalization, Ing. *тоха*/Ch. *туоха* – Ing. *техар/туьйхира* ‘hit’ – *теха-в/тоьхна* ‘hit’ *уо:>оь:*].

5. **Pluperfect tense** / (plusquamperfect) answers the question what did (long)? in both languages it is formed by attaching the suffixes *-дар* (*-бар, -вар, -йар*) to the stem of the past perfect tense and indicates a long-passed result. It may still be called the past in the past. For example: Ing. *дийша-дар*/Ch. *дешне:ра* ‘read’, *вена-вар/веьне:ра* ‘came’, *лайза-вар/левзне:ра* ‘played’, *ваха-вар/вахне:ра* ‘left’. The linking verb *ду* (*ву, бу, йу*) in the past tense – *дар* (*-бар, -вар, -йар*) has been greatly simplified in the Chechen form [e:p]: Ing. *дихьадар*/Ch. *дехьнера* ‘wore’, *веннавар/веллера* ‘died (long ago)’, *деннадар/деллера* ‘gave’, *вахавар/вахнера* ‘walked’, Ing. *аьнна-дар*/Ch. *аьллера* (*алина-йара-алине:ра-аьлле:ра*).

6. **Future actual tense** in the Ingush language is formed by attaching the suffix **-pr** and the present tense form of the class auxiliary linking verb **ва (да, ба, йа)** to the basis of a present tense participle.

In the Chechen language, the future actual (real) is formed from the form of the *future possible using the form of the present tense of the class auxiliary linking verb-ligament ву (ду, бу, йу) 'be'*.

For example: Ing. деш/Ch. доьшу 'reads' – деша-рг-да/доьшур ду 'reads', язду/яздо 'writes' – язде-рг-да/яздйр ду 'will write', вел/воьлу 'laughs' – вела-рг-ва/воьлур ву 'will laugh', велх/воьлху 'cries' – велха-рг-ва/воьлхур ву 'will cry'.

The famous Ingush linguist Barakhoeva (2011) believes that this tense form is formed as follows: The fact that this form is formed by the conjugation of the archaic participle in the independent form with the present tense form of the auxiliary да (в, й, б) / be...

In the Ingush language, when forming the future tense, three consonants occur: - **ргв-, ргй-, ргб-, ргд-**, due to which the basis of a verb undergoes a phonetic simplification of the basis of a word and straining of the groups of consonants as a result of progressive assimilation: доарладда (доарларгда), боарлабба (боарларба).

The Chechen literary language the traces of the sound [r] in the indicated set of consonants were not preserved, but it is present in the Shatoi dialect of the Chechen language, where this set of consonants appeared according to the principle of analogy as a result of alignment with the suffix **pr** of independent forms of a participle.

7. **Possible future tense** (what can it do?): хьор/хьор 'may carry', лур/лур 'may give', глор/глор 'may go', лер/ле:р 'may die'. Verbs in the form of a possible future tense indicate that the action will be performed, or may not be performed after the moment of speech. For example: Ing. локхетар / Ch. ъухькхетар 'may suddenly fall'; Ing. ловужар / Ch. ъухьавуьжар 'may lie down'; длакхетар/длакхетар 'may hit'. локхетар хьо, лоралуш хила! 'Careful, you may fall!' This tense is rarely used in the Chechen and Ingush literary languages, it is more characteristic of dialects of the Chechen language.

8. Unlike the Ingush language, the **recently passed tense** also stands out in Chechen (what did it do? (just now)). The recently passed tense is formed using the suffixes **-u and -ui** attached to the form of the past obvious tense: **кагий** 'broke', **йохий** 'broke', **кечий** 'cooked'. **Клант жайна дешна вели** 'A boy just read the book'. **Луюьро маха туьхи**. 'The doctor just gave me an injection'.

9. **Complex (compound) present** (contunative, progressive) is formed in an analytical way using the auxiliary verb **ду (ву, бу, йу)** and the implicit-partial form of a verb of the present tense (**деи**). **Йо1 кехат йаздеш йу** 'A girl writes a letter'. **Бераш хорбаз йууш ду** 'Children eat watermelon'. Continuous tense (contunative) was not indicated in the grammar textbooks of the Chechen language. Aliroev (2005) gives only the form of the present tense.

10. **Complex (compound) past imperfect tense** (contunative) is formed analogously to the present imperfect tense, only the auxiliary verb **ду (ву, бу, йу)** is set in the past tense **дара (вара, бара, йара)**: Ch. **воьлхуш вара** 'cried', **воьлуш вара** 'laughed', **дагош йар** 'burned', **ловзуш дара** 'played'; Ing. **дешаш вар** 'studied', **лоацаш вар** 'caught'. **Бераш ловзуш дара арахь** 'Children played in the yard'.

7. Conclusion

Thus, in Nakh languages the secondary phonemes **уь**, **оь**, **аь** and **е** and their long variants, diphthongs **ие**, **иэ**, **ю**, **юь** are the result of phonetic changes – palatalization and labialization of vowels of VI system under the influence of vowels of V2 system, assimilation, junction of vowels and consonants.

Both in analytical tense forms and in synthetic, the linking verb **еу** (**оу**, **бу**, **йу**) is widely used. This auxiliary linking verb in the composition of analytical and synthetic forms is partially or completely desemantized.

In the modern Ingush language, palatalized rounded vowels **уь** and **оь** characteristic of the Chechen language are absent or observed only in the speech of the elderly, the sound **оь** in the speech of the Ingush is replaced by **иэ**. As Gandaloeva (2019) notes, “in the scientific literature, linguists replaced them with **уь/уй**, **оь/иэ**. For example: уйче, уйла, гуйра, шера” (p. 104). In the last century, palatalization and diphthongization of vowels **а>аь**, **а>ие**, **ю>ие**, **а – иэ**, **а >оа** were observed in the Ingush language. At the same time, today many linguists note the opposite process, i.e. depalatalization and delabialization of vowels, which led to the diphthongization of monophthongs and the formation of new diphthongs (**а>ие**, **ю>ие**, **а – иэ**). We observe the reduction of vowels of the first and second syllable in both languages, however, in Ingush this process is more pronounced, especially in the verb forms of the present tense and infinitive (Ing. *дада* (to run) – *дод*, *дага* (to burn) – *дог*, *тыла* / Ch. *тила*, *дэза/дүза* ‘to fill’, *дэста/дүста* ‘to measure’). Besides, the gemination of consonants of the verb stem of the past perfect tense is observed in both languages.

The sound [u] as the variant of [w] was presented in the Pranakh language as a primary vowel in the outcome of the verb foundations of the infinitive and the present and it led to the formation of rounded vowels in the first syllables of words.

Semi-vowel or semi-consonant sounds [w, i (j)], which are present as prefixes in class verbs, have a large role in phonetic processes, in particular in Chechen, the influence of [w] is obvious while in Ingush it is [i (j)]. The same phonetic process was described by Tokaeva (2019) on the example of the Batsbian language, which also refers to the Nakh languages: “the consonant form of the sonant [w] may transition to [u] and back to [w], and this sound more often appears before the rounded vowels” (Tokaeva, 2014, p. 258). Similar conclusions are reached by Venhua Jin when studying qualitative changes of the phoneme /y/ in the process of complete diphthongization and transition to /wi/ in the Korean language of China (as cited in Jin, 2012).

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