CONVERGENCE IN LANGUAGE CHANGE: MORPHO-SYNTACTIC PATTERNS IN MINGRELIAN (AND LAZ)\textsuperscript{1}

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Abstract

The paper examines two features of Mingrelian (a member of the Kartvelian, or South Caucasian, language family): (i) the marking of subordinate clauses by either clause-final suffix -n(i)/-i/ə alone or this suffix + a full subordinating conjunction (or relative pronoun); (ii) the ‘Conditional’ forms in -k'о(n(i)), which are peculiar within Kartvelian to Mingrelian and its close sister Laz. Influence exerted long ago by the North West Caucasian language Abkhaz, whose speakers may be presumed to have been in close contact with the Zan ancestors of Laz-Mingrelians, it is claimed, might feasibly underlie these phenomena. The discussion finally touches upon consideration of the possible role played by parataxis in the development of some hypotactic constructions in the history of at least some languages, especially in light of a recent attempt to refute the notion that hypotaxis can be so derived.

\textsuperscript{1} Part of the work on which this paper, read at a meeting of the Philological Society in Cambridge on Saturday 11th March 2000, is based was carried out during a sabbatical term I was able to spend in Tbilisi (Georgia) and Ochamchira (Abkhazia) in the final months of 1987 thanks to a British Academy exchange with the Georgian Academy of Sciences. In Tbilisi I had the good fortune to work with the Mingrelians: the late K`orneli Danelia, Rezo Sherozia and Merab Chuxua; my informants over a number of years in Ochamchira were: P`ant’e and Ek’a Basilaia, Manana Gunia and the late Neli T`orchua. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I take this opportunity to mention them. As always, my thanks go to my wife, Zaira Khiba, for help with the Abkhaz data. The paper was improved thanks to helpful comments provided by two anonymous readers of the submitted draft; I hope they will agree that their suggestions have been adequately accommodated.

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1. Preface

Some particularities of hypotaxis and the formation of a set of verbal paradigms in the Caucasian language Mingrelian, whose best known cognate within the South Caucasian/Kartvelian family is, of course, Georgian, are re-examined. Whilst the basic data will be reasonably familiar to anyone who has looked at Mingrelian, the hypotheses to follow will, I trust, be new and take us beyond Mingrelian’s immediate congeners.

1.1. Formation of complex sentences in the South Caucasian/Kartvelian family

Anyone with a background in Indo-European, when looking at the standard strategies for forming subordinate clauses in Georgian, is immediately struck by how familiar they seem. One is comforted to find free-standing and (usually) clause-initial conjunctions (or relative pronouns) in association with fully finite verbs, which will stand in either the indicative or the subjunctive mood depending on the requirements of the relevant construction and, in some cases, the time-reference involved. The major patterns for Georgian are sketched under item (1) (Some minor patterns, non-finite strategies, the wide use of reported speech, and indefinite clauses are ignored. See Hewitt 1987; 1995 for comprehensive discussions):

(1) a. Adjectival/Relative clauses:
   vints ~ rats ~ romelits
   who which who/which
   (in the appropriate case and (for romelits) number + Indic2)

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2 The abbreviations employed in this paper are:
Abso = Absolutive            Nom = Nominative
Acc = Accusative             Non.Fin = Non-Finite
Adv = Adverbial              Perf = Perfect
Aor = Aorist                 Pers = Person
Condit = Conditional         Pl = Plural
Dat = Dative                 Plup = Pluperfect
Erg = Ergative               Poss = Possessive
Fem = Feminine               Pot = Potential
Fin = Finite                 Pres = Present
Fut = Future                 Prev = Preverb
b. Noun clauses:
   rom (+ Indic)
   that

c. Adverbial clauses:

*Time:*
‘when’:
   rotica ~ rodesats (+ Indic)
   when
‘as soon as’:
   rogorts k’i ~ tu ara (+ Indic; the latter standing post-verbally)
   as soon as
‘after’:
   mas jemdeg rats ~ mas uk’an rats ~ mas aket rats ~ im droidan
   rats (+ Indic)
   after
‘while, until, before’:
   sanam(de/dis) ~ vidre(mde/mdis) (+ Indic or Subj)
   while, until, before

*Purpose:*
   rata ~ rom (+ Subj or Plup Indic)
   (in order) that

*Result:*
   rom (+ Indic for actual results; + Subj or Plup Indic for
   potential results)
   that

*Cause:*
   radgan(ats) ~ vinaidan ~ rak’i ~ raxan ~ imis gamo rom ~
   imit’om rom (+ Indic)
   because, since, as

\[\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Gen} = \text{Genitive} & \text{Ptc} = \text{Participle} \\
\text{IE} = \text{Indo-European} & \text{Qu} = \text{Question} \\
\text{Imper} = \text{Imperative} & \text{Quot} = \text{Quotative} \\
\text{Imperf} = \text{Imperfect} & \text{Rel} = \text{Relative} \\
\text{Indef} = \text{Indefinite} & \text{Sing} = \text{Singular} \\
\text{Indic} = \text{Indicative} & \text{Stat} = \text{Stative} \\
\text{Inf} = \text{Infinitive} & \text{Sub} = \text{Subordinator} \\
\text{Instr} = \text{Instrumental} & \text{Subj} = \text{Subjunctive} \\
\text{Irr} = \text{Irrealis} & \text{Super} = \text{Superessive} \\
\text{Neg} = \text{Negative} & \\
\end{array}\]
Manner:
rogorts ~ ragyaradats ~ ranairadats (+ Indic)
as

Condition:
tu (+ Indic for real conditions) ~ rom (+ Subj or Plup Indic for unreal conditions)
if

Concession:
tumt(a) (+ Indic) ~ miuxedavad imisa rom (+ Indic) ~
although despite the fact that
tund(a(ts)) (+ Subj or Plup Indic)
even if (Georgian)

Similar reliance on finite subordinate clauses is attested throughout the recorded history (spanning 15 centuries) of Georgian, and I know of no suggestion why this patterning (with variations, of course) should not be taken as characteristic of the Kartvelian family as a whole. Even if one accepts Winfried Boeder’s recent contention: ‘The frequent use in Old Georgian of the masdar, whose sphere of usage has narrowed in modern Georgian . . . , we may, therefore, deem an archaism, which must be a mid-stage between the pre-historic state with nominalised complement clauses and the modern state with mostly subordinate clauses containing a finite verb’ (1999: 41–2), it would still be true that Georgian (?Kartvelian) has always behaved in an Indo-European manner, with a declinable verbal noun (masdar) whose adverbial case-form functioned in the old language just like an IE infinitive (for the variation in case marking of the infinitival object see Hewitt 1983). There is no hint in Kartvelian of a full clausal argument structure accompanying the array of converbal forms (and even some masdars and infinitives) found elsewhere in the Caucasus, as in the following examples quoted from Haspelmath (1993) for Lezgi(an):

(2) a. Nabisat-a witʃi-n ktab k’el-iz
   Nabisat-ERG self-GEN book-ABSOL read-INF
   baʃlamiʃ-na
   start-AOR
   ‘there began Nabisat’s reading of her book = N. started to read her book’
b. Sajran ada ik’ luhu-n.a-l
Sairan(ABSOL) she(ERG) so say-MASD-SUPER
mähtel xa-na
surprised be-AOR
‘Sajran was surprised that she was talking like that’
(Lezgi(an))

I do, however, have to draw attention to a couple of features not immediately obvious from a simple listing of the basic Georgian data.

1.2. Further internal Georgian developments

The conjunction rom (often pronounced [ro]) already stands out in the list under (1) for its ability to mark a wide variety of clause types. In fact, it is even commoner, for it can replace the standard conjunctions rotsa~rodesats ‘when’ and radgan(ats)~vinaidan=rak’i ‘because’, appearing in such examples usually after the first constituent of the clause. It has a similar and exceedingly wide usage in relative clauses, especially in the spoken language; such relative structures tend to precede the head noun, whereas those containing a full relative pronoun must follow their heads – for details on Georgian relatives see Hewitt (1985; 1995). Some examples of these additional functions are given under (3), with the more specific construction in brackets (ro(m) = conjunctions rotsa~radgan and relative romelits, respectively).

(3) a. fen ro(m) axlosa xar, ar mefinia
you SUB near you.are not I.fear
‘when/because you are near, I’m not afraid’
(= rotsa ~ radgan (etc) fen axlosa xar)

b. gufin ro(m) mogetsi (is) ts’igni mitfvene
yesterday SUB I.gave.it.to.you that book shew.it.to.me
‘shew me the book I gave you yesterday’
(= mitfvene (is) ts’igni, romelits gufin mogetsi) (Georgian)

This important modern general subordinator did not exist in Old Georgian, and its creation by erosion from romel(i) via rome can be charted in the texts – the Old Georgian complementiser role was
filled by either *vitarmed* or *rametu*, which in origin were clearly both adverbal attachments to an introductory *verbum dicendi aut sentiendi*, meaning respectively ‘in some such way’ and ‘something/somewhat thus’.

Though foreign to the literary language, we also have to observe a feature attested in some dialectal material, namely the insertion of *ro(m)* into a subordinate clause already fully characterised by its own conjunction/relative pronoun, as illustrated under (4), where, respectively, complex *sadats ro* stands for simplex *sadats*, *romelits rom* for *romelits*, and *rotsa ro* for *rotsa*:

(4) a. mivida ert adgilsa, sadats ro es xalxi miq’ams
   X went one place to where SUB this folk X takes. Y
   am γorsa
   this pig
   ‘he went to a place where this pig is taking this folk’
   (Upper Imeretian, Gigineishvili et al. 1961: 442)

b. untsrosi dzma varo, romelits rom ts’evides da
   younger brother I am QUOT who SUB X is to go &
   aγar mevideso
   no more X is to come QUOT
   ‘I am the younger brother who is to go and not come back’
   (ibid.)

c. rotsa ro is kvabi gaaγes, im kalma mdzvali
   when SUB that pot they opened X that woman bone
   mdzvalze maaba
   bone on X bound Y to Z
   ‘when they opened that pot, that woman attached bone to
   bone’
   (Inner K’akhetian, ibid. 201)

The extent of this double characterisation of subordinate status across the dialects is not known, but the many pages whose scanning

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3 Where the Georgian verb indicates one or more 3rd person arguments, the letters X, Y, Z are used to indicate the presence of the relevant verbal index.

4 For information, Upper Imeretian is spoken in the largest of Georgia’s western provinces, whilst K’akheti(a) is Georgia’s main region to the east of the central province of Kartli, where Tbilisi is located.
produced a mere four examples for just these two dialects plainly did not abound in them.

Significantly, whether used alone or alongside a regular conjunction/relative pronoun, ro(m) can never stand post-verbally and thus never appears clause-finally. The only conjunctural phrase in Georgian that can behave thus is tu ara ‘as soon as’, as indicated under (1).

2. SUBORDINATION IN MINGRELIAN

Mingrelian’s home is traditionally defined as the western lowlands between the rivers Ingur and Tskhenis-ts’q’ali, bounded by Abkhazia, Svanetia (where the most divergent Kartvelian language, Svan, is spoken), and the Georgian-speaking provinces of Imereti and Guria, plus the Black Sea – in the last 100 years Georgian has encroached from the east, just as Mingrelian has gained in the north-west at the expense of North West Caucasian Abkhaz. The only two Kartvelian languages which are at all mutually intelligible are Mingrelian and Laz, usually styled dialects of Zan in Georgia itself. Their ancestors once formed a continuum along a stretch of the Black Sea’s eastern littoral before starting to be split by incoming Georgian speakers fleeing the Arabs’ advance into central Georgia from the middle of the 7th century; apart from a few pockets along the Abkhazian and Georgian coast, Laz speakers today are confined to Turkey. Mingrelian (like Laz and Svan) is not a written language, though some communist texts and a large number of local papers and journals were published in it for about a decade from the late 1920s, a deliberately unpublicised fact of which even most Mingrelians are today quite unaware.

Before considering subordination, the following peculiarities need to be noted. As stated by native speaker T’ogo Gudava (1975: 356): ‘At the absolute end of a word a close vowel (/i/, /a/, /u/) may be added after a consonant, and vice versa – if a word ends in a close vowel (i, e, u), this vowel may optionally be dropped’. Schwa can usually be interpreted as an allophone of /u/ (but see below for cases of its substituting for /i/). Examples (5)–(7) illustrate the addition of a supernumerary vowel (respectively /i, e, u/, here bracketed) to consonant-final elements (one verb, two nouns):
(5) meurs, meurs(i)\(^5\) do kefexvadu t’riali mindork
X.goes X.goes & X.met.Y broad meadow
‘he goes [&] goes and came upon a broad meadow’
(Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 272) (Mingrelian)

(6) uk’ulaʃi dʒəmas(ə) nodʒoxobue data
youngest brother X.is.called.Y Data
‘the youngest brother is apparently called Data’
(Q’ipshidze 1914, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 266) (Mingrelian)

(7) ate k’otʃk(u) kek’aʔunu
this man X.followed.Y
‘this man followed him’
(Q’ipshidze 1914, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 266) (Mingrelian)

Examples (8)–(9) show the optional loss of a person-tense marking
final /i/ or /u~ə/ respectively:

(8) midaprt(i) ‘I went’ (Mingrelian)
(9) midart(uə) ‘X went’ (Mingrelian)

Mingrelian (but not Laz) is also characterised by loss of final /-n/.
In (10) the presence of final /-ial/, the speech-particle suffix, protects
the underlined 3rd pers sg marker /-n/ in this Present indicative (va-
yiɾ-ən-ia):

(10) tʃkəni rina mutuʃa va-γiɾ-ən-ia
our being for.nought X.does.not.count.QUOT
‘(saying) our existence counts for nought’
(Q’ipshidze 1914, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 260) (Mingrelian)

But without such a suffix the example would read as in (11) (with
va-γiɾ-ə(/u)):

(11) tʃkəni rina mutuʃa va-γiɾ-ə(/u) (Mingrelian)

Attention can now be turned to subordination in Mingrelian.
Mingrelian’s equivalent of Georgian romel-i-ts ‘which one’ is

\(^5\) The Georgian translation appended by the authors is: midis, midis da fexvda t’riali mindori, which indicates that they assign no particular function to the bracketed ‘i’ in the Mingrelian. Representations in the original Georgian script for all such examples in these footnotes may be found in the Appendix at the end of the article.
*namu-t(i)*. Both consist of the interrogative pronoun/adjective *romel-i = namu* ‘which (one)?’ + subordinating suffix *-ts = -t(i)*, suffixes which incidentally also serve as coordinators ‘and, also, even’ in their respective languages. And relative clauses, postposed to their heads, can be formed, as in Georgian, in the typically Indo-European fashion, exemplified by Dative *namu-su-ti* and Nominative *namu-ti* in (12) and (13), respectively:

(12) k’otj-ı tına re, namu-su-tı data
    man-NOM than one he.is who-DAT-SUB Data
    d3oxo6
    X.is.called Y
    ‘the (real) man is he who is called Data’ (ibid. 266)
    (Mingrelian)

(13) k’otj-ı, namu-tı ?urdyeleptsɔ tʃ’q’iʃandɔ7
    man-NOM who.NOM-SUB rabbits.DAT X.was.herding Y
    ‘the man who used to shepherd rabbits’ (ibid. 268)
    (Mingrelian)

Mingrelian also has a range of clause-initial subordinating conjunctions (some, like Georgian, incorporating the subordinating suffix *-t(i) = Geo. -ts*), that may be used without further complication – *ond(ar)o-soįfax* ‘while’, *mutʃ’ot(i) as (soon as)*, and *muąams* ‘when’ in (14)-(16), respectively:

(14) ond(ar)o-soįfax voxet tak, tʃ’itʃ’e kimubʃuat8
    while we.sit here little let’s.work
    ‘while we are sitting here, let’s do a little work’ (elicited)
    (Mingrelian)

(15) mutʃ’ot kobdziri tına, daxe gebxangi9
    as I.saw X X almost I.became.unhinged
    ‘as (soon as) I saw X, I almost went beserk’ (elicited)
    (Mingrelian)

6 In Georgian: *k’atsi is aris, romelsats data hkvia*.
7 In Georgian: *k’atsi, romelits k’urdyelebs mts’q’ensavda*.
8 In Georgian: *sanamvlidve vsxedvart ak, tsot’a vimufaot*.
9 In Georgian: *rogrts k’i vnxet ıgi, k’inayam gavgįiδlįgadavirie*.
(16) muẓams kəmours, muʃebas dibtf’q’ant\(^{10}\)
when X.comes work.DAT we’ll.start.X
‘when X comes, we’ll start work’ (elicited) (Mingrelian)

I am at a loss to explain why Vamling/Tchantouria (1993: 73) gloss the -ti of mutʃ’oti in one of their examples (cf. the first word of (15)) as INSTR[umental].

It is now time to consider the first oddity. It is impossible to reconstruct a common Kartvelian conditional marker (for either real or unreal protases). And interestingly, real conditions are marked in Mingrelian by clause-final (thus, generally verb-final) -da, which even follows cliticised speech particles (elements that indicate a direct quote), as in (18):

(17) kɔtf’vend(uɔ)-da, mindor(i) ifolud(uɔ)\(^{11}\)
it.was.raining-if field X.was.getting.wet
‘if it was raining, the field was getting wet’ (elicited)

(Mingrelian)

(18) me txseni wamutfjia-da, duts
me horse you.didn’t.give X.to.me QUOT-if self(.DAT)
dip’iļə ifenjia\(^{12}\)
I’ll.kill.X still QUOT
‘. . . saying, if you don’t give me the horse, I’ll still kill myself’
(Xubua 1937, quoted in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 258)

(Mingrelian)

Bearing in mind that da in Georgian is the co-ordinating conjunction, which in Mingrelian is do (manifesting the expected vowel correspondence Geo. /al/ = Ming. /ol/), I have argued (see Hewitt 1991) that the Mingrelian conditional suffix is best explained as a borrowing of the Georgian co-ordinator,\(^{13}\) examples of which

\(^{10}\) In Georgian: rotsal/rodesats mova, muʃaobas davits’q’ebt.
\(^{11}\) In Georgian: tu ts’imda, mindori sveldeboda.
\(^{12}\) In Georgian: me tu txseni ar mometsio, tavs movik’lav maıntso. This is Danelia/Tsanava’s translation, from which we see that the protasis marker tu does not have to take clause-initial position.
\(^{13}\) This, I assume to be somewhat different from Abesadze’s guarded remark (1965: 254): ‘The possibility is not excluded that Mingrelian da (= [Georgian] tu) and do (= [Georgian] do) might be of a single origin.’ On the other hand, Arnold Chikobava, a native Mingrelian, saw conjunction and protasis-marking da in Georgian as discrete entities (1936: 185).
apparently performing a protasis-marking function can be found from any period of Georgian. The arbitrarily chosen illustration (19) happens to be from a 20th century collection of dialectal material – ‘You won’t give it to him AND I shall no longer be your child’ easily converts to ‘If you don’t . . .’:

(19) ar mijtsem da me tkveni jvili ayar
not you’ll give X.to Y and (= if) I your child no longer
vinknebo
I’ll be. QUOT
‘if you don’t give it to him, I shall no longer be your child,
saying’

(Inner K’akhetian, Gigineishvili et al. 1961: 193) (Georgian)

One can also point to the widespread use of Georgian da when an interrogative is repeated at the start of the reply, as in (20):

(20) rodis ts’axvedi? rodis da, guf’in ts’avedi
when you went when? yesterday I went
‘when did you go? If it’s a question of when, I went yesterday’

(Georgian)

Via Mingrelian (one assumes), this conditional use of da has even passed into North West Caucasian Abkhaz, where the substitutability of -za+r ‘if’ for -da in jwz’ban-da proves that the suffix means ‘if’:

(21) jwz’ban? jwz’ban-da (= jwz’ban-za+r) jw-s-ta’xə-r\(^\text{14}\)
why why-? (= why-if) X-I want-PAST
‘why? If it’s a question of why, I wanted to’

(Abkhaz)

It is convenient at this stage to ask what serves as complementiser in Mingrelian. The conventional answer is nam(uə)+da. Consideration of the fact that namu = Geo. romeli ‘which (one)’? (the source of today’s complementiser rom), whilst da = ‘if’, logically suggests the following path of development for the complementiser: ‘that’ ⇐ ‘thus’ ⇐ ‘if it’s a question of what [sc. then somewhat as follows]’. It should be noted, however, that informants living either within or close to Abkhazia with whom I once worked often used mutf’o, which is strictly the interrogative manner adverbial ‘how?’

\(^{14}\) In Mingrelian: mutfə? mutfə-da, mok’ond(uə).
(as in *mutʃ'o ret* ‘How are you?’; cf. ex. (15) for the truly subordinate form with *-t(i)*) in seeming preference to *nam(ulɔ)+da*. This extension of the manner conjunction I have argued elsewhere (see Hewitt 1992a) to be the likely result of Abkhaz influence, for, lacking a pure complementiser, Abkhaz makes wide use in such a role of the particle *-ʃ(ə)-*, whose basic meaning is ‘how, as’. The example in (22a) illustrates the complementiser role, whilst that in (22b) shows the particle’s basic force of manner:

(22) a. d-ʃə-tʃmaza+_street s-a+kw'-ʃə-a-jt’

X-that-ill-NON.FIN.PAST I-it+on-fall-FIN.PAST

‘I realised that (s)he was ill’

vs

(22) b. s-ʃə-q’a-w (a)-aj+pʃ

I-how-be-NON.FIN.PRES (it-)like

‘as I am’ (Abkhaz)

We can now proceed to note that all the subordinate clauses illustrated thus far for Mingrelian that incorporate a clause-initial subordinating adverb/pronoun may carry an additional marker of their subordinate status, and this is clause-final *-n(i)* (in which position it usually, but not necessarily, attaches to the verb), a pleonastic marking of subordinate status much commoner than the parallel structures quoted above for Georgian. Examples (23)–(25), with general subordinator underlined, illustrate the tautology in causal, relative and noun complement clauses, respectively:

(23) uts’eis, *tifeni naməda tʃ’itʃ’e rdə-ni*\(^\text{15}\)

they.said.X.to.Y for.the.reason that small he.was-SUB

‘they said it to him because he was small' (Q’ipshidze, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 260) (Mingrelian)

(24) ordesə ti k’ata, namunepkəti ʃarasa

they.were that folk who on.the.road auxvadesə-ni\(^\text{16}\)

they.bumped.into.X-SUB

\(^{15}\) In Georgian: *utxres, imit’om rom p’at’ara iq’o.*

\(^{16}\) In Georgian: *iq’vnen is xalxi, romlebits gzaze femoxvda(t).*
‘the folk whom he/they had met on the road were (there)’
(Q’ipshidze, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 268) (Mingrelian)

(25) mitʃk(u/ə), nam(u/ə)da~mutʃ’o tak rek-ən\(^{17}\)
I.know.X that here you.are-SUB
‘I know that you are here’ (elicited) (Mingrelian)

It should be noted for (25) that, even when unprotected by a word-final vowel, the nasal does not undergo the expected deletion. Now, this clitic is also widely used (exactly like Georgian *rom*) as the sole marker of a clause’s subordinate function and is naturally the strategy employed for colloquial pre posed relatives, where no relative pronoun appears.\(^{18}\) This marking of subordinate status solely by the clitic is exemplified in (26)–(28) for relative, manner and temporal clauses, respectively:

(26) kotomi ?wilu-ni (ti) osurs iptʃinenk\(^{19}\)
chicken X.slew.Y-SUB that woman.DAT I.know.X
‘I know the(/that) woman who killed the chicken’ (elicited)
(Mingrelian)

(27) irulu, vek’inudʒinu(u)-mi\(^{20}\) teʃi\(^{21}\)
X.ran.off X.did.not.look.back-SUB so
‘X ran off without looking back’
(Q’ipshidze, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 278) (Mingrelian)

(28) sadili ga(a)tu-ni, maxatʃkalk uts'u:
lunch X.finished.Y-SUB peasant X.said.Y.to.Z
wife.DAT
‘when he’d finished lunch, the peasant said to his wife . . .’
(ibid.) (Mingrelian)

\(^{17}\) In Georgian: *vitsi, rom aka xar.*
\(^{18}\) I investigated the patterns of relativisation in Mingrelian in a Georgian article published in Tbilisi (see Huit’i [Hewitt] 1981).
\(^{19}\) In Georgian: *katami ro(m) dak’la (im) kals vitsnob.*
\(^{20}\) I have never heard long vowels from my Mingrelian informants and so bracket the second ‘u’ here.
\(^{21}\) In Georgian: *gaiktsa, uk’an ro(m) ar mouxedavs, ise.*
\(^{22}\) In Georgian: *sadili ro(m) gaatava, glexma utxra tsools.*
There are, however, rivals to -n(i) as clause-final subordinator – though I have made no count, it is my impression that -n(i) is by far the commonest allomorph. Q’ipshidze observed in 1914 (p. 289) that -n(i) could reduce to -i, as indicated four times in (29)–(30):

(29) ku(u)ts’i(i), mortas-əni/mortas-i24 say.X.to.Y X.is.to.come-SUB
‘tell X to come!’ (Mingrelian)

(30) mara iladʒines-i, kodzires, boʃi but they.looked.out.at.X-SUB they.saw.X lad aʃesiʃrinants-i [. . .]
X.stands.out.among.Y-SUB ‘maras’ tkuan-k-i, morenia25 but.DAT you.say.X-SUB what.is.it.QUOT
‘but when they peered at him, they saw that the lad stands out among [the pigs]. [. . .] saying: what’s the reason that you say “but”?’
(Q’ipshidze, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 260) (Mingrelian)

It so happens that I have no examples to hand of final ‘-u’ fulfilling such a role, and so the presence of the underlined schwa in (31) raises the question of whether it should not perhaps here be treated as an allophone of /i/:

(31) k’otʃi si ʔoperekə, ʔurdiyeleptsə tʃ’q’isənk-ə26 man you you.evidently.are rabbits.DAT you.herd.X-SUB
‘it appears that you are a (real) man insofar as you shepherd rabbits’ (ibid. 268) (Mingrelian)

23 Q’ipshidze first quotes:
miodʒini(ə)ni kodzirə(ə) X.looked.at.Y-SUB X.saw.Y
‘X looked and saw Y’ (Mingrelian)

He then simply says that the nasal may be dropped, leaving -i to merge with what precedes, which would produce miodʒini. However, since miodʒini is actually part of the Aorist Indicative paradigm for the root -dʒin- and means ‘you looked at Y/look at Y’, it is difficult to see how any subordinating sense could be preserved by dropping the nasal in this particular sequence.

24 In Georgian: utxari, ro(m) movides!

25 In Georgian: magram ro(m) gahxedes, naxes, ro(m) hitʃi fuəʃi ixedeba . . . magram-’s ro(m) ambob, ra ariso?

26 In Georgian: k’atsi fen q’opilxar, k’urdiyebs ro(m) mts’q’emxav.
Sometimes it is unclear how to interpret the function of such vowels, as with the final -i (underlined) of ibtxuati in (32):

(32) mok’ona osuro
    we.want.X woman(=wife).ADV
    ibtxuat-i vitoširi da-osurepi
    we.ask. for.X.AOR.SUBJ.-? SUBJ 12 sister-women
‘we want to ask the hand in marriage of 12 women-sisters’
(ibid. 268)  (Mingrelian)

If comparison is made with the Georgian equivalent (33), it is seen that ro(m) is optional where the Aorist Subjunctive (which is what represents the subordinate verb in both (32) and (33)) is dependent on the verb ‘(we) want’, viz.

(33) gvinda, (ro(m)) kalad (= tsolad)
    we.want.X that woman.ADV wife.ADV
    vitxovot tormet’i da-kalebi
    we.ask.for.X.AOR.SUBJ 12 sister-women (Georgian)

This, then, leaves open the analysis of final -i in (32) as a subordinator or merely a euphonic post-consonantal word-final ‘i’ – the verb-form in (32) could also be expressed as ibtxuati-lo. It is my belief that the clue to post-verbal or clause-final indexing of subordination in Mingrelian might lie precisely in the conjunction of the two optionalities: (i) optional use of euphonic final ‘i’ and, to extrapolate from the situation in Georgian, (ii) optional presence of subordinator when the verb stands in the subjunctive. It should be recalled that Mingrelian in general seems not to like word-final ‘n’. Now, it so happens that a 3rd person plural subject is co-indexed in a verb of subjunctive mood exclusively by such a final ‘n’, and, therefore, to protect it, it is regularly accompanied by an extra (and, thus, usually) final ‘i’. Consider the underlined ‘i’ in (34):

(34) tʃkin skualepi dzyabi do bɔfik
    our children girl & boy
    kiʔuani-da, tʃilo
    they.turn.out.to.be.AOR.SUBJ-if wife.ADV
do komondʒo  kimvortʃkinatia\textsuperscript{27} & husband.ADV let's.deem.X.AOR.SUBJ.QUOT
‘saying, if it transpires that our children turn out to be a boy
and a girl, let’s deem them husband and wife’
(Xubua 1937, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 256) (Mingrelian)

In (34) the relevant vowel cannot be interpreted as the subordinator,
for in such protases this role can only be fulfilled by -da. Compare
also (35):

(35) p’idʒi kimetʃes artimaʒiris, muti
oath they.gave.X.to.Y each.other.DAT that.which
iʃu-an-i muʃmuʃi
they.acquire.AOR.SUBJ(-?2) own
xeluat-əni,
craftsmanship.INSTR-SUB
artiməʒirats’k’ama jkafa gi(ı)rtan-i\textsuperscript{28}
between.each.other in.middle they.split.X.AOR.SUBJ?-SUB
‘they swore to each other that whatever they should gain each
by his own craftsmanship they should split between them
down the middle’
(Q’ipshidze 1914, in Danelia/Tsanava 1991: 264) (Mingrelian)

I take the first underlined ‘i’ (in iʃuani) to be the euphonic protector of
the subjunctive’s otherwise final ‘n’ since this clause’s pleonastic
subordinate marker is found in the clause-final -(< ə)n (on xeluatəni),
whereas I regard the ‘i’ at the end of the quote (on gi(ı)rtani) to be
functioning as general subordinator applying to the entire oath.\textsuperscript{29} I

\textsuperscript{27} In Georgian: tʃveni tʃilebi gogo da bitʃi tu iknen, tsoład da kmräd mivitʃnioto.
This Georgian translation and the Mingrelian original demonstrate that, though the
protasis markers in both languages are normally construed with the indicative, they
may on occasions accompany a subjunctive. It seems to me that the nuance is
captured in English by translating ‘If it transpires that . . . ’.

\textsuperscript{28} In Georgian: sit’q’ya (= p’iri) mïstses ertmanets, (rom) rats k’i ifovon tāv-taviši
xelobit, ertmanetʃi juaʃi gaq’on. Danelia/Tsanava do not, in fact, insert any com-
plementiser in their Georgian translation.

\textsuperscript{29} I have only one example of 3rd person plural subjunctive ending -n being
reinforced by the variant subordinator with nasal -n(ı), and even here there is the
vowel -i- between the subjunctive nasal and the subordinator. The text in Xubua
(1937: 161) lacks the subordinator -ni, but the addition was elicited from an
informant. The example reads:
want, then, to propose that it is this combination of fluctuating presence vs absence of verb-final euphonic ‘i’, fluctuating presence vs absence of verb-final ‘n’, frequent coupling of 3rd pers plural subjunctive ‘n’ + ‘i’, and tolerance of the subjunctive mood in certain subordinate clauses with or without subordinator that together prompted the reinterpretation of -n(i), 30 -i, or its variant -σ as general subordinator in clauses where the sister language Georgian happens to employ ro(m). However, we need to ask whether there might not have been some stimulating force for (i) why Mingrelian happened to create a general subordinator in the first place and specifically in clause-final (usually verb-final) position, differently from the regular Kartvelian pattern, and (ii) why pleonastic marking of subordination should be much more widely attested in Mingrelian than elsewhere in Kartvelian. In Georgian ro(m) developed through phonetic attrition of an element that started life as (and in its full form retains) a clause-initial subordinating role; new subordinating functions were assigned as the shorter form became distinct from its source. Such a combination of changes seems quite understandable. I do not, however, see how Mingrelian’s ‘rom’-equivalents can be easily derived from any of the language’s clause-initial subordinating items (namut(i) and nam(ul)da would be the only candidates), and, even if one were tempted to hypothesise a connection between either of these and -n(i), the verb-/-clause-final positioning of the suffix would remain problematic. I suggest that the solution lies in yet another aspect of

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30 N.B. that the -ni of -fe+ni(i), as in mu-fe+ni(i) ‘why?’ and ti-fe+ni(i) ‘for X’, is often called a postposition (Chikobava 1936: 65; Vamling/Tchantouria 1993: 83; Harris/Campbell 1995: 292) – no connection, as far as I am aware, has been postulated between this element and the general subordinator under discussion. However, I must say that I know of no evidence to prove a postpositional origin for this element. Where complex case endings exist in Kartvelian (and the component -fe is the Ablative desinence), they usually combine two case markers – e.g. in Mingelian -(i)f+ot ‘for’ = Old Georgian -(i)s+ad we have Genitive followed by Adverbial. This might suggest that the origin of this -n(i) should perhaps be sought in the case system.
the influence that the North West Caucasian language, Abkhaz, has
plainly exercised during their long period of symbiosis on Mingrelian
(and, indeed, on Mingrelian and Laz together).\(^3\)

The North West Caucasian family of languages, like North
Caucasian languages in general, largely employ non-finite verb-
forms as their translation equivalents of what would typically be
subordinate clauses characterised by a fully-fledged finite verb in
languages of the Indo-European and Kartvelian families. Of the
three main divisions of North West Caucasian (Circassian, the now
extinct Ubykh and Abkhaz), it is in this last that one finds the most
sharply delineated morphological distinction between finite and
non-finite forms:

(36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dynamic Group I Tenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘stand up’</td>
<td>‘not stand up’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finite</td>
<td>(1st pers)</td>
<td>(Relative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>(1st pers)</td>
<td>(Relative)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>s’galojt’</td>
<td>j’galo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ja’gala</td>
<td>s’galm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sam’galejt’</td>
<td>j’omgala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aorist</td>
<td>s’galep’</td>
<td>ja’galara/ch</td>
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<td>s’galarana</td>
<td>j’omgalarana</td>
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<td>Future I</td>
<td>s’galašt’</td>
<td>ja’galaša</td>
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<td></td>
<td>s’galašam</td>
<td>j’omgalaša</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future II</td>
<td>s’golax’ejt’</td>
<td>ja’golax’ow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sam’golasi’(t’)</td>
<td>j’omgolax’ow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= ja’golax’a(t)</td>
<td>= j’omgolax’a(t)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                | Dynamic Group II Tenses |                      |
|                | ‘stand up’              | ‘not stand up’       |
| Imperfect      | (1st pers)              | (Relative)           |
|                | (1st pers)              | (Relative)           |
| Past Indefinite| s’gulan                 | ja’galaz             |
|                | s’golmazt’             | ja’golaz             |
| Conditional I  | s’galaran               | ja’galaraz           |
|                | s’galarazt’            | j’omgalaraz          |
| Conditional II | s’galašan              | ja’galašaz           |
|                | s’galašazt’            | j’omgalašaz          |
| Pluperfect     | s’golax’an              | ja’golax’az          |
|                | sam’golasi’az           | j’omgolax’az         |

|                | Stative Pattern         |                      |
|                | ‘be standing’           | ‘not be standing’    |
| Finite         | (1st pers)              | (Relative)           |
| Non-finite     | (1st pers)              | (Relative)           |
| Present        | s’galowp’               | ja’galow             |
|                | s’gallam               | ja’gallam            |
| Past           | s’gulan                 | ja’galaz             |
|                | s’gallamst’            | ja’gallam             |

\(^3\) For Abkhazian loan words in Mingrelian see Chirikba (1998).
A glance at the tables in (36) reveals how the two types of verb (dynamic, stative) differ for all their tenses (whether affirmative or negative) between finite forms (here with 1st person singular subject s-) and their non-finite equivalents (here given in the form appropriate to a relative, with 1st person singular subject prefix replaced by its relative equivalent ja- ‘who’). What one notices immediately is that the shift from finite to non-finite in all cases but one (finite s’elam to non-finite ja’g’elam) involves alteration to the morphology at the end of the verbal complex (accompanied perhaps by movement of negative affix and stress). Insofar as the relative affix replaces the normal finite agreement affix (in these examples at the very start of the complex), one can speak of alteration earlier in the clause (specifically, in the pre-radical section of the verbal complex). And when one examines how Abkhaz forms its translation equivalents of English noun clause complements and adverbial clauses of manner, cause (which involves a complement to a postposition), concession and time ‘when’32 and ‘as soon as’, or the object clauses in such expressions as ‘I know (i) where you live, (ii) whither you are going, (iii) whence you came, (iv) why they died’, one finds a similar combination of subordinating affixes inserted in the pre-radical structure coupled with complex-final non-finite morphology, as shewn in the selections under (37) (cf. also (22)):

(37) a. a’bas d-axl-‘tēwazwɔ s-a+‘tēwɔ-pxafɔjt’
   thus X-that-talk.NON.FIN I-it+of-be.ashamed.FIN.PRES ‘I’m ashamed that X is talking like this’
   (Abkhaz)

b. s-axl-‘jważ a-‘zɔ sɔ-m’tsejt’
   I-that-be.afraid.NON.FIN.IMPERF it-for I-not-go.PAST ‘I didn’t go, because I was afraid’
   (Abkhaz)

c. ‘a-mra (ə)s-‘pxɔ-qɔ x1towp’
   the.sun (it-)how-shine.NON.FIN.PRES-even it.is.cold ‘although the sun is shining, it is cold’
   (Abkhaz)

d. d-ənɔ-z-ba a-ljwqswɛ (ə)‘lə-s-tejt’
   him/her-when-I-see.NON.FIN.AOR the-book (it-)her-I-give.FIN.AOR ‘when I saw her, I gave her the book’
   (Abkhaz)

32 Time ‘after’ combines a non-finite structure meaning ‘when’ followed by the postpositional phrase ‘after it’.
33 With ‘a-flax’ ‘after it’ inserted in second place the meaning is ‘after I saw her’.
e. do-ṣ-tṣa-ʨʷ-w^i^a-z  yə-ʨəza  d-aajt’
(s)he-how-go-just-NON.FIN.PAST his-friend  (s)he-come.FIN.AOR
‘as soon as he went, his friend came’ (Abkhaz)

f. b-aχ^2^-nχc ~    b-aχ^1^-ʦc =
you.FEM-where-live.NON.FIN.PRES  you-where-go.NON.FIN.PRES
b-a’x’d+nʣa-ʦc ~  b-a’x’d+nʨʷ-aa ~
you-whither-go.NON.FIN.PRES you.FEM-whence-come.NON.FIN.AOR
jə-zə-’psə-z  (o-)z-’dər-wej’t‘
they-why-die-NON.FIN.PAST(it-)I-know-FIN.PRES
‘I know (i) where you live, (ii) where = whither you are
going, (iii) whence you came, (iv) why they died’ (Abkhaz)

The markers which, in conjunction with non-finite morphology,
form the remaining subordinate expressions (of purpose, result,
time ‘while’, ‘since’, ‘before/until’, condition and the expression ‘as
if’) all stand exclusively at the end of the Abkhaz verbal complex.
Nevertheless, I wish to propose that it is precisely in Abkhaz that
we find a possible source for the Mingrelian features that are of
interest because of their non-Kartvelian character. The double
marking of subordination by (often early, i.e. pre-radical) insertion
of a marker to specify the nature of the clause (or clause-
equivalent) plus non-finite morphology shown by a change at the
end of the verbal complex is entirely natural for Abkhaz (and the
sister languages). Undeniably, there were moments in history when
Abkhaz influence is likely to have extended well beyond the
current south-eastern boundaries of Abkhazia.34 And perhaps it

34 I myself have discussed a number of cases of possible Abkhaz influence on
Mingrelian and vice versa (see Hewitt 1991, 1992a, b, and Hiuit’i [Hewitt] 1988).
There is undeniable evidence from the Soviet period (i.e. after the mass migrations
that took most of the native Abkhazian, and indeed North West Caucasian,
population to Ottoman lands in the late 19th century) that it was then the norm
for Mingrelian to be spoken as their second language by those Abkhazians living in
close contact with Mingrelians (whereas knowledge of Abkhaz amongst the Mingreli-
ans of Abkhazia seems to have been far less common). And we have evidence from
the observations of (the half-Turkish half-Abkhazian) Evliya Chelebi in the 1640s for
similar patterns of bilingualism among the Abkhazians living close to Mingrelia – of
the princely Chachba family he says: ‘Amongst themselves they also speak in
Mingrelian, for the country across the R. Phasis is Mingrelia in its entirety’
(translated from the Georgian rendering of G. Puturidze 1971: 100). As Mingrelian
advanced westwards in the wake of those 19th century migrations at the expense of
was as a result of such influence that some reanalysis of the elements discussed above at the end of Mingrelian verb-forms occurred. To those with some knowledge of Abkhaz let me say that I have not forgotten to mention the possibly pertinent facts about the functioning of the Abkhaz Past Indefinite and Past Absolute – see Hewitt (1979) for a discussion of how these forms are used. The former ends in -n and signifies ‘X VERBed AND’, the latter ends in -nə and functions like the English past participle ‘having VERBed’, as demonstrated in (38):

(38) da-ʼtsa-n ~ da-ʼtsa-ʼnə  a-ʼņə
   (s)he-go-FIN.PAST.INDEF (s)he-go-PAST.ABSOL  the-house
   (ə-)ʼaa-ʃ-xʼwejt’
   (it-)PREV-he-buy.FIN.AOR
   ‘he went and ~having gone, he bought the house’ (Abkhaz)

Comparison of the endings is clearly very reminiscent of the Mingrelian fluctuation between -n and -ni – this example, indeed, is plainly very close in sense to (28), which could equally well be translated as ‘the peasant finished lunch and ~having finished lunch the peasant said to his wife’. Whilst the form and function of these exceedingly frequent Abkhaz verb-types might have been additional factors in exerting the influence for which I am arguing, I would, of course, not wish to suggest that these actual morphs might themselves have been borrowed. From what I said by way of explanation earlier, it is obvious that no such

Abkhaz at the latter’s eastern fringe (specifically in the Gal District, earlier known as Samurzaq’ano), one might hypothesise that Abkhazians could have preserved features of their ancestral tongue as they became assimilated by the Mingrelians and adopted Mingrelian as their first language. However, though we have no direct contemporary testimony, it is not unreasonable to assume that the period of maximum Abkhazian influence throughout not only Mingrelia but even the whole of western Georgia will have been in the final two centuries of the 1st millennium (viz. during the period of the Abkhazian Kingdom – see Hewitt 1993 for a convenient survey of the historical facts). At this stage, one might suppose, the greater likelihood would have been for (Laz-)Mingrelian’s Zan ancestors to have adopted Abkhaz as their second language because of its prestigious status and to have calqued some Abkhaz features in their native Kartvelian tongue(s). It remains an open question as to whether, at an even earlier period, there might not even have been an Abkhazian (?North West Caucasian) substrate influencing (parts of Western) Kartvelian.
hypothesis is necessary. It is sufficient to think purely in terms of structure and function, much as the high number of preverbs in North West Caucasian (specifically Abkhaz) must have helped, as widely acknowledged, to foster the large inventories of such items developed (without overt borrowing) in both Mingrelian and Laz in contrast with the numbers of such elements in Georgian or Svan (see Hewitt Forthcoming for a survey of Kartvelian preverbs). The possibility of splitting the subordinating suffix from its verbal host and placing it clause-finally (as in (35)) must be assumed to be an internal Mingrelian development – Abkhaz clauses are much more rigidly verb-final than is the case in Kartvelian, and so there is less opportunity for creating clause-final marking that is not at the same time verb-final.

How is the situation in Mingrelian reflected in Laz? To introduce direct quotation with *verba dicendi et sentiendi* Laz has borrowed *ot'i* from Greek and *-ki ~ tfi* from Turkish (originally from Persian). (39) illustrates *-ki*:

(39) oxordža mušik komolis uts’u-ki –
    wife his.ERG husband.DAT X.said.Y.to.Z-that
    ar xodʒepe kododzi-ni
    one.(pair.of) bulls.NOM set.X.up.IMPER-?
    ‘his wife told her husband to set up one pair of bulls’
    (Chikobava 1936: 184) (Laz)

Note in passing the mysterious final element *-ni* to end the quote. No source I have consulted for Laz mentions the presence of such a Mingrelian-type marker, but I do not see how else it can be interpreted here\(^{35}\) – obviously a question for future investigation.

However, the native element *na* is widely used as a general subordinator. It usually behaves like Georgian *ro(m)*, tucking itself, where possible, inside its clause, and (also in parallel with the Georgian marker) derives by phonetic reduction from the language’s interrogative for ‘which one?’ (*namu*, as in Mingrelian). (40) shews it in relative function:

\(^{35}\) In Mingrelian this example would be: *tfil(i) mušik komondž(i)s uts’u (namdal mutfo): arti xodʒepe kododzi-ni = Georgian: tsolma misma kmars utxra rom: erit xarebi daaq ene.*
(40) na moskidasen doibt’axumt\textsuperscript{36}  
   SUB X.will.remain we’ll.break.X  
   ‘we’ll break off what remains’  
   (Chikobava 1936: 184) (Laz)

We have argued that the genesis in Mingrelian of a general subordinating suffix might well have taken place under the influence of a language in which subordinate clauses as such are exceptional but where a non-finite verb-form, morphologically end-marked, serves instead. The verb-forms with which Mingrelian associates its suffix retain their finite morphology, and so the suffix does nothing more than indicate subordinate status of its clause. But in an appropriate linguistic milieu it would not be too great a step for a general subordinator to take on the role of (let’s call it) pseudo-nonfinite marker. Abkhaz has no case system to speak of, and so, unlike its sister languages, cannot add case markers to its verbs’ non-finite forms. But Laz has long been exposed to languages (Classical/Byzantine/less relevantly Modern) Greek and Turkish) where non-finite verb-forms (specifically participles) can be case-marked – examples (41) and (42) demonstrate the use of dative and genitive case endings on Turkish and Ancient Greek participles, respectively:

(41) elmayı gelene
gelen.\text{ACC} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{having.come}.\text{DAT} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{give.IMPER} \hspace{1cm} \text{(Turkish)}
   = \Delta \delta_5 \hspace{0.2cm} \tau \sigma \hspace{0.2cm} \mu \acute{\epsilon}l\lambda\omicron\nu\tau\gamma i\text{37} 
   \hspace{0.2cm} \text{give.IMPER the apple.\text{ACC the having.come}.\text{DAT} ‘give the apple to the one who came’} \hspace{1cm} \text{(Ancient Greek)}

(42) gelenin elmasını bana ver
   \text{having.come}.\text{GEN} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{apple.POSS.\text{ACC me}.\text{DAT} \hspace{0.2cm} \text{give.IMPER} \hspace{1cm} \text{(Turkish)}}
   = \Delta \delta_5 \hspace{0.2cm} \mu \omicron \hspace{0.2cm} \tau \sigma \hspace{0.2cm} \mu \acute{\epsilon}l\lambda\omicron\nu\tau\gamma i\text{38} 
   \hspace{0.2cm} \text{give.IMPER me.DAT the apple.\text{ACC the having.come}.\text{GEN ‘give me the apple of the one who came’}} \hspace{1cm} \text{ (Ancient Greek)}

\text{36 In Georgian: } \text{ro(m) dartfeba (imas) movt’ext}.  
\text{37 The Modern Greek equivalent is } \Delta \omega \delta \sigma \hspace{0.2cm} \tau \sigma \hspace{0.2cm} \mu \acute{\epsilon}l\lambda\omicron\nu \sigma \alpha \acute{\alpha} \tau \omicron \acute{\omicron} \hspace{0.2cm} \pi \acute{o} \hspace{0.2cm} \eta \rho \beta \omicron \epsilon (where we have a prepositionally governed anaphoric pronoun ‘to the one’ + relative clause ‘that came’, which is less helpful to the point at issue).  
\text{38 In Modern Greek: } \Delta \omega \delta \sigma \hspace{0.2cm} \mu \omicron \hspace{0.2cm} \tau \sigma \hspace{0.2cm} \mu \acute{\epsilon}l\lambda\omicron\nu \alpha \acute{\alpha} \tau \omicron \acute{\omicron} \hspace{0.2cm} \pi \acute{o} \hspace{0.2cm} \eta \rho \beta \omicron \epsilon .
In light of this, consider Laz example (43):

(43) na bigzalitu-pe-fi lazut’i hini
    SUB we.went-NOUN.PL-GEN maize.NOM they.ERG
dok’oborey
    they.collected.X
    ‘they collected the maize of those of us who went’
    (K’art’ozia 1970, Text 1, line 8) (Laz)

Here a finite verb (Aorist Indicative with 1st person plural subject – bigzalit(u)) has attached to it the noun pluraliser (-pe-) AND the genitive case ending (-fi). To explain this, all we have to do is assume that the general subordinator has effectively become a pseudo-non-finite marker, thereby allowing what otherwise looks to be a full clause to carry the normal marker of nouns in the language. Commenting on this very example, which she quotes from Holisky (1991), Alice Harris (in Harris & Campbell 1995: 292) suggests that the nominaliser here might actually be the vowel -u-, which she links to a widely used verbal-noun formant in Laz (-Mingrelian). However, if we consult the original K’art’ozia article, we find in the second line of the short text containing citation (43) the following main-clause verb-form:

(44) menda-f-t-ti-tu
    PREV-1st.Pers-come-AOR.PL
    ‘we came’ (Laz)

This is nothing other than a finite verb ending in an optional -u. Indeed, K’art’ozia comments on this very peculiarity in his introduction, where he quotes Laz specialist Sergi Dzhikia’s observation to the effect that in the Atina dialect verbs ending in -t/shn can add a meaningless -u. This is plainly reminiscent (albeit on a more limited scale) of the observation from Gudava with which we began about optional end-vowels in Mingrelian. If the development of verb-/clause-final subordinator in Mingrelian is a natural development for the language’s native material in the environment of its neighbour Abkhaz, the further extension of the parallel and similarly native item na in Laz to a pseudo-non-finite marker under the influence of Greek and Turkish is equally comprehensible.
But there is one final feature yet to examine in both Laz and Mingrelian. Laz also employs na clause-finally, in which role it functions as the marker of a protasis. In a real protasis such as (45) it is the equivalent of Mingrelian -da, which, as stated above, I regard as a specialised borrowing from Georgian of its coordinating conjunction:

(45) jeti ginon-na, ma megfjare\textsuperscript{39}
place.NOM you.want.X-if I'll.give.X.to.you
‘if you want a place, I’ll give it to you’
(Chikobava 1936: 184) (Laz)

I believe that Laz may also have borrowed Georgian da, altering it to na once the latter became so prevalent in subordinate clauses, but there is no way to prove this. However, the element is also used for unreal protases, as in (46), where we note that it is preceded by an element -k’on-, as yet unspecified:

(46) aja furunifi nek’na akolendo t’u-k’on-na, k’ai t’u\textsuperscript{40}
this oven-GEN door.NOM over.here it.was-?if good it.was
‘if this oven’s door had been over here, it was (= would have been) good’ (ibid. 151) (Laz)

In Mingrelian unreal conditions referring to the present or future optionally contain -n(i) in association with Present, on the one hand, or Future or Aorist Subjunctive,\textsuperscript{41} on the other, all three subjunctives being illustrated in (47):

\textsuperscript{39} In Georgian: tu adgili ginda, me mogtsem.
\textsuperscript{40} In Georgian: am purnis k’ari aketk’en rom q’opiliq’o, k’ai iq’o.
\textsuperscript{41} Vamling/Tchantouria (1993: 67) quote an example of -n(i) combined with the Future Indicative which they translate as a real condition:

lexi dosk’idu ts’amals kumuyanki-n(i)
invalid.NOM X.will.recover medicine.DAT you’ll.bring.X.to.Y-SUB
‘the sick person will recover if you bring him medicine’ (Mingrelian)

On p. 75 they observe that a temporal sense is also possible for this example (‘... when you bring him medicine’). All the cases I have encountered of real future conditions in Mingrelian would demand -da (in place of -n(i)) here, for normatively the example as it stands should only have temporal force. Note also that the authors’ gloss of the temporal subordinator mudroszo as ‘at that time’ (p. 74) should, of course, read ‘at which time’.
(47) a. ase (ko)guraplende(n(i)) gak’vetils, d5gir bofi
now you.learn.X.PRES.SUBJ42 lesson.DAT good boy.NOM
i?idi
you.would.be
‘if you were now learning your lesson, you’d be a good boy’
elicited) (Mingrelian)

b. nebas komut ιandasα(ni) ?udes
permission.DAT X.give.Y.to.FUT.SUBJ(if) house.DAT
gamk’urtinuankia
I’ll.turn.X.round.QUOT
‘saying: if (s)he were to give me permission, I’ll turn the
house round’
(Xubua 1937: 215) (Mingrelian)

c. ma molaprte(ni) skants’k’αma, muʃa
I I’ll.come.away.AOR.SUBJ(if) with.you in.what
γomarne
X.will.help.you
‘how will it benefit you, were I to come away with you?’
elicited43 (Mingrelian)

But what do we find in the past? Consider the parallel triplets in (48) and (49):

(48) ma skan sakmes vak’etendi-k’o(n(i)), 44 d5gir(i)
I.NOM your job.DAT I.was.doing.X-? good

42 Vamling/Tchantouria (1993: 73) quote an example from Q’ipshidze (1914: 425)
containing a Present Subjunctive with -ni which they translate by the English
preterite, viz.: yoronti k’os kaak’etendasuni safverk muʃeni vee?nu? ‘If God created
man, why was there no relief?’ In fact, the translation should read as follows: ‘If God
were enriching man [sc. as an ongoing process], why was there no relief?’

43 In Georgian these examples are: exla (ro(m)) sc’avolde gak’vetils, k’argi hit’i
iknehodi. nebas (ro(m)) monstsemdes, saxls movarunebu. me (ro(m)) ts’amovide
fentar, xafi gamogadzeba?

44 Such forms combine with the Conditional (Georgian xolmeobiti) of the copula
to form an imperfective Conditional, e.g.
d5gir tsxovrebas mini mayirsendu’o-k’on i’uapudua
good life.DAT who.NOM X.was.deeming.worthy.of Y-? X.would.be/has been.QUOT
‘asking: who would be/have been deeming me worthy of a good life?’ (Mingrelian)
The equivalent imperfective Future couples the Future Indicative of the copula with
the Present Subjunctive (with or without -n(i)) of the lexical verb, e.g.
i`uapud(u/o)

it.would.have.been

= ma skani sakme vak`eti-k`o(n(i)), d3gir(i)

I.NOM your job.ACT I.did.X? good

i`uapud(u/o)

it.would.have.been

= ma skani sakme mik`etebud(u/o)-k`o(n(i)), d3gir(i)

I.DAT your job.NOM I.had.done.X? good

i`uapud(u/o)

it.would.have.been

‘if it had been me doing your job, it would have been good’

(elicited)\(^{45}\) (Mingrelian)

or

(49) ma ts`erils dobt`arundi-k`o(n(i)), d3gir(i)

I.NOM letter.DAT I.would.have.written.X? good

i`uapud(u/o)

it.would.have.been

= ma ts`erili dobt`ari-k`o(n(i)), d3gir(i)

I.NOM letter.ACT I.wrote.X? good

i`uapud(u/o)

it.would.have.been

= ma ts`erili dom(i)ti`arud(u/o)-k`o(n(i)), d3gir(i)

I.DAT letter.NOM I.had.written.X? good

i`uapud(u/o)

it.would.have.been

‘if I had written the letter, it would have been good’ (elicited)\(^{46}\)

(Mingrelian)

Here we have an element -k`o(n(i)) attached in (48) respectively to the Imperfect, preverbal Aorist and preverbal Pluperfect \textit{Indicatives}, in (49) respectively to the Conditional (Georgian \textit{xolmeobiti}), preverbal Aorist and preverbal Pluperfect \textit{Indicatives} – the three preverbal vs preverbal pairs here seem to be interchangeable,

\(^{45}\) In Georgian: \textit{me feni sakme rom meketebina, k`argi ikneboda.}

\(^{46}\) In Georgian: \textit{me ts`erili rom damets`era, k`argi ikneboda.}
though the subtle question of aspectual distinctions would benefit from further study. What, then, is this element, which appears as -k’on- in Laz example (46), but as -k’o in Laz example (50) (Dumézil 1967: 81)?

(50) mts’k’upi var t’u-k’o hak var dobdgitut’i
darkness not it.was? here not I.would.stay
‘was it not dark, I should not stay here!’
(Dumézil 1967 Text IX.85) (Laz)

In his introduction Dumézil simply glosses -k’o as French ‘si’ = ‘if’ (i.e. the protasis marker). As to the origin of the suffix in these special modal forms, which are quite unique to Laz–Mingrelian and which the Georgian tradition styles p’irobiti,47 most commentators present it as existing in the allomorphic variation -k’o(n) and interpret it as a reduced form of what in Mingrelian appears as o-k’o(-n) ‘X wants Y’ (e.g. Chikoba 1936: 140). As we see from (51):

(51) Mingrelian Svan Laz Georgian
‘I want X’ m-o-k’o(-n) m-a-k’u m-i-n-o-n m-i-nd-a
‘you want X’ g-o-k’o(-n) dzh-a-k’u g-i-n-o-n g-i-nd-a
‘X wants Y’ o-k’o(-n) x-a-k’u u-n-o-n u-nd-a

In Laz this conjugation of ‘want’ is used suffixly with (partly) conjugating Aorist Subjunctive of the lexical verb in the Xopa dialect to form the equivalent of the Future Indicative; in Chxalurian the suffixal component remains in the 3rd person singular form, whilst the lexical verb conjugates fully; in Vic’e-Arkabulian, on the other hand, the fully conjugating Aorist Subjunctive takes as suffix a reduced form of the Present tense of the copula (as Marr observed – 1910: 53). All of this gives for the verb ‘measure’ the following patterns (Chikoba 1936: 148):

(52) Laz Future Indicative Formations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vic’e-Arkabulian</th>
<th>Xopan</th>
<th>Chxalurian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ll measure X’</td>
<td>b-zum-a-re</td>
<td>b-zim-a-m-i-n-o-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘you’ll measure X’</td>
<td>zum-a-re</td>
<td>zim-a-g-i-n-o-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘X’ll measure Y’</td>
<td>zum-a-s-e(-re)</td>
<td>zim-a-s-u/i-n-o-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘we’ll measure X’</td>
<td>b-zum-a-t-e(-re)</td>
<td>b-zim-a-m-i-n-o-n-an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47 This would normally be translated as ‘conditional’. However, as seen above, it has become the norm to use this English term for what in the Georgian tradition is named the xolneobiti (i.e. the Future Indicative stem + the endings of the Imperfect).
'you’ll measure X' zum-a-t-e(-re) zim-a-g-i-n-o-n-an zim-a-t-u+n+o+n
'they’ll measure X' zum-a-n-e(-n) zim-a-s-u/i-n-o-n-an zim-a-n-u+n+o+n

Marr (1910: 53) and Q’ipshidze (1911: 5) go on to speak of the Chxaltians having an alternative formation suffixing -k’o (Marr)/-k’on (Q’ipshidze) to the conjugated Aorist Indicative. This formation is presented by Chikobava exclusively as the IIInd pirobiti mood, which he translates just like the parallel coupling in Mingrelian illustrated in (48) and (49) above. The listing under (51) demonstrates that Mingrelian certainly employs the form o-k’o(-n) (with the usually deleted final -n being the Present Indicative 3rd person singular affix agreeing with the Nominative entity desired), whereas Laz uses a different root, closer to the Georgian. One might argue that the root of the verb ‘want’ was shifted in Laz after the suffix took on this modal force. But another problem is that Laz does not delete final -n, and yet the suffix -k’o~k’on seems to exist in both forms in both languages. The main difficulty, however, seems to me to be the juxtaposition of the suffix with base-forms in the indicative mood – t’u in (46) and (50) is the Imperfect Indicative of the copula. The 3rd person singular form of the independent lexeme ‘want’ in both Mingrelian and Georgian has become fossilised as the marker of necessity/obligation, but, whether used in this latter sense or to signify ‘want’, the subordinate verb/clause follows the desiderative marker48 and, with reference to future events, the coupling is with the Aorist Subjunctive,49 as shewn in (53):

48 In Georgian this order is obligatory, and, when unda represents the fossilised marker of obligation, it functions as a kind of auxiliary prefix, forming such a tight bond with its dependent verb that no other material can split them. In Mingrelian, however, there is at least one example in Danelia/Tsanava (1991: 272) with the order reversed:

ena rafep’f mindges mevu?one-o+k’o+n-ia
this horse.GEN owner.DAT I.take.X.to.Y-necessary-QUOT
saying: I have to take this to the horse’s owner’
(Mingrelian)

In Georgian: es rafebis p’at’rons unda mivuq’vanoo. Note, however, that, regardless of the order of the elements in Mingrelian, the subjunctive remains essential.

49 For present wishes the Present Subjunctive is used:

ok’o btʃ’arunde(-ni) ts’erils
necessary I.be.writing.X.PRES.SUBJ(-SUB) letter.DAT
'1 should be writing a letter’
(Mingrelian)

In Georgian: unda vts’erde ts’erils.
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(53) ok’o midaprte(-ni)
    it’s.necessary I.go.AOR.SUBJ(-SUB\(^50\))  (Mingrelian)
= unda  ts’avide
    it’s.necessary I.go.AOR.SUBJ  (Georgian)
‘I have to go’

But what happens when the wish/obligation relates to the past? Consider (54) (with Pluperfect Indicative alone in Georgian vs Pluperfect + underlined suffix(es) in Mingrelian):

(54) ok’o midamrtumud-k’o(n(i))
    it’s.necessary I.had.gone-?  (Mingrelian)
= unda  ts’avusuliq’avi
    it’s.necessary I.had.gone
‘I had to go/should have gone’  (Georgian)

A parallel pattern is found in past purpose clauses, as shown in (55):

(55) midart(u/a) tʃxom(i) outʃ’opud(u/a)-k’o(n(i))  (tifen(i))
    X.went  fish.NOM X.had.caught.Y-?  for.it\(^51\)
= ts’avida, rom-rata tevzi  daetʃ’ira
    X.went  SUB  fish.NOM X.had.caught.Y
‘X went (in order) to catch fish’  (Georgian)

It may strike observers as odd that Georgian should require a subjunctive mood when such irrealis expressions relate to the present or future but an indicative in the past. The reason for this is that a specifically irrealis/potential particle (naturally coupled with the indicative mood) once functioned in Old Georgian but has been lost in the modern dialects, leaving the Pluperfect Indicative, which developed out of the Aorist Indicative, stranded in these constructions. The Old Georgian particle was -\(\text{-mts}a\),\(^52\) which looks

\(^{50}\) Not even the subordinating \(ro(m)\) is possible in Georgian, so close is the bond between auxiliary and subjunctive.

\(^{51}\) This is reminiscent of the optional use of the postpositional phrase \(a’-z\pi\) ‘for it’ after non-finite expressions of purpose, marked by \(-r+ts\), in Abkhaz, though the construction is perhaps preferable with tifen(i) in Mingrelian.

\(^{52}\) Still widely used in the set expression ts’\(q\)\(\text{-uulimt} iq’\(os\) ‘May X be damned!’, but because its force is no longer properly understood, even here it is coupled with a verb in the subjunctive (the Aorist indicative here would be iq’\(o\)).
as if it contains -tsa ‘and, also, even’, though the precise analysis remains annoyingly opaque. Examples (56a) and (56b) illustrate a past unreal condition and a past purpose clause, respectively:

(56) a. uk’uetu-mtsa\textsuperscript{53} itsoda saxlisa upalman . . .
if-POT X.knew.Y house.GEN master.ERG
iywidzebda-mtsa
X.was.awake.POT
‘if the master of the house had known, he would have remained awake’
(K‘iziria 1969: 151) (Old Georgian)

or

b. mieaxla . . . rayta-mtsa mohk’ueta tavi misi
X.approached.Y that-POT X.cut.Z.off.Y head.NOM Y’s
‘X approached Y in order to cut off his head’ (ibid. 142)
(Old Georgian)

Since Mingrelian incorporates the suffix of interest to us in subordinate clauses where Georgian too once placed its now obsolete potential/irrealis element (viz. unreal past protases and past purpose clauses\textsuperscript{54}), a natural question to ask is whether there might not be some functional relationship between the two – formally they are quite distinct. Since the etymology of the Georgian particle is unclear, do other languages offer any clues as to what items can fulfil such a function? It so happens that Russian is a language which employs a similar particle, namely б(у), illustrated in (57), whose origin is transparent:

(57) esli bu upal, to nikogda bu ne vstal
if IRR fell then already IRR not stood.up
‘if (I) had fallen, (I) would never again have stood up’
(Turgenev, from Borras & Christian 1963: 239) (Russian)

\textsuperscript{53} Note that it is protasis marker tu (or at least a complex conjunction containing it) that couples with the irrealis particle and recall that the example (46) has the Laz equivalent of Georgian tu (namely -na) also coupled with -k‘on. This would lead one to expect a one-time association of -k‘a(n) + da in Mingrelian.

\textsuperscript{54} Mingrelian’s development of a Conditional (formally identical to Georgian’s xolmeobiti with the Imperfect Indicative endings attached to the Future Indicative tense) renders the presence of such a particle in the apodosis of unreal conditions superfluous.
In (57) *bta* is etymologically the 2nd/3rd person singular form of the simple past tense of the verb ‘be’ (Entwistle & Morison 1974: 205; Matthews 1960: 210), attested from the 13th century, though in Modern Russian this *irrealis* marker no longer shows any copular usage. If, then, the copula is a possible source for the marker carrying the function of interest to us, we might further ask whether any copular link is establishable for the Mingrelian–Laz suffix. Within Kartvelian there is none (to the best of my knowledge), but an affirmative response is feasible if we do not restrict ourselves to the Kartvelian family but yet again cast our gaze into Abkhaz (–Abaza) grammar.

Extremely frequent in Abkhaz with negated verbs equating to English expressions ‘without VERBing ~ without having VERBed’ is the suffix -kn’a(−n), as in (58), where we note an optional final nasal and that labialised consonant + open vowel in Abkhaz would be expected to correlate with plain consonant + ‘o’ in Kartvelian (cf. Abkhaz *aq”a-raan*, borrowed from Georgian *q’orani* ‘raven’), e.g.

(58) ak’-’gʰə *(o-)*sa-ma-m-kʷa(−n) ~ (o-)q’a-m-‘ts’a-kʷa(−n)
  one-even (it-)*I-have-not-?
  (it-)*PREV-not-do-?
  s-aa-jt’
  I-come-FIN.AOR
  I came without anything ~ without having done anything’
  (Abkhaz)

But from a semantic point of view this hardly seems to offer enlightenment. Consider, however, (59a) from Abkhaz and (59b) from the divergent Abaza dialect:

(59) a. ak’-’gʰə *(o-)*q’a-j-m-‘ts’e-jt’.
    ak’-’gʰə
    one-even (it-)*PREV-he-not-do-FIN.AOR
    (o-)*q’a-j-m-‘ts’a-kʷ’ − /ə+nə-w
dʒa+w+f+t₅⁵
    (it-)*PREV-he-not-do-?-.NON.FIN.PRES.STAT
    ‘he didn’t do anything. Do you really think he did nothing?!’ = ‘Of course, he did!’
    (Abkhaz)

55 An alternative would be:
    ak’-’gʰə *(o-)*q’a-j-m-‘ts’e-jt’.
    ak’-’gʰə *(o-)*q’a-m-‘tsa-kʷa(−n)
    one-even (it-)*PREV-he-not-do-FIN.AOR
    one-even (it-)*PREV-not-do-.NON.FIN.AOR-?
    ja-ʃ’ *pa-q’a-j-m-‘ts’e-j
    it-how-PREV-he-not-do-.NON.FIN.AOR-QU
compare

b.  jo-b-dǝr-xǝ-w-ma
it-you.FEM-know-really-NON.FIN.PRES-QU  dad
jo-j-hʷǝ-w+z
which-he-say-NON.FIN.IMPERF
- ja-zǝ-m-dǝr-x-kʷa
  it-I-not-know-really-?
‘do you know what dad said? Of course I do!’
(Tabulova 1976: 215)  (Abaza)

Here we have ways to rebut a negative assertion or the doubt implied in a question. The invariant Abkhaz particle indicating surprise at the end of (59a) suggests a connection with the verb 'a-qǝ(-ǝ)-fǝ-ra ‘suppose’ (which governs a simple non-finite form of the verb for the object supposed – just what we have in (O-)-q’a-j-m-t’s’a-kʷ’ǝ+w’nǝ-w). The verb whose validity is being queried appears with the suffix of interest to us followed by -w, the marker of a stative verb in its non-finite present tense guise – in Abaza (59b) the suffix attaches equally to a non-finite verb-form. I suggest that the most convincing way of assigning meanings to all the parts such that the required sense is obtained in the Abkhaz sequence (59a) is to interpret the sequence as in (59c) with a copular root:

(59) c. (ǝ)q’a-j.m.’t’s’a-kʷ’ǝ+a’nǝ-w  dǝ+ǝ+w+f+t
  his.not.having.done.it-be-ing  is.it.really.supposable
  ‘is his not having done it really supposable?!’  (Abkhaz)

A parallel analysis would then be assignable to the Abaza sequence. It so happens that a copular root -kʷ’/ǝ- does exist in Abkhaz, as in (60):

(60) la+’ra  ’l-a+kʷǝ-m
  she  she-be-not.PRES.STAT
  ‘it isn’t her’  (Abkhaz)

The shift of open to close vowel is by no means uncommon – example (61) illustrates how Abkhaz developed the close from the proto-Abkhaz-Abaza open vowel, preserved in Abaza, in the nominal root ‘head’ (also illustrated is how the original voiceless
uvular plosive, again preserved in Abaza, merged in Abkhaz with the voiceless back fricative):


It is, thus, quite conceivable that this root might be cognate with the suffix under examination. Consider also a strange optional addition (underlined in (62)) with expressions of the type ‘as X is/was VERBing’:

(62) a’bas d-’sə-q’a-z  
   ‘a+kʷə-m-kʷθ a . . . wəs
   thus (s)he-how-be-NON.FIN.PAST ?
   jə-’sə-q’a-z  
   ‘a+kʷə+m+kʷθ a+n
   it-how-be-NON.FIN.PAST ?
   ‘such being his/her) situation . . . such being the situation’

(within 11 lines of each other in Zyxwa 1976: 89) (Abkhaz)

What can this optional addition mean? Given the commonest role attested for the suffix -kʷθa(n) in modern Abkhaz and given that the initial sequence a+kʷθ must be ‘it+be-‘, one might suggest the translation ‘without it being so’, but this looks dubious from a semantic point of view. More conceivable, I feel, is that a tight contrast of the kind ‘it wasn’t, it was’ or ‘it not being [so], it being [so]’ might plausibly serve as an expressive way of stressing that it was just/precisely under the circumstances described in the preceding clause that the main event occurred. If, then, the element -kʷθa is in origin a copular root (and -m- is clearly the regular negative marker), we could interpret the final nasal as either a reduced form (and such are not uncommon) of a stative verb’s sole absolute suffix (-nθ) or the stative past tense marker (-n) – either way, the element is optional, presumably because the original force of the suffixal component(s) (and indeed of this optional word as a whole) has been lost. Now, since in Laz–Mingrelian conditionality is associated with the suffix of interest, it would be nice to point to a role in conditional expressions for the parallel item in Abkhaz. In fact, none is known from Abkhaz proper, but the suffix -kʷθn (variants: -kʷθn/-gʷθn) is found in the divergent Abaza dialect, not spoken on Abkhaz territory since its speakers migrated to the North(-West) Caucasus in the 14th century, and here it can follow the regular Abkhaz conditional suffix -(zə+)r ‘if’ (cf. Lomtatidze
1944; Chkadua 1970; Lomtatidze & Klychev 1989 for examples), as seen in (63)–(64):

(63) d-ἳa+j-ἳx-r- kaps+n  sa-j-ἳb
   (s)he-come-again-if-ʔ  me-he-kill-FIN.FUT
   ‘if he were to return, he’ll kill me’
   (Lomtatidze 1944: 168) (T’ap’anta Abaza)

or

(64) ṭsan-la  d-rα-qa-rα- kaps+n  da-z-ba-’rα+n
   day-by him/her-they-take-if-ʔ-NON.FIN.PAST him/her-I-see-CONDIT
   ‘if they’d taken him/her by day, I’d have seen him/her’
   (ibid. 169) (T’ap’anta Abaza)

Whilst recognising that this hypothesis is more controversial than that advanced earlier, I nevertheless want to propose that it is again within Abkhaz(–Abaza) that we might have a source for a copular suffix (even down to its fluctuating nasal) that might have filtered into Laz–Mingrelian long ago (obviously before the split of these two closely related tongues that began in the 7th century) to take on the still important irrealis marking function, once fulfilled in Georgian by the now obsolete suffix -nts. Whether - kaps+n ever had a protasis-marking role in the standard Abkhaz dialects is unknown – if the protasis marker -r is indeed derived from the non-finite Future I (marked today by -ralα – cf. (36), and see Lomtatidze 1994: 168; Hewitt 1987: 94), it is not inconceivable that originally such forms were dependent on some other element, and a form of the copula might well have filled that slot before falling into obsolescence, but this is pure speculation in the present state of our knowledge. Whatever the origin of the optionality of the nasal component in Laz–Mingrelian’s formally similar suffixes (and an analysis of the distribution of -k’o vs -k’on in Laz, where neither deletion of final ‘n’ nor the subordinating suffix -n(i) is supposed to exist, is clearly required), I get the distinct impression that (in Mingrelian at least) the -n(i) of -k’o(n(i)) is actually being assigned the separate role of subordinating suffix (equivalent to Georgian ro(m)) that we discussed earlier. Its detachment from the verb (kofibdesik’o) in the second conjoined subordinate clause and attachment to the clause-final noun
(dabrfele) in example (65) (from one of the locally published Mingrelian journals of the 1930s) surely tends to support this suggestion:

(65) k’lasiuri n’terepk iridixaše miant’es
class-enemies.NOM from.all.sides they.attacked.X
k’olmeurneobas: p’rovok’atsia, tf’uala,
collective.farming.DAT provocation arson
gentxapa, midayala do f’xva
assault robbery & other
ted3gurepit such.like.things.INST
tifeni, namda k’olmeurneoba gak’uryvapudesi-k’oni
for.it that collective-farming.NOM they.had.destroyed.X-?
do atenero gilatarafalo kufib(u)desi-k’o dabrfele-ni
& thus for.marauding they.had.acquired.X-? Darcheli-?
‘class-enemies have attacked collective-farming from all sides:
by provocation, arson, assault, robbery and suchlike in order
to destroy collective-farming and in this way to acquire [our
village of] Darcheli for marauding’ (k’olekt’ivi[f]arat [By Way
of the Collective] 1, 5 May 1932, p. 2) (Mingrelian)

However, the possibility of reduplicating this final component –
compare (66) and (67) with examples (54) and (55), respectively –
perhaps suggests some doubt amongst (at least some) speakers as
to the precise force of -ni when combined with -k’o – in my field-
notes I have more cases of reduplicated -n alone than of the full
-ni:

(66) ok’o midamrtumud-k’o(ni(n(?i))))
‘I had to go/should have gone’ (Mingrelian)

(67) midart(u/ə) tfxom(i) outf’opud(u/ə)-k’o(ni(n(?i)))) (tif’en(i))56
‘X went (in order) to catch fish’ (Mingrelian)

56 Such elicited examples with -ni-n(i) among my corpus all seem to occur only
after -k’o, but again this may be no more than an accidental gap in the data.
3. Digression

As is well known, some dialects of Ancient Greek also had an *irrealis* marker *ke(n)*. It has even been suggested that, if a disputed Mycenaean form similarly conveyed potentiality, then the proto-Greek putative demonstrative adverb (for there is no copular connection in the Greek) would be reconstructible as *q"e(n)lq"n* (Palmer 1995: 68/285), a form whose full-grade is intriguingly reminiscent, structurally at least, of the Abkhaz–Abaza suffix and, both structurally and functionally, of the Laz–Mingrelian suffix. Whilst the eastern Black Sea coast was colonised by Greeks from the 8th century BC, the colonisers came from Miletus, where Ionian, a dialect with *an* in place of *ke(n)*, was spoken (Palmer 1995: 81). And so, this superficial similarity looks like nothing more than mere coincidence.

4. Conclusion

If the arguments advanced above prove to be correct, is there any wider lesson to be drawn other than that Abkhaz influence on Laz–Mingrelian will have been demonstrated to be even deeper than previously thought? The whole thrust of this presentation has been predicated on the belief that indications to a language’s development might be found within the form and function of its native stock of elements and/or by taking into consideration the linguistic milieu in which it is/has been spoken (particularly where bi- and multilingualism have been the norm, as in the Caucasus) – in the present instance the argument has been that both factors might have played a part in the genesis of the features examined. Misinterpretations and/or reanalyses are undeniably significant factors in language change, and it is surely legitimate to look to neighbouring and/or (one-time) dominant languages as sources of possible influence. When the question concerns reconstruction, is it proper to ignore possible clues in the form of the actual morphs themselves? I suggested above a (to my mind) entirely plausible chain of (re)interpretation to explain how Mingrelian *nam(ulσ)da* ‘that’ might have acquired its complementiser functions assuming it to be a coalescence of interrogative *namu* ‘which (one)?’ and protasis-marker *-da* ‘if’. This, of course, touches upon the question of the relevance of
parataxis to attempts at explaining the genesis of at least some types of hypotactic constructions in some languages, a possible path of development I have discussed with reference to the Caucasus more than once (see Hewitt 1984; 1987). Now, it so happens that, as a result of hypothesising along such lines, I stand accused by Harris and Campbell (1995: 284) of committing what they style the ‘Marker/Structure Fallacy’:

‘Notice that it is by no means necessary to assume that the structure in which a particular innovative grammatical element is found developed out of the structure in which that grammatical element originated. It is logically possible that one word simply developed from another, with little reference to context. It is also possible that structural marking that developed in one context was later extended to another. While the issue of whether the sources of markers logically imply the sources of structures is an empirical one, we shall refer to the assumption that they do as the Marker/Structure Fallacy.

‘An example of the Marker/Structure Fallacy in recent work comes from Hewitt (1987: 141–2, 260–1), where it is assumed without further evidence that a subordinate clause with marking otherwise found in questions in Georgian must have developed from an “independent interrogative clause” . . .

‘The Parataxis Hypothesis is not supported by evidence from attested instances of the rise of the use of subordinators.’

(Stresses original)

I suggested that Georgian’s sole clause-final subordinating phrase tu ara ‘as soon as’ (cf. 1) might have taken on this meaning via progression from an expressive use of its original role in marking alternative questions (for the words literally mean ‘or not’, as in ts’avid a tu ara ‘Did X go or not?’) to being grammaticalised as a fully-fledged formant of this type of temporal clause. In other words, my ascription to this particular type of subordinate structure of an origin in the paratactic use of the relevant question-marking strategy because the marking mechanism also functions interrogatively is denounced as fallacious. The details of how this or that language comes to express this or that type of subordination seem not overly to trouble my critics, for they seek to ‘explain’ widely
attested parallelisms in structure between questions and dependent clauses merely by pointing to a global, shared semantic characteristic, namely ‘speaker non-assertion’. Whether or not one accepts the validity of this claim, I fail to see how it ‘explains’ anything at all, for, if speaker non-assertion is the sole determining factor, should it not follow that any question-forming strategy ought to be capable of marking any appropriate type of subordinate clause in the relevant language(s)? I am not aware that such unrestrained substitutability has been observed in such languages, and so one must conclude that, whatever the relevance of speaker non-assertion might be to the sort of constructional parallelisms under review, some other process must be at work behind this or that language’s choice of this or that question-forming strategy to mark a particular type of subordinate structure. For the time being, therefore, I prefer to think that reinterpretation (specifically, the embedding) of an original paratactic sequence is by no means implausible. But it is not just that the Harris/Campbell proposal is lacking in explanatory adequacy – their presentation is marred by some questionable interpretations of basic data (and not only Caucasian).

The late Nia Abesadze (1965: 251–2) is cited (p. 290) as source for the statement that the Mingrelian coordinator do ‘and’ can serve as a clause-final subordinator, as in (our) example (68):

(68) bayanak mutf’ot ginirtu viti ts’anero do
    child such become 10 year and
    ‘as soon as the child turned ten . . .’

(Xubua 1937: 1), glosses by Harris/Campbell p. 290

(Mingrelian)

In fact, Abesadze made no such claim. What she actually wrote was that the co-ordinator may stand between subordinate and main clause in addition to the presence of an independent subordinator, a feature she observed to be attested throughout the Kartvelian family. Here, as amply attested above, the subordinator is much’ot

57 One could also mention that the phenomenon was found in Ancient Greek and Old Armenian: cf. Iliad 1.477–8: ἔμοι δ’ ἤρχησεν φάνη ῶτοιδάκτυλος Ἡώς, καὶ τοῦ ἐπειδ’ ἀνάγωντο ‘When the early-born Dawn appeared with rosy fingers, [and] then they set sail . . .’; ibrew ekn enmut i xoran andr, ewjant’ris bazmec’aw ‘When he came [&] entered the tent there, [and] he sat down at the banquet’ (Jensen 1959: 197) – the standard transcription for Old Armenian is used here.
'as (soon as)', for this would be the correct gloss (rather than 'such’ – Abesadze herself, it should be emphasised, correctly translated this conjunction on pp. 240–1 as Georgian rogorts (k'i) ‘as soon as’), just as the verb in (68) is actually ‘became’ (not ‘become’).

On p. 295 the A-not-A question-forming strategy in Turkish is illustrated by (our) example (69):

(69) kadın tarla-ya git-ti-mi git-me-di-mi
    woman field-DAT go-PAST-QU go-NEG-PAST-QU
    ‘did the woman go to the field (or didn’t she go)?’ (Turkish)

It is then asserted (p. 297) that: ‘The A-not-A structure of Turkish questions is also used to form temporal clauses with the meaning “as soon as”’, as in (our) example (70):

(70) kadın tarla-ya gid-er git-me-z
    woman field-DAT go-AOR go-not-AOR
    ‘as soon as the woman went to the field’ [my glosses]
    (Turkish)

In fact, Turkish does not use its question-forming strategy to build this type of subordinate clause, as proven by the absence in (70) of the question-forming suffix -mi – it counter-poses affirmative vs negative so-called Aorists (which lack any person affix); furthermore, the time reference of (70) is determined by the tense of the main verb (i.e. under appropriate conditions, it could be future).58

58 I am grateful to my colleagues Dr. Bengisu Rona and Laurent Mignon for analysis of these Turkish examples. A further slip in the presentation of the Georgian data in Harris and Campbell (1995) concerns the extension of the Georgian speech particle -o, which is discussed on p. 307 with reference to two examples. The first of these has the verb ‘think’ as introductory main verb for a direct quote, whereas the second, cited below, is stated only to imply the presence of such a verb:

sazedao kisevis pornebja -en element'i ise xjirad gyevlneba,
    superessive version in forms -en element.NOM so often X.is.manifested.for.us
    [rom titkos igia mats'armoebeli-o]
    that as.if that.is formant.NOM-QUOT
    (Georgian)
    ‘We encounter the element -en so often in forms of the supressive version that it is as though it were the formant’

What Harris, for she is the author of this particular chapter, overlooks is that the conjunction titkos, which can function here alone (i.e. without the subordinator rom), does itself incorporate what is in origin the 3rd person singular Aorist Subjunctive passive of the basic verbum dicendi of Georgian, whose root is -tk(ν)- ‘say’, such that the speech particle can in this example at least be made to depend directly on this verbal root.
Having absolutely rejected any account of language change that utilises the concept of parataxis, Harris and Campbell proceed to present (pp. 310–13) a concrete example of how a language with non-finite subordination might have developed a finite strategy, a not uncommon occurrence. The language chosen is North East Caucasian Udi, and with an observation on this illustration the present Caucasian odyssey will close.

Contrasted with the participial relative structure (‘dancing girl’ = ‘girl who danced’) that typifies the whole language family, as in (our) example (71), is the clausal neologism with relativiser and fully finite dependent verb, witnessed in (our) example (72):

(71) azak’e xinārax gōlōfpi
     I.saw girl.DAT dance.PTC
     ‘I saw the dancing girl = girl who danced’    (Udi)

vs

(72) azak’e xinārax mat’in-te gōlōf-ne-p-i
     I.saw girl.DAT who-REL dance1.-3rd.SING-dance2-PERF
     ‘I saw the girl who danced’    (Udi)

And the ‘explanation’ proffered for this quite radical shift? Admittedly, the accompanying footnote (footnote 37 on p. 429) states: ‘There is circumstantial evidence that this development of finite relative clauses was influenced by Azeri, Armenian, and/or Georgian, each of them a language unrelated to Udi with which Udi has been in contact for long periods of time. If this is correct, it does not change the fact that the change in Udi required an internal mechanism . . . It is difficult or impossible to find any change in any language where the possibility of the influence of another language can be categorically excluded’. However, the internal mechanism proposed is simply (?)simplistically) this: as a participle is classifiable as part-adjective/part-verb, the – presumably any – language is free to shift from non-finite participial phrase to full clause with finite verb! But what of the formant here glossed as ‘relative’? Readers might, I feel, have appreciated being told that -te is the widely used Armenian conjunction (e)tt0e/te/, whose privileges of occurrence (in Old Armenian) match those of Georgian tu (viz. ‘that, if, or’). This borrowing is clearly described in his Udi
grammar by Schulze (1982: 202), who also points out that this import is widely associated with Udi’s native stock of interrogatives to produce a range of new subordinating elements. Yet again, then, we seem to have a clear (hardly circumstantial) case of language interference, which is surely the really interesting point here.

Before engaging in meaningful speculation about general trends, one surely has to unravel the developments in individual languages. Even this goal is unattainable unless investigations are predicated on accurate presentation of the data. I hope I may at least claim to have satisfied this basic desideratum, however persuasive the interpretation of these data may then be judged to be. Specifically, I have argued: (a) that the presence in Mingrelian of an atypical Kartvelian feature, namely verb- or clause-final marking of subordination (*-n(i)//-ilə either alone or tautologically indicating the subordinate status of the clause), could have arisen out of the reinterpretation of native Mingrelian morphological material under influence from neighbouring Abkhaz, where the phenomenon of suffixal marking of subordinate status is entirely characteristic of the North West Caucasian family, to which Abkhaz belongs; (b) that the irrealis verb-formant -k’o(n(i)), found only in Mingrelian and Laz within the Kartvelian family, might actually have derived from one of Abkhaz’s copular roots, namely -k”wə (argued to derive from *-k”w’a) ‘be’; and, tangentially, (c) that parataxis remains a viable explanation for the development of certain types of subordinate structures, despite a recent attempt by Harris and Campbell utterly to reject this assumption, – some deficiencies in the latter’s analyses are pointed out, and the explanatory adequacy of their belief that ‘speaker non-assertion’ can alone account for why some languages assign subordinate-marking functions to interrogative strategies is questioned.

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59 I have myself mused (see Hewitt 1987: 252) about this as a possible Armenian source for Georgian tu, which, as mentioned above, has no cognate forms in the sister languages.
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60 Ap’olon Tsanava was the unnamed co-author of this work (p.c. – T’ogo Gudava).
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APPENDIX

5. ჰოვამ, ღობამ და ჰუბჰს სურამა ბოდორო

6. ჰარქ ან ჰომ, თომალამ დათა ჰუბჰს

7. ჰარქ, თომალამ ერთადგანმა ჰუბჰს ჰუბჰს

8. საქართველო/სოფლის სხვადასხვა ჰობი არის შორენილი

9. თომალამ ჰო სხვადასხვა ჰობი, მობალამ ჰუბჰს ჰუბჰს/ჰუბჰს

10. ჰობა/ჰობალამ მოხდა, მობალამ
     დატოტვა

11. ჰობი ჰუბჰს, მობალა ჰუბჰს

12. ჰობი ჰუბჰს ან ჰუბჰს, მობი
     ჰუბჰს ჰობი

13. თხობ, თომამ ჰელა ჰელა

14. ჰობალამ თომ(ჰ) ჰურამ (ოჰ) ჰობი

15. ჰობა, ჰჰობ თომ(ჰ) ან ჰუბჰს ჰუბჰს, მობ

16. ჰელამ თომ(ჰ) ჰურამ, მობალამ ჰუბჰს
     ჰობი

17. ჰობი, თომ(ჰ) ჰუბჰს

18. ჰობი, თომ(ჰ) ჰუბჰს!

19. ჰობამ ჰობ(ჰ) ჰურამ ჰუბჰს, ჰამა, თომ(ჰ)
     ჰობჰ ჰობჰამ ჰუბჰს... ჰუბჰს–ჰობ(ჰ) ჰამა, ჰობ ჰჰობ

20. ჰარქ ჰობ ჰუბჰს, ჰუბჰობ თომ(ჰ)
27. შეიძლო შეტყობინება თუმცა და ეს იყო თუ ქვებში, მიუხედავად და იქვემდებარება ნიშნავს.

28. ხუროება (= ვოკა) მოხდა გრაფახელით, (ოთი) თუ იყო ის მოქცემთ თუ თანააზრება გამოხატავს, ერთობლივით თუმცა არ გახვეთ.

29. საყრდენი თეორია შეუტანებლობა თუ არა, ამ გაკრების გადაკრებამ არ ჩამოიწერე.

35. ჭიდაობა მოხდა ჭიმის ჯგუფში მით: გირთ - საქმები დასუფთავე.

36. რო(ტ) თაროება (ოთი) დარგდება.

39. თუ ადაბლო ხანგრძლივ, ამ გამოფენა.

40. ამ გამოფენის ახალ გამოცემა თქვე

43. ხურო (რო(ტ)) შეტყობინება ბარათით, ართხან ძვირ იტაბარები. თუმცა (რო(ტ)) მოქცენდა, საქმე მოქცენდა. თუ (რო(ტ)) შეტყობინება აქირა, თანო გამოვიდება?

45. ამ განვიხილოთ, რომ შეტყობინები, ართხან იტაბარებ.

46. ამ შეტყობინით გახდება ადაბლო.

48. ამ გამოფენის პასუხიც შედის შეტყობინება.

49. ხურო ემთხვევა ჭიმით