

# Mordvin (Erzya and Moksha)

ARJA HAMARI AND RIGINA AJANKI

## 23.1 Background of the language and speaker community

The Mordvin branch of the Uralic language family consists of two closely related languages: Erzya (E) and Moksha (M). They are spoken in Russia in the Middle-Volga region, where the Republic of Mordovia is situated. However, more than half of the Mordvins live outside the republic, scattered in the surrounding provinces and republics. In Mordovia, only about forty per cent of the population are ethnic Mordvins. The rest of the inhabitants are Russians, Tatars, and others.

According to the last census (2010) of the Russian Federation, there are approximately 744,200<sup>1</sup> ethnic Mordvins. Around 431,600 of them were reported to have a command of either Erzya or Moksha, but no reliable data exists as to how many of them speak a Mordvin language as a mother tongue or what the proportions of Erzya and Moksha speakers are. On the basis of earlier censuses it can be estimated that around a third of them are speakers of Moksha, while two thirds speak Erzya. At present, especially younger-generation Mordvins are balanced or Russian-dominant bilinguals. Consequently, today's Erzya and Moksha are heavily marked by Russian influence.

In many traditional grammatical descriptions especially by Western scholars, Erzya and Moksha were generally regarded as the two main dialects of the Mordvin language. The Mordvins themselves, however, have always considered Erzya and Moksha two separate languages and this is also the view of most contemporary linguists. The two languages are not completely mutually intelligible, as there are differences at all levels: phonology, morphology, lexicon, as well as syntax. Both languages also have their own written standard.

Both Erzya and Moksha are further divided into five major dialects as listed below and shown in Map 23.1 in the plate section.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, each dialect can be divided into

subdialects. The Moksha dialects are mostly spoken in Western Mordovia and to the south and south-west of the republic, while the Erzya dialects are situated in Eastern Mordovia and to the east, north-east, and south-east of the republic. The only exception is the Mixed or Shoksha dialect of Erzya, which is spoken away from other parts of the Erzya area, surrounded by speakers of Moksha, and strongly influenced by Moksha. In both languages, the standard variety is based on the Central dialect of each language. Note that the Mordvin-speaking areas are not homogeneous: the Erzya and Moksha settlements are interspersed with Russians and other ethnic groups.

Dialects of Erzya (Feoktistov 1990: XXXIV–XLII):

- 1) Central dialect
- 2) Western dialect
- 3) North-Western (or Alatyř') dialect
- 4) South-Eastern (or Sura) dialect
- 5) Mixed (or Shoksha) dialect

Dialects of Moksha (Feoktistov 1990: XLIII–LVII, Feoktistov and Saarinen 2005: 46–57):

- 1) Central dialect
- 2) Western dialect
- 3) South-Eastern (or Insar) dialect
- 4) Intermediate dialects (two separate groups)
  - a) area between Western, Central and South-Eastern dialects
  - b) south-western group outside Mordovia
- 5) Mixed dialects (four separate groups outside Mordovia):
  - a) northern group
  - b) southern group
  - c) south-eastern group
  - d) eastern group

Most of the example sentences presented in this chapter come from two electronic corpora, *MORMULA* and *MokshEr*, administered by The Research Unit for Volgaic Languages at the University of Turku. *MORMULA* consists of folklore

dialects of Erzya are spoken in a totally different area from the Western dialects of Moksha.

<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-01.pdf](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/Documents/Vol4/pub-04-01.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Note that although some of the names of the dialects are similar, they refer to dialect groups of two different languages. For example, the Western

material based on spoken language that were collected by Heikki Paasonen at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as folk tales in both languages, and a journal in Erzya. MokshEr includes journals and newspapers from the years 2002–2005 as well as works of fiction. Additional text sources used in this chapter (also for the example texts in 23.6) are the children’s magazine Якстерь тяштенья (jaks'tɕərʲ tʲæʃtʲənʲæ, ‘Red Little Star’), issue 2/1994 (= JT), and four other literary texts or readers: Ključagin (1997) (= K), Kondrakova (2014) (= Ko), Paltin et al. (1997) (= P), and Šunčeva (2009) (= Š).<sup>3</sup> N. E. refers to Natalia Ermakov, our native language consultant of Erzya.

## 23.2 Phonology

### 23.2.1 Vowel system

In Standard Erzya there are five, in Standard Moksha seven vowels (Tables 23.1 and 23.2, respectively). Moksha has a front vowel /æ/ and a reduced vowel /ə/, that do not exist in Erzya. However, these vowels are found in some Erzya dialects that are spoken in the vicinity of the Mokshas.

**Table 23.1** Erzya vowels and their representations in the Cyrillic standard orthography

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i <И> : ĭ <Ы>		u <Ю>, <У> <sup>a</sup>
Close-mid	e <Е> : ě <Э>		o <Ё>, <О>
Open			ɑ <Я>, <А>

<sup>a</sup> Where two graphemes are given for a single vowel, the first one is used after palatalized consonants and the second one after non-palatalized consonants.

There is currently no uncontested description of Mordvin phonology. Of the vowels, especially the quality of /ɑ/ in

<sup>3</sup> Якстерь тяштенья. Эрь ковань мокшень журнал иттнendi. 2/1994. Editor in chief: Анатолий Ежов. Саранск.

Ključagin (1997) = Ключагин, Пётр. Цёканька. Ёвтнемат. Средней ды старшей классо тонавтнициятнень туртов. Саранск: Мордовской книжной издательствась.

Kondrakova (2014) = Кондракова, Маргарита. Шачема мастор. In Кудо. Эстонь-моксиэрзянь вейсэндяксонть журналозо 5/2014. Tallinn: Eesti-Mordva Selts.

Paltin et al. (1997) = Палтин Ю. М., Петрушкин Н. И., Разгуляева Т. В., Рузавина В. М., Ерюшев Б. А. Оцёр. Ёвтнемат. Средней ди старшей классо тонавтнициятнень туртов. Саранск.

Šunčeva (2009) = Шунчева, С. В. Мось велем. In Кудо. Эстонь-моксиэрзянь вейсэндяксонть журналозо 4/2009. Tallinn: Eesti-Mordva Selts.

**Table 23.2** Moksha vowels and their representations in the Cyrillic standard orthography

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i <И>, <Ы> <sup>a</sup>		u <Ю>, <У>
Close-mid	e <Е>, <Э>	ə <Ø>, <Е> : ə <Ø>, <О> <sup>c</sup>	o <Ё>, <О>
Open	æ <Е >Э> <Я> <sup>b</sup>		ɑ <Я>, <А>

<sup>a</sup> See footnote (a) to Table 23.1.

<sup>b</sup> The marking of /æ/ is inconsistent in the orthography.

<sup>c</sup> The marking of the reduced vowel is inconsistent in the orthography.

both languages has been described in a variety of ways. According to, for example, Čudaeva (1963: 29) and Devaev (1963: 267) Moksha /ɑ/ is either a central or a back vowel depending on the dialect, while Ivanova (2006: 28) considers it central in all dialects. Erzya /ɑ/ is described as “non-front” by Bondarko and Poljakov (1993: 85) but also as a back vowel in dialects influenced by Moksha (Rédei 1984: 225). Lehiste et al. (2003: 16) and Aasmäe et al. (2013: 16–17, 47–62, 77) explain this with dialectal variation, but mention that other factors such as style or register, Russian influence, or even the gender of the speaker may also play a role. In this study, the notation /ɑ/ will be used for both Erzya and Moksha, but the problematic position in terms of centralness or backness is shown in Tables 23.1 and 23.2.

The vowel /æ/ is a phoneme in the Central dialects and sectors of the Western dialects of Moksha, and also in Standard Moksha, which is based on the Central dialects. However, according to Aasmäe et al. (2013: 47–62), the distribution of /æ/ is irregular and shows a notable overlap with /e/. In Erzya, phonemic /æ/ only occurs in dialects influenced by Moksha. Other dialects as well as Standard Erzya only know /æ/ as a fronted allophone of /ɑ/ after a palatalized consonant (Zaicz 1998: 187). Here, this allophonic alternation will not be taken into account.

In Erzya, /i/ and /e/ have velar allophones /j/ and /ɛ/ that appear when preceded by a non-palatalized alveolar, e.g. (E) сий sʲij ‘louse’ but сый sij ‘pus, matter’; седь sɛdʲ ‘coal’ but сэдь sɛdʲ ‘bridge’. Moksha displays a velar allophone /j/, which occurs mostly in non-initial syllables when preceded by a non-palatalized alveolar, as in (M) пути putʲ ‘s/he sets, puts’, ваны vanʲ ‘s/he looks’ (Bartens 1999: 29). The velar allophones of (E, M) /i/ and (E) /e/ are indicated in the orthography. However, they are not distinguished in the transcriptions of the present study as their occurrence is fully predictable.

The Moksha reduced vowel /ə/ is the most frequent vowel in the language (Ivanova 2006: 34, 107, Aasmäe et al. 2013: 18–19). It generally occurs in an unstressed position, most frequently in non-initial syllables but also in unstressed initial syllables; the latter mostly in words that have a stressed /ɑ/

or /æ/ in a non-initial syllable, e.g. (M) р̄в̄я ә̄v̄æ ‘wife’ (see 23.2.3 for stress assignment). The distribution of the allophones of the reduced vowel (ə and ɛ) depends on the environment: the palatal allophone is used when a front vowel appears in the preceding syllable or when the preceding consonant or one of the consonants of a cluster is a palatalized alveolar (Bartens 1999: 29–30). As pointed out by Aasmäe et al. (2013: 18–19), there is no consensus within Moksha linguistics whether the reduced vowel is a phoneme or merely an allophone of the full vowels (i, u, e, o) in unstressed syllables (e.g. Rédei 1968b: 383–6). According to the latter view, the vowel inventory of Standard Moksha would consist of six phonemes only (u, o, a, i, e, æ) (Aasmäe et al. 2013: 19–20).

There are only monophthongs in both languages. However, vowel sequences are found in loanwords or occasionally as the result of loss of a consonant, e.g. (E) раужо rauзо < равужо ravuzo ‘black’ (Zaicz 1998: 188).

The spelling of both languages follows the principles of Russian Cyrillic orthography. No additional characters or diacritics are used. This works well for Erzya (note the use of separate graphemes for the front and back allophones of /i/ and /e/; see Table 23.1). The Moksha orthography, in contrast, fails to denote the vowels phonematically. Word-final /æ/ is written with Cyrillic ⟨е⟩ or ⟨я⟩ (e.g. (M) сиде s̄id̄æ ‘dense, thick’, иля il̄æ ‘other’), but ⟨я⟩ can also mark /a/ after a palatalized consonant, as in эря- er̄a- ‘live’. Word-initially /æ/ is spelled by ⟨э⟩ (e.g. (M) эльбят̄кс æl̄bæt̄ks ‘mistake’),

but э may also denote /e/ (e.g. (M) эря- er̄a- ‘live’). The spelling of the reduced vowels is particularly inconsistent: in an unstressed first syllable, the reduced vowel is not marked at all (e.g. (M) кда k̄da ‘if’, р̄в̄я ә̄v̄æ ‘wife’), whereas in a non-initial syllable the velar allophone /ə/ is spelled as ⟨о⟩ and the palatal allophone /ɛ/ as ⟨е⟩ (e.g. (M) ужонь уз̄ə-n̄i corner-GEN, велень vel̄ɛ-n̄i village-GEN). In the transcriptions of the present study, the Moksha reduced vowel is indicated but its velar and palatal allophones are not distinguished, except when it is relevant for the description.

### 23.2.2 Consonant system

There are twenty-eight consonants in Standard Erzya and thirty-three in Standard Moksha (Tables 23.3 and 23.4, respectively). In addition to these, a velar nasal /ŋ/ occurs in parts of the North-Western dialects of Erzya, e.g. пей ‘tooth’, kudo-ŋ house-LAT (пей пей ‘tooth’, кудов kudo-v house-LAT in other dialects and the standard language; Feoktistov 1990: XXXVIII).

There is a palatalization opposition in both languages. True phonemic opposition between palatalized and non-palatalized consonants only exists for dental-alveolar consonants, i.e. before back vowels both palatalized and non-palatalized alveolar consonants can occur (E суро suro ‘millet’ vs суро s̄uro ‘horn’).

**Table 23.3** Erzya consonant phonemes

		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental-alveolar	Palatalized <sup>a</sup>	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Stop	voiceless	p ⟨п⟩		t ⟨т⟩	tʲ ⟨тʲ⟩			k ⟨к⟩
	voiced	b ⟨б⟩		d ⟨д⟩	dʲ ⟨дʲ⟩			g ⟨г⟩
Nasal		m ⟨м⟩		n ⟨н⟩	nʲ ⟨нʲ⟩			
Affricate				tʃ ⟨ц⟩	tʃʲ ⟨цʲ⟩	tʃ̣ ⟨ч⟩		
Sibilant fricative	voiceless			s ⟨с⟩	sʲ ⟨сʲ⟩	ʃ ⟨ш⟩		
	voiced			z ⟨з⟩	zʲ ⟨зʲ⟩	ʒ ⟨ж⟩		
Non-sibilant fricative	voiceless		(f ⟨ф⟩)					(x ⟨х⟩)
	voiced		v ⟨в⟩					
Approximant							j ⟨й⟩ <sup>b</sup>	
Trill				r ⟨р⟩	rʲ ⟨рʲ⟩			
Lateral approximant				l ⟨л⟩	lʲ ⟨лʲ⟩			

<sup>a</sup> Palatalization is indicated in the orthography with either the following vowel (see Table 23.1) or—in the absence of a vowel—with the soft sign ь.

<sup>b</sup> When /j/ is followed by a vowel both the consonant and the vowel are indicated with a single grapheme in the orthography—the one that also indicates the palatalization of an alveolar: je ⟨е⟩, ju ⟨ю⟩, ja ⟨я⟩, jo ⟨ё⟩

Table 23.4 Moksha consonant phonemes

		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental-alveolar	Palatalized <sup>a</sup>	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Stop	voiceless	p <п>		t <т>	tʲ <тʲ>			k <к>
	voiced	b <б>		d <д>	dʲ <дʲ>			g <г>
Nasal		m <м>		n <н>	nʲ <нʲ>			
Affricate				ts <ц>	tsʲ <цʲ>	tʃ <ч>		
Sibilant fricative	voiceless			s <с>	sʲ <сʲ>	ʃ <ш>		
	voiced			z <з>	zʲ <зʲ>	ʒ <ж>		
Non-sibilant fricative	voiceless		f <ф>					(x <х>)
	voiced		v <в>					
Approximant	voiceless						j̥ <йх, их, ых> <sup>c</sup>	
	voiced						j <й> <sup>b</sup>	
Trill	voiceless			r̥ <рх>	r̥ʲ <рʲх>			
	voiced			r <р>	rʲ <рʲ>			
Lateral approximant	voiceless			l̥ <лх>	l̥ʲ <лʲх>			
	voiced			l <л>	lʲ <лʲ>			

<sup>a</sup> See note (a) to Table 23.3.

<sup>b</sup> See note (b) to Table 23.3.

<sup>c</sup> In the Cyrillic orthography, the voiceless liquids and fricatives are marked by inserting the character x after the character indicating the consonant. When /i/ precedes /j/, the latter is not indicated in the orthography; thus, <их> appears after palatalized consonants and <ых> after non-palatalized consonants.

In addition to palatalization, there is an opposition of voiced vs voiceless stops and fricatives in both Erzya and Moksha. In Moksha, this opposition has been extended to /v/, /j/, /r/, and /l/, as well (see 23.2.5.1).

In Erzya, /f/ and /x/ only appear in loanwords, and the same applies to Moksha /x/. However, in Moksha native words /f/ occurs as a reflex of original /v/ before /t/ (e.g. (M) шуфта *šufta*, cf. (E) чувто *čuvto* ‘tree’) (e.g. Devaev and Cygankin 1970: 31).

Finally, in Moksha the affricate /ɕ:/ <ц> occurs in some native words, although it tends to be pronounced as /ʃ:/ (e.g. (M) аще- *acə-*, *qʃə-* ‘be, be situated’); the sound also appears in Russian loanwords (Aasmäe et al. 2013: 21).

### 23.2.3 Stress

Word stress is relatively free and it does not distinguish between meanings. However, the stress is not arbitrary

either but there are certain tendencies, partly common to both languages. According to Lehiste et al. (2003) on Erzya and Aasmäe et al. (2013) on Moksha, in both languages the stress most commonly falls on the first syllable, but the assignment of stress also depends on sentence prosody. Words are generally divided into disyllabic units in which a stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed one. The primary stress generally falls on the first syllable, while other odd-numbered syllables (the third, fifth, etc.) get a secondary stress. However, in both languages word stress can be subordinated to a rhythmical sentence stress so that stress assignment can disregard word boundaries and move the stress to the second, fourth, etc. syllable within a non-initial word of a sentence (Lehiste et al. 2003: 56, 86, Aasmäe et al. 2013: 78).

In both languages, stress may also be connected with the quality of vowels, but there are considerable differences between Erzya and Moksha. In Erzya, vowel reduction is the most distinctive characteristic of the vowels in unstressed

syllables as opposed to stressed syllables (Lehiste et al. 2003: 61–7, 85–6). However, instead of a clear-cut alternation between full and reduced vowels (as in Moksha), vowel reduction is a continuum in Erzya, and the extent of reduction also seems to depend on style and context.

In Moksha, stress is often assigned to a non-initial syllable if it contains /a/ (or /æ/) and if there is a high vowel (/i/ or /u/) in the initial syllable. On the other hand, the rhythmical stress of a sentence described above may affect the stress pattern. Moreover, as described by Aasmäe et al. (2013: 47–61, 76–7), in Moksha the quality of vowels in unstressed syllables differs systematically from that of the vowels in stressed syllables (see 23.2.1). Most importantly, the occurrence of the reduced vowel /ə/ (with back and front allophones) is characteristic for Moksha unstressed syllables and the feature that distinguishes the vowel system from that of Erzya.

## 23.2.4 Phonotactics, word and syllable structure

### 23.2.4.1 Phonotactics

#### 23.2.4.1.1 Phonotactics of vowels

In both standard varieties, all vowels can occur in a word-initial syllable but in non-initial syllables there are restrictions specific to each variety (see Lehiste et al. 2003: 15–16 on Erzya and Aasmäe et al. 2013: 20 on Moksha). In Erzya non-initial syllables, only /o/, /e/, and /a/ occur without restrictions, whereas /u/ and /i/ are possible in loanwords, /i/ also in some inflected forms, such as the third-person present-tense forms of verbs (e.g. (E) *ваны* van-i ‘s/he looks’, *ваныть* van-itʲ ‘they look’). In Moksha, only /a/, /æ/, and /ə/ can appear in non-initial syllables without restrictions. The vowels /a/ and /æ/ are possible in final open syllables (i.e. syllables ending in a vowel), whereas the reduced vowel mostly appears word-internally (however, see Aasmäe et al. 2013: 19 for other views). The vowels /o/ and /e/ can occur in non-initial syllables in loanwords only (e.g. (M) *народ* narot ‘people, nation’, (M) *жилетка* žilʲetka ‘vest’ < Russ. *narod*, *žiletka*). Similarly, /u/ and /i/ in non-initial syllables are possible in loanwords; moreover, /i/ can occur in certain inflected forms such as the third-person present-tense forms of verbs (e.g. (M) *ваны* van-i ‘s/he looks’) and the lative case (e.g. (M) *вели* velʲ-i village-LAT), and both /u/ and /i/ occur in derivational suffixes (e.g. (M) *кели* kelʲi ‘broad’ < *келе* kelʲæ ‘breadth’; (M) *сакалу* sakalu ‘bearded’ < *сакал* sakal ‘beard’). Furthermore, /u/ and /i/ are also found in a word-final position in nouns that used to have derivational suffixes -v or -j, respectively, e.g. (M) *келу* kelu (< \*kelu-v) ‘birch’, *инези* inʲəzi (< \*inʲəzi-j) ‘raspberry’. In both languages, there is also a word-final /i/ in some words

that have become monosyllabic owing to diachronic processes, e.g. (E) *чи* tʲei, (M) *ши* ʃi ‘sun; day’ < \*ketʲæ (e.g. UEW 1988: 141–2).

Both languages still show traces of vowel harmony (see 1.3.3) in the vowel variation of some allomorphs (see 23.2.5.2). In addition, according to Zaicz (1998: 190), in some eighty per cent of the inherited lexicon the words have either front vowels or back vowels only. In the oldest layer of the Erzya lexicon, /o/ mostly occurs in a non-initial syllable in words that have a back vowel in the first syllable (e.g. (E) *кудо* kudo ‘house; home’), whereas /e/ of non-initial syllables is most typical in words that have a front vowel in the first syllable ((E) *сиве* sʲive ‘collar’). The occurrence of /a/, on the other hand, is not dependent on the vocalism of the first syllable (e.g. (E) *киръга* kirʲga ‘neck’, (E) *мода* moda ‘ground, earth’).

As can be seen in Table 23.5, in Moksha the occurrence of /a/, /æ/, and /ə/ in non-initial syllables is likewise partly dependent on the vocalism of the first syllable; /a/ occurs in the non-initial syllable when the first syllable has a back vowel and /æ/ when the first syllable has a front vowel. The occurrence of the reduced vowel /ə/ is not dependent on the vocalism of the first syllable. However, the distribution of its allophones is; the velar allophone /ə/ often corresponds to Erzya /o/, while the palatal allophone /ə/ corresponds to Erzya /e/, e.g. (M) *сисем* sʲisʲəm ‘seven’ (cf. (E) *сисем* sʲisʲem ‘seven’), (M) *уштор* uʃtər ‘maple’ (cf. (E) *укштор* ukʃtor ‘maple’).

**Table 23.5** Vowel distribution in the Central dialects of Moksha (adapted from Aasmäe et al. 2013: 18)

Initial syllable	Subsequent syllables	Final open syllable
i	(æ) ə	(æ) (i)
e	(æ) ə	(æ) (i)
æ	(æ) ə	(æ) (i)
u	ɑ ə	ɑ (u) (i)
o	ɑ ə	ɑ (u) (i)
ɑ	ɑ ə	ɑ (u) (i)
(ə) <sup>a</sup>	ɑ ə	ɑ (æ) (i)

<sup>a</sup> The vowels given in brackets have restricted occurrence.

#### 23.2.4.1.2 Phonotactics of consonants

In both languages all consonants can occur word-internally but there are more restrictions in the word-initial and word-final positions (see Devaev and Cygankin 1970: 29–45, 58–76 and Bondarko and Poljakov 1993: 95–134 for details).

Word-initially, voiced obstruents (/b/, /d/, /dʲ/, /g/, /z/, /zʲ/, and /ʒ/) mainly occur in loans and in onomatopoeic words in both Erzya and Moksha. Furthermore, /f/, /x/ /t͡s/, and /t͡sʲ/ are rare in this position in Erzya, whereas in Moksha /t͡s/ and /t͡sʲ/ are more common.

Word-finally, /p/, /b/, /g/, /f/, /x/, and /t͡s/ are rare in both languages. Moreover, word-final /t/ and /tʲ/ occur mainly in loanwords (e.g. (E, M) депутат d'eputat 'deputy') and in some suffixes, such as the plural marker of nouns (e.g. (E) велеть vel'e-tʲ, (M) велеть vel'ə-tʲ village-PL) as well as the 3PL suffix of verbs (e.g. (E) ваныть van-itʲ, (M) ваныть van-ijʲ 'they look').

Consonant clusters of two or three consonants are frequent in both languages, but there are also clusters of five and, in Moksha, even six consonants. According to Bondarko and Poljakov (1993: 123–31) and Rédei (1984: 212–20), clusters of two consonants can belong to one morpheme or include a morpheme boundary, whereas clusters of three or four consonants occur within a single morpheme more rarely and clusters of five or (in Moksha) six consonants only occur as the result of combinations of morphemes. Clusters of two or three consonants can appear word-initially, word-internally, as well as word-finally, e.g. (E, M) кшни kʃnʲi 'iron', (E) пешксе peʃksʲe, (M) пяхксе pæʃksʲæ 'full', (E) виськс vis'ks 'shame', (M) пяхтьф pæʲtʲf 'coiled, curly'. Clusters of four consonants occur word-internally and word-finally, e.g. (E) вастневкшне- vastʲnʲevkʃnʲe- 'show oneself, appear', (M) ласькфте- las'kftʲə- 'drive away, banish', (E, M) пр'алкс-т pillow-PL. In Erzya, the clusters of five consonants only appear in a word-internal position (e.g. (E) каркс-тне belt-NOM.DEF.PL) but in Moksha both word-internal and word-final positions are possible for the clusters of five and six consonants as well (e.g. (M) шаркстфт ʃarkst-f-t turn-PTCP-PL).

Geminate consonants only occur on morpheme boundary. They may arise when a consonant-initial suffix is attached to a consonant stem, e.g. (E) максса maks-sa give-PRS.3SG>3SG, (M) канне kanʲ-nʲə- carry-FREQ-.

#### 23.2.4.2 Word stems

##### 23.2.4.2.1 Nominal stems

The nominative forms of nouns may end in either a vowel or a consonant. When inflected, different types of nominal stems can be distinguished: (i) some nouns have a vowel stem only, (ii) some have a vowel stem in the nominative but a consonant stem in certain inflectional forms and (iii) some have a consonant stem in the nominative but an epenthetic vowel is inserted between the stem and the suffix in certain inflectional forms producing a vowel stem (see Bartens 1999: 71–2 for a more detailed description).

In nouns that have a **vowel stem only**, the stem may end in /a/, /o/, or /e/ in Erzya and in /a/ or /æ/ in Moksha. In Erzya the vowel /a/ always stays unchanged throughout the inflectional paradigm, e.g. (E) пр'я pr'ja 'head': пр'янь pr'ja-nʲ head-GEN.DEF.SG: пр'ядо pr'ja-do head-PART. The vowels /o/ and /e/ can also be maintained, e.g. (E) ужо uʒo 'corner': ужонь uʒo-nʲ corner-GEN: ужосо uʒo-so corner-INE; веле veʎe 'village': велень veʎe-nʲ village-GEN: велесэ veʎe-se village-INE. However, /o/ and /e/ are subject to omission in certain forms (see below).

As for Moksha, those nouns that are etymological cognates of Erzya nouns ending in /a/ have a stem-final /a/ which remains a full vowel when the word is inflected, e.g. (M) мода moda 'ground, earth': модать moda-tʲ ground-GEN.DEF.SG: модаса moda-sa ground-INE (cf. E moda 'ground, earth'). However, instead of /a/, /æ/ appears word-finally after a palatalized consonant or word-internally between two palatalized consonants, cf. (M) пр'я pr'ja 'head' and пр'янь pr'ja-nʲ head-GEN.DEF.SG but пр'яда pr'ja-da head-PART. In contrast, Moksha stem-final /a/ corresponding to Erzya /o/ alternates with the reduced back vowel if followed by a suffix, as in (M) ужа uʒa 'corner': ужонь uʒə-nʲ corner-GEN: ужосо uʒə-sa corner-INE. Similarly, Moksha stem-final /æ/ corresponding to Erzya /e/ alternates with the reduced front vowel, as in (M) веле veʎæ 'village': велень veʎə-nʲ village-GEN: велеса veʎə-sa village-INE.

In both languages, the word-final vowel is maintained unchanged in inflection in words that have become monosyllabic owing to diachronic processes, e.g. (E) чи t͡ʃi 'sun, day': чинь t͡ʃi-nʲ sun/day-GEN; (M) ши ʃi 'sun, day': шинь ʃi-nʲ sun/day-GEN. Moreover, the word-final vowel usually remains unchanged in recent loans as well as proper names.

The nouns that have **both a vowel stem and a consonant stem** include words that have a consonant cluster in which the last consonant is either an alveolar or a velar. The uninflected stem ends in /o/ or /e/ in Erzya and, respectively, /a/ or /æ/ in Moksha. In both languages, the vowel is often omitted, especially in the plural forms, local cases and sometimes also in the partitive and the abessive case. Consequently, a consonant stem appears in these forms, e.g. (E) чувто t͡ʃuvtʲo 'tree': чувт-т t͡ʃuvtʲ-t tree-PL: чувтсо t͡ʃuvtʲ-so tree-INE; (M) шуфта ʃufta 'tree': шуфт-т ʃuft-t tree-PL: шуфтса ʃuft-sa tree-INE. In the same inflectional forms, Erzya nouns ending in (E) -мо, -ме also have a consonant stem regardless of whether m is part of a cluster or not, e.g. (E) сельме s'el'me 'eye': сельмьт s'el'm-tʲ eye-PL: сельмсэ s'el'm-se eye-INE. However, there is plenty of dialectal variation in the use of the consonant stems in both Erzya and Moksha.

Nouns with a word-final consonant get **an epenthetic vowel in certain inflectional forms**. In Erzya the epenthetic vowel is /o/ if the first syllable has a back vowel and

/e/ if the first syllable has a front vowel, while in Moksha, the allophones /ə/ and /ɛ/ of the reduced vowel are used. The vowel stem is used in the genitive and lative in Erzya and the genitive, dative, and causative in Moksha, whereas other inflectional forms are based on the consonant stem, e.g. (E) *вирь* *virʲ* ‘forest’: *вирень* *virʲe-nʲ* forest-GEN but *вирьсэ* *virʲ-se* forest-INE; (M) *вирь* *virʲ* ‘forest’: *вирень* *virʲə-nʲ* forest-GEN: *виренди* *virʲə-nʲdi* forest-DAT: *виренкса* *virʲə-nksa* forest-CAUS but *вирьса* *virʲ-sa* forest-INE.<sup>4</sup>

#### 23.2.4.2.2 Verbal stems

In both languages, three types of verbal stems can be distinguished: (i) stems ending in the vowel /a/ (e.g. (E, M) *пала-пала* ‘kiss’), (ii) stems ending in the vowel /o/ in Erzya and /ə/ in Moksha (e.g. (E) *вано-вано-*, (M) *вано-ванə-* ‘look’) and (iii) stems ending in the vowel /e/ in Erzya and /ɛ/ in Moksha (e.g. (E) *ниле-* *nʲilʲe-*, (M) *ниле-* *nʲilʲə-* ‘swallow’) (Bartens 1999: 122). Verbs of the first type only have one stem and the stem vowel does not change when the verb is inflected, except for certain Erzya forms in which the vowel is replaced by /i/. Verbs of the second and third types, on the other hand, also have a consonant stem (e.g. (E, M) *ван-ван-* ‘look’; (E, M) *ниль-* *nʲilʲ-* ‘swallow’) which is used in certain inflectional forms. For example, the stem vowel is lost in the present-tense first- and second-person plural forms in Erzya verbs of the second and the third type (e.g. (E) *вантано* *van-tano* look-PRS.1PL, *вантадо* *van-tado* look-PRS.2PL, (E) *нильтяно* *nʲilʲ-tʲano* swallow-PRS.1PL, *нильтядо* *nʲilʲ-tʲado* swallow-PRS.2PL) and Moksha verbs of the third type (e.g. *нильхтяма* *nʲilʲ-tʲama* swallow-PRS.1PL, *нильхтяда* *nʲilʲ-tʲada* swallow-PRS.2PL). In addition, in the second and the third types of verbs the stem vowels are replaced by /a/ in the present-tense first- and second-person singular forms; however /a/ is regarded as a part of the personal ending in this study (e.g. (E, M) *ванан* *van-an* look-PRS.1SG, *ванат* *van-at* look-PRS.2SG, (E, M) *нилян* *nʲilʲ-an* swallow-PRS.1SG, *нилят* *nʲilʲ-at* swallow-PRS.2SG).

### 23.2.5 Morphophonological phenomena

Several morphophonological phenomena can affect either the stem or the suffix or both when words are inflected. The most prominent of these are different types of assimilations on the morpheme boundary as well as the vowel harmony which can affect suffixes.

<sup>4</sup> Note, however, that while some scholars consider the epenthetic vowel to belong to the stem, others regard it as a suffix-initial vowel (see Maticsák 2012: 125–6 for a summary of the different views). In this study, the vowel is treated as a stem-final sound.

#### 23.2.5.1 Assimilation

Both progressive and regressive assimilations across a morpheme boundary are possible and the features most frequently affected are voicing/ devoicing and palatalization/ depalatalization. Erzya and Moksha are not completely identical as to the direction and type of assimilation.

Progressive assimilation takes place, for example, when a voiced morpheme-final consonant has a voicing effect on the initial consonant of the following morpheme, e.g. (E) *эйжуро* *ejʲuro* ‘icicle’ (< *эй* *ej* ‘ice’ + *журо* *ʲuro* ‘horn’), (M) *кудбрия* *kudbrʲæ* ‘roof’ (*куд* *kud* ‘house’ + *пря* *prʲæ* ‘head’); this assimilation is usually shown in the orthography when it occurs within compound words but not in phrases or inflected forms (Zaicz 1998: 189–90).

Owing to the progressive assimilation, suffixes with an initial apical consonant (except /s/) have two allomorphs, one with a palatalized consonant and another with a non-palatalized consonant. The choice of the allomorph depends on the palatalization vs non-palatalization of the stem-final consonant, as in (E) *кал* *kal* ‘fish’: *калнень* *kal-nenʲ* fish-DAT: *калт* *kal-t* fish-PL vs (E) *каль* *kalʲ* ‘willow’: *кальнень* *kalʲ-nʲenʲ* willow-DAT: *кальть* *kalʲ-tʲ* willow-PL; (M) *кал* *kal* ‘fish’: *калхт* *kaɫ-t* fish-PL vs (M) *каль* *kalʲ* ‘willow’: *кальхть* *kaɫʲ-tʲ* willow-PL. Zaicz (1998: 190) calls this consonant harmony. Another instance of assimilation in suffixes can be seen in Moksha, where suffix-initial /s/ and /sʲ/ become /ts/ and /tsʲ/, respectively, when preceded by a stem-final /n/ or /nʲ/, e.g. (M) *нупонь* *nupənʲ* ‘moss’: *нупоньца* *nupənʲ-tsa* moss-INE ‘in moss’ (cf. inessive ending -sa).

A typical instance of regressive assimilation in Mordvin is the devoicing effect of /-t/ or /-tʲ/. For example, in both languages, the morpheme-final voiced consonant (/b/, /d/, /dʲ/, /g/, /z/, /zʲ/, /ʒ/) is devoiced in front of the plural suffix, e.g. (E) *кедь* *kedʲ* ‘hand’: *кедть* *ketʲ-tʲ* hand-PL; (M) *кядь* *kædʲ* ‘hand’: *кятть* *kætʲ-tʲ* hand-PL. In addition, word-final /n/ and /nʲ/ are totally assimilated with the plural suffix -t /-tʲ, e.g. (E, M) *ломань* *lomanʲ* ‘person’: *ломатʲ-tʲ* person-PL (in Erzya also *lomanʲ-tʲ* is possible). This type of assimilation is shown in the orthography in Moksha (*ломатть*) but not in Erzya (*ломанть*). In Moksha, word-final /m/ is partly assimilated by the plural suffix, as in (M) *утом* *utəm* ‘storehouse’: *утопт* *utəp-t* storehouse-PL.

The devoicing effect of voiceless consonants is especially strong in Moksha where /l/, /lʲ/, /r/, /rʲ/, /j/, as well as /v/ are also devoiced in front of /-t/ or /-tʲ/, as in:

- (M) /l/ *кал* *kal* ‘fish’: *калхт* *kaɫ-t* fish-PL  
 (M) /lʲ/ *пеель* *pejəlʲ* ‘knife’: *пеелхть* *pejəlʲ-tʲ* knife-PL  
 (M) /r/ *юр* *jur* ‘root’: *юрхт* *juɫ-t* root-PL  
 (M) /rʲ/ *вирь* *virʲ* ‘forest’: *вирьхть* *virʲ-tʲ* forest-PL

(M) /j/ пей pej ‘tooth’ : пейхть pej-tʲ tooth-PL  
 (M) /v/ кев kev ‘stone’ : кефт kef-t stone-PL

Furthermore, after voiceless liquids and fricatives, /t/ or /tʲ/ is dropped when followed by /n/ in Moksha; this happens, for example, for the morpheme-initial /tʲ/ of the nominative plural suffix (M) -tʲnʲæ of the definite declension. However, the devoicing effect of the omitted /tʲ/ remains, e.g. (M) ков kov ‘moon; month’ : кофне kofnʲæ moon.NOM.DEF.PL, кал kal ‘fish’ : калхне kaɫnʲæ fish NOM.DEF.PL. In the same morpheme /tʲ/ is dropped also when preceded by the assimilation of /m/ described above, e.g. (M) пизем pizɛm ‘rain’ : пизепне pizɛpnʲæ rain.NOM.DEF.PL. Moreover, Moksha words ending in /u/ or /i/ used to have word-final derivational suffixes -v and -j, respectively, and these suffixes reappear when followed by -tʲnʲæ; both ancient suffixes are devoiced and the morpheme-initial /tʲ/ is omitted, as in (M) келу kelu ‘birch’ : келуфне kelufnʲæ birch.NOM.DEF.PL (< \*kelu-v-tʲnʲæ), инези inɛzi ‘raspberry’ : инезихне inɛziɫnʲæ raspberry.NOM.DEF.PL (< \*inɛzi-j-tʲnʲæ).

It should be noted that the devoicing assimilation described above is partly historically conditioned and, although attested elsewhere (i.e. in connection with some derivational suffixes), it does not happen automatically in all morpheme boundaries (cf. M вирь virʲ ‘forest’ : вирть virʲ-tʲ forest-GEN.DEF.SG). On the other hand, in Moksha, devoicing occasionally also takes place before /k/, /ts/, and /tɕ/, as well (e.g. M эрьккæ ærʲkæ ‘lake’; ярхца- jaɫtsa- ‘eat’). However, not all instances of devoicing in Moksha have to do with a morpheme boundary, as voiceless consonants have caused devoicing of the preceding consonant word-internally, as well, e.g. (M) шуфра ŋuɫra ‘tree’ (cf. E чувто tɕuvto ‘tree’).

### 23.2.5.2 Vowel harmony in suffixes

In Erzya the vowel harmony still concerns suffixes: certain grammatical morphemes have two allomorphs with different vocalism—usually one with the back vowel /o/ and another with the front vowel /e/ (e.g. the inessive in -so ~ -se). The allomorph is chosen according to the frontness or backness of the last vowel of the stem (e.g. (E) кудосо kudo-so house-INE but велесэ veɫe-se village-INE). In addition, if the word-final consonant is palatalized, an initial apical consonant (except /s/) of the suffix is also palatalized and the suffix has a front vowel regardless of the frontness or backness of the vowel of the stem, e.g. (E) калдо kal-do fish-PART but кальде kaɫi-dʲe willow-PART; умарде umaɫi-dʲe apple-PART.

In Moksha, systematic vowel harmony of suffixes does not exist (e.g. the inessive is consistently -sa) but there are

some relics of suffixal harmonization, e.g. (M) куду kud-u house-LAT but вели veɫi-i village-LAT; (M) ловга lov-ga snow-PROL but кигя ki-gæ road-PROL. In Moksha, too, the opposition of the palatalization of the word-final consonant can sometimes have an effect in the frontness vs backness of the vowel of the suffix, e.g. (M) калга kaɫ-ga fish-PROL but кальгя kaɫi-gæ willow-PROL.

## 23.3 Morphology

### 23.3.1 Nominal inflection

#### 23.3.1.1 Nouns

Both languages have two paradigms for noun declension, traditionally called **the indefinite** (or basic) and **the definite declension**. In the indefinite declension only the case marking is present, while the suffixes of the definite declension express both case and definiteness of the referent.

According to most grammars, the number of cases of the indefinite declension in the singular is twelve in Erzya (e.g. Cygankin et al. 2000: 76–87) and thirteen in Moksha (e.g. Aljamkin et al. 2000: 47–54) (see Tables 23.6 and 23.7). The main difference between the indefinite paradigms of Erzya and Moksha is that the Moksha causative has no equivalent in Erzya. This case has relatively recently been grammaticalized from the postposition (M) инкса inksa ‘because of’ and still carries the original semantics of the postposition.

In both languages, there are four grammatical cases: the nominative, genitive, dative, and partitive.<sup>5</sup> The nominative mainly functions as the case of subjects and nominal predicates, the genitive is used in the expressions of possession, the dative is employed to mark the beneficiary or addressee, and the partitive is the case governed by certain verbs. In addition, the nominative, genitive, and partitive (as well as the inessive) are employed in differential object marking (see 23.4.4; cf. 44.4.1). The five local cases express the goal (illative), direction (lative), location (inessive), source (elative), and route (prolative). The main function of the translative is to express a change or transition of a referent into something. The comparative marks the size or the approximate quantity

<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, the case that is here referred to as partitive, has been called ablative instead. The case suffix was originally used to express motion away from something (e.g. Bartens 1999: 75–6). In the contemporary Mordvin languages, however, these spatial (or temporal) uses are marginal and the case can be regarded as grammatical: it is used in the marking of partial object and partial predicate, in expressions of quantity and standard of comparison, as well as in the complements of certain verbs. In the light of typological literature on partitive cases (most notably Luraghi and Huomo 2014), we consider the designation *partitive* to be more appropriate than ablative.

of a referent. The abessive is used to denote the meaning ‘without’.

Bartens (1999: 80) considers the comparative a derivational marker rather than a case suffix as it is regularly used to form adjectives; the abessive is likewise used in derivation (see 23.3.3.2). Since both forms also have certain adverbial uses, in this presentation we will follow the standpoint of most grammarians and regard them as cases homonymous with derivational suffixes, but we recognize that their position is problematic in the interface of derivation and inflection. Note that the same applies to the genitive and translative case endings as well; these are also used in functions generally interpreted as derivational. However, the position of the genitive and translative in the case paradigm is undisputed. In the examples in this chapter, all occasions of these suffixes are glossed with the case designations, since the borderline between case inflection and derivation is often blurred.

**Table 23.6** The case suffixes in the indefinite declension

	Erzya	Moksha
Nominative	–	–
Genitive	-nʲ	-nʲ
Dative	-nʲenʲ/-nenʲ	-nʲdi
Partitive	-do/-dʲe/-de/-to/-tʲe/-te	-da/-ta
Inessive	-so/-se	-sa/-tʲsa
Elicative	-sto/-ste	-sta/-tʲsta
Illative	-s	-s/-tʲs
Lative	-v	-v/-u/-i
Prolative	-va/-ga/-ka	-va/-ga/-gæ/-ka
Comparative	-ʃka	-ʃka
Abessive	-vtomo/-vtʲeme/-tomo/ -tʲeme/-teme	-ftəma
Translative	-ks	-ks
Causative	–	-nksa

In the plural, the indefinite declension only has the nominative form, ending in -t/-tʲ in both languages. For other cases either the singular forms of the indefinite paradigm or the plural forms of the definite paradigm must be used.

In the definite declension, alongside the singular (Table 23.8) there is also a plural paradigm (Table 23.9). In Moksha, however, only three cases—nominative, genitive, and dative—participate in the definite declension. In both languages, the

**Table 23.7** The indefinite declension of (E) *веле* *velʲe*, (M) *веле* *velʲæ* ‘village’ in the singular

	Erzya	Moksha
Nominative	<i>velʲe</i>	<i>velʲæ</i>
Genitive	<i>velʲe-nʲ</i>	<i>velʲə-nʲ</i>
Dative	<i>velʲe-nʲenʲ</i>	<i>velʲə-nʲdi</i>
Partitive	<i>velʲe-dʲe</i>	<i>velʲə-da</i>
Inessive	<i>velʲe-se</i>	<i>velʲə-sa</i>
Elicative	<i>velʲe-ste</i>	<i>velʲə-sta</i>
Illative	<i>velʲe-s</i>	<i>velʲə-s</i>
Lative	<i>velʲe-v</i>	<i>velʲ-i</i>
Prolative	<i>velʲe-va</i>	<i>velʲə-va</i>
Comparative	<i>velʲe-ʃka</i>	<i>velʲə-ʃka</i>
Abessive	<i>velʲe-vtʲeme</i>	<i>velʲə-ftəma</i>
Translative	<i>velʲe-ks</i>	<i>velʲə-ks</i>
Causative	–	<i>velʲə-nksa</i>

definite dative in the singular is also used in the function of a directional case, while the illative and lative are missing from the paradigm. However, in the Erzya plural paradigm, the definite illative is possible. The translative case is rare in Erzya definite declension but it is attested dialectally.

**Table 23.8** The case suffixes of the definite declension in the singular

	Erzya	Moksha
Nominative	-sʲ	-sʲ/-tʲsʲ
Genitive	-nʲtʲ	-tʲ
Dative	-nʲtʲenʲ	-tʲi
Partitive	-donʲtʲ/-dʲenʲtʲ/-denʲtʲ/-tonʲtʲ /-tʲenʲtʲ/-tenʲtʲ	–
Inessive	-sonʲtʲ/-senʲtʲ	–
Elicative	-stonʲtʲ/-stenʲtʲ	–
Prolative	-vanʲtʲ/-ganʲtʲ/-kanʲtʲ	–
Comparative	-ʃkanʲtʲ	–
Abessive	-vtomonʲtʲ/-vtʲemenʲtʲ/ -tomonʲtʲ/-tʲemenʲtʲ/-temenʲtʲ	–
Translative	(-ksenʲtʲ)	–
Causative	–	–

**Table 23.9** The case suffixes of the definite declension in the plural

	Erzya	Moksha
Nominative	-t'n'e	-t'n'æ
Genitive	-t'n'en'	-t'n'an'
Dative	-t'n'en'en'	-t'n'an'di
Partitive	-t'n'ed'e	-
Inessive	-t'n'ese	-
Elative	-t'n'este	-
Illative	-t'n'es	-
Prolative	-t'n'eva	-
Comparative	-t'n'ejka	-
Abessive	-t'n'evt'eme	-
Translative	(-t'n'eks)	-
Causative	-	-

position (E) ej- ~ ez-, (M) e- ~ ez- that carries the case suffix of the indefinite declension.<sup>6</sup> In Erzya, some functional differences seem to exist between the suffixed forms and the postpositional constructions (Alhoniemi 1982: 31–44, Manner 2020). In addition to (M) e- ~ ez-, the postposition инкса inksa ‘because of’ is used in Moksha, together with the noun in the definite genitive, as the definite equivalent of the causative case. Examples of the definite declension and the postpositional constructions are given in Tables 23.10 (in the singular) and 23.11 (in the plural).

In both languages, a noun already carrying an indefinite case suffix of the genitive, inessive, elative, comparative, or abessive can be further inflected with the suffixes of the definite declension. These constructions are usually referred to as **the secondary declension** (in Russian: вторичное склонение) in the grammars. In this declension, the two case suffixes are attached to each other without any intermediate elements (1), except in the case of the genitive where an additional element (E -s'e-, M -n'ä-) appears between the indefinite genitive in -n' and the secondary definite case suffixes (2). Syntactically, the forms of

**Table 23.10** The definite declension and postpositional case constructions of (E) веле, (M) веле vel'æ ‘village’ in the singular

	Erzya		Moksha	
	Case suffix	Postpositional construction	Case suffix	Postpositional construction
Nominative	vel'e-s'	-	vel'ä-s'	-
Genitive	vel'e-n't'	-	vel'ä-t'	-
Dative	vel'e-n't'en'	-	vel'ä-t'i	-
Partitive	vel'e-d'en't'	(= elative)	-	vel'ä-t' ezda
Inessive	vel'e-sen't'	vel'e-n't' ejse	-	vel'ä-t' esa
Elative	vel'e-sten't'	vel'e-n't' ejste	-	(= partitive)
Illative	(= dative)	vel'e-n't' ejs	-	vel'ä-t' es
Prolative	vel'e-van't'	vel'e-n't' ezga	-	vel'ä-t' ezga
Comparative <sup>a</sup>	vel'e-ſkan't'	(vel'e-n't' ejjka)	-	(vel'ä-t' ejjka)
Abessive	vel'e-vt'emen't'	-	-	-
Translative	(vel'e-ksen't')	-	-	-
Causative	-	-	-	vel'ä-t' inksa

<sup>a</sup> The postpositions (E) ejjka ~ (M) ejka are not frequently encountered in either of the Mordvin languages. However, they are referenced in dictionaries (Serebrennikov et al. 1993: 773, Serebrennikov et al. 1998: 909).

Instead of the missing definite case forms in Moksha, postpositional constructions are used, and similar postpositional constructions also exist in Erzya as an alternative to the definite case forms. In these constructions, the noun is marked with the definite genitive ending and followed by the post-

this declension are modifiers that appear without a head noun; the case that would normally be attached to the head

<sup>6</sup> Since the stem of the postposition is semantically empty, it is glossed simply as POSTP in this study.

**Table 23.11** The definite declension and postpositional case constructions of (E) *веле* *vel'e*, (M) *веле* *vel'æ* 'village' in the plural

	Erzya		Moksha	
	Case suffix	Postpositional construction	Case suffix	Postpositional construction
Nominative	<i>vel'e-t'n'e</i>	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'æ</i>	–
Genitive	<i>vel'e-t'n'en'</i>	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an'</i>	–
Dative	<i>vel'e-t'n'en'en'</i>	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an'di</i>	–
Partitive	<i>vel'e-t'n'ed'e</i>	(= elative)	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an' ezda</i>
Inessive	<i>vel'e-t'n'ese</i>	<i>vel'e-t'n'en' ejse</i>	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an' esa</i>
Elative	<i>vel'e-t'n'este</i>	<i>vel'e-t'n'en' ejste</i>	–	(= partitive)
Illative	(= dative)	<i>vel'e-t'n'en' ejs</i>	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an' es</i>
Prolative	<i>vel'e-t'n'eva</i>	<i>vel'e-t'n'en' ezga</i>	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an' ezga</i>
Comparative	<i>vel'e-t'n'ejka</i>	( <i>vel'e-t'n'en' ejjka</i> )	–	( <i>vel'ə-t'n'an' ejka</i> )
Abessive	<i>vel'e-t'n'evt'eme</i>	–	–	–
Translative	( <i>vel'e-t'n'eks</i> )	–	–	–
Causative	–	–	–	<i>vel'ə-t'n'an' inksa</i>

of an NP, appears in the modifier instead. (See Hamari 2016 and Privizentseva 2017 for a more detailed study.)

## (1) Erzya (MokshEr)

Кияк эзь сакшно, зярс араселинь? – кевкстнян  
 кудосотнень.  
*kijak ez' sakšno z'ars aras'-el'in'*  
 someone NEG.PST1.3SG arrive.CNG until NEG-PST2.1SG

*kevkstn'-an kudo-so-t'n'en'*  
 ask-PRS.1SG house-INE-GEN.DEF.PL  
 'Nobody came by while I was away, did they? – I ask  
 those who are at home.'

## (2) Erzya (MokshEr)

Ды эрва чокшне яксинек театрав. Сестэ оперансесь ды  
 драмансесь ульнестъ ве кудосо.  
*di er'va t'okšn'e jak-s'-in'ek t'eatra-v seste*  
 and every evening go-FREQ-PST1.1PL theatre-LAT then

*opera-n'-s'e-s' di drama-n'-s'e-s'*  
 opera-GEN-s'e-NOM.DEF.SG and drama-GEN-s'e-NOM.DEF.SG

*ul'-n'e-s't' ve kudo-so*  
 be-FREQ-PST1.3PL one house-INE  
 'And every night we went to the theatre. At that time, the  
 opera and drama [theatre] were in the same house.'

In the **possessive declension**, the nouns are marked not only for case but also for possessor person and number.

With singular possessors, both Erzya and Moksha distinguish between singular and plural possessee in the nominative (Table 23.12); in Erzya, special suffixes for a singular and a plural possessee exist in 1SG and 3SG (e.g. (E) *цѣрам* *tš'ora-m* 'my son'; *цѣран* *tš'ora-n* 'my sons'; *цѣразо* *tš'ora-zo* 'his/her son'; *цѣранзо* *tš'ora-nzo* 'his/her sons'), but in Moksha, 2SG also has specialized suffixes (e.g. (M) *цѣраце* *tš'ora-tš'æ* 'your son'; *цѣратне* *tš'ora-t'n'æ* 'your sons').

The formation of the rest of the possessive declension can be seen in Table 23.13. As can be seen, there are some differences in the forms of the possessive declension between Erzya and Moksha, but differences also exist in the usage of these forms.

As for Erzya, there are special suffixes expressing both the possessor and the case in the genitive and the dative, but these only exist for the singular persons. In the Erzya genitive plural persons, the possessive suffixes of the nominative are used, while the dative is usually expressed by using a postpositional construction, e.g. (E) *ava-nok turtov* mother-POSS.1PL for 'for/to our mother' (Bartens 1999: 101). Moreover, the special genitive and dative possessive suffixes are used only in kinship terms in Erzya. In other nouns, the nominative possessive suffixes are used in the genitive as well, while the postpositional construction mentioned above appears in the dative. The rest of the possessive declension concerns all nouns.

In Moksha, the distinction between singular and plural possessives also exists in the genitive and the dative when the possessor is one of the singular persons. The Moksha suffixes

**Table 23.12** Possessive suffixes of the nominative case

		Erzya		Moksha	
Possessor person and number		Singular possessee	Plural possessee	Singular possessee	Plural possessee
Sg.	1.	-m	-n/-n <sup>j</sup>	-z <sup>j</sup> æ	-n <sup>j</sup> æ
	2.	-t/-t <sup>j</sup>	-	-t <sup>s</sup> æ	-t <sup>j</sup> n <sup>j</sup> æ
	3.	-zo/-ze	-nzo/-nze	-t <sup>s</sup>	-nza
Pl.	1.	-nok/-n <sup>j</sup> ek	-	-n <sup>j</sup> kæ	-
	2.	-nk	-	-n <sup>j</sup> t <sup>j</sup> æ	-
	3.	-st	-	-sna/-t <sup>s</sup> na	-

**Table 23.13** Possessive declension

		Erzya	Moksha	
		Singular & plural possessee	Singular possessee	Plural possessee
Gen.	1SG	-n <sup>j</sup> <sup>a</sup>	-z <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup>	-n <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup>
	2SG	-t <sup>j</sup> <sup>a</sup>	-t <sup>s</sup> æn <sup>j</sup>	-t <sup>j</sup> n <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup>
	3SG	-nzo/-nze <sup>a</sup>	-nt <sup>s</sup>	-nzæn
	1PL	-	-n <sup>j</sup> kæn <sup>j</sup>	
	2PL	-	-n <sup>j</sup> t <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup>	
	3PL	-	-snæn/-t <sup>s</sup> næn	
Dat.	1SG	-n <sup>j</sup> en <sup>j</sup> <sup>a</sup>	-z <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup> d <sup>i</sup> /-z <sup>j</sup> t <sup>i</sup>	-n <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup> d <sup>i</sup>
	2SG	-t <sup>j</sup> en <sup>j</sup> <sup>a</sup>	-t <sup>s</sup> æn <sup>j</sup> d <sup>i</sup>	-t <sup>j</sup> n <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup> d <sup>i</sup>
	3SG	-nsten <sup>j</sup> <sup>a</sup>	-nt <sup>s</sup> t <sup>i</sup>	-nzændi
	1PL	-	-n <sup>j</sup> kæn <sup>j</sup> d <sup>i</sup>	
	2PL	-	-n <sup>j</sup> t <sup>j</sup> æn <sup>j</sup> d <sup>i</sup>	
	3PL	-	-snændi/-t <sup>s</sup> nændi	
Other cases	1SG	Case suffix + -n/-n <sup>j</sup>	Case suffix + -n	
	2SG	Case suffix + -t/-t <sup>j</sup>	Case suffix + -t	
	3SG	Case suffix + -nzo/-nze	Case suffix + -nza	
	1PL	Case suffix + -nok/-n <sup>j</sup> ek	Case suffix + -nk	
	2PL	Case suffix + -nk	Case suffix + -nt	
	3PL	Case suffix + -st	Case suffix + -st	

<sup>a</sup> Only in kinship terms.

of the possessive declension are used in all nouns, and the kinship terms do not have a special status in the paradigm.

In cases other than the nominative, genitive, and dative both Erzya and Moksha build their suffixes on the case suf-

fixes of the indefinite declension, which are followed by possessive suffixes that originally come from the paradigm of the plural possessee. The lative and the translative are missing from the possessive declension in both languages.

23.3.1.2 *Personal pronouns*

The personal pronouns can also be inflected in different cases. The most frequent forms are the grammatical cases (nominative, genitive, dative, and partitive), the inessive which regularly serves as the case of the object (see 23.4.4.3), and in Moksha also the causative case. Other case forms are more or less rare—especially the first- and second-person forms that can refer only to animate, mostly human referents. The third-person pronouns can refer to both animate and inanimate referents, which makes them more frequent. However, it is difficult to estimate the actual frequencies of the different forms, as this hasn't been thoroughly studied.

The lative case does not appear in the paradigm of personal pronouns in either of the languages and the translative is absent in Moksha. In the partitive case, both languages have variants in which the case suffix is reduplicated (e.g. 1SG: E *mon'd'ed'en*, M *mon'd'ədən*).

As can be seen in Tables 23.14–23.17, some cases only have a suffixal form, while instead of some case forms, a construction employing a postposition can be used as an alternative. In the dative, both Erzya and Moksha have an originally postpositional stem *tʲe-* followed by a possessive suffix referring to the person in question, while the local cases and the comparative have the postposition (E) *ej-* ~ *ez-*, (M) *e-* ~ *ez-*, already seen in the declension of nouns in the

previous section. However, in the paradigms of personal pronouns the postpositions behave differently from those of other nouns. If the postposition *ej-* ~ *ez-* in Erzya is preceded by the personal pronoun in the genitive form, only the case marker is attached to it. In the absence of the pronoun, a possessive suffix referring to the person is attached to the postposition in addition to the case suffix. In Moksha, on the other hand, the possessive suffix is always present in *e-* ~ *ez-* and the appearance of the personal pronoun in the genitive form is optional.

In both languages, there is a reflexive pronoun (E, M) *es'* 'self'. It can agglutinate to the personal pronouns producing emphatic forms of the pronouns, e.g. (E) *монсь moni-s'* (1SG-EMPH); (M) *монць mon'ts'* (1SG.EMPH).

23.3.1.3 *Adjectives*

Many adjectives have a nominal reading as well, e.g. (E) *лембе ʎembe*, (M) *лямбе ʎæmbæ* 'warm; warmth'. Any adjective can function as a noun and be inflected in case. As an attribute, an adjective does not usually agree with the head noun, although there are some exceptions (see 23.4.2.1). In a predicate position, an adjective is conjugated in the present as well as the second past-tense (see 23.4.3). The comparison of adjectives is expressed with analytical constructions (see 23.4.2.5).

Table 23.14 Erzya personal pronouns in the singular

	1SG	2SG	3SG
Nominative	<i>mon</i>	<i>ton</i>	<i>son</i>
Genitive	<i>monʲ</i>	<i>tonʲ</i>	<i>sonze</i>
Dative	1) <i>monʲenʲ</i> 2) <i>tʲenʲ</i>	1) <i>tonʲetʲ</i> 2) <i>tʲetʲ</i>	1) <i>sonʲenze</i> 2) <i>tʲenze</i>
Partitive	<i>monʲdʲenʲ/monʲdʲedʲenʲ</i>	<i>tonʲdʲetʲ/tonʲdʲedʲetʲ</i>	<i>sonʲdʲenze/sonʲdʲedʲenze</i>
Inessive	1) <i>monʲsenʲ</i> 2) <i>monʲ ejse/ejsenʲ</i>	1) <i>tonʲsetʲ</i> 2) <i>tonʲ ejse/ejsetʲ</i>	1) <i>sonʲsenze</i> 2) <i>sonze ejse/ejsenze</i>
Elative	1) <i>monʲstenʲ</i> 2) <i>monʲ ejste/ejstenʲ</i>	1) <i>tonʲstetʲ</i> 2) <i>tonʲ ejste/ejstetʲ</i>	1) <i>sonʲstenze</i> 2) <i>sonze ejste/ejstenze</i>
Illative	1) <i>monʲzenʲ</i> 2) <i>monʲ ejs/ejzenʲ</i>	1) <i>tonʲzetʲ</i> 2) <i>tonʲ ejs/ejzetʲ</i>	1) <i>sonʲzenze</i> 2) <i>sonze ejs/ejzenze</i>
Prolative	1) <i>monʲgan</i> 2) <i>monʲ ezga/ezgan</i>	1) <i>tonʲgat</i> 2) <i>tonʲ ezga/ezgat</i>	1) <i>sonʲganzo</i> 2) <i>sonze ezga/ezganzo</i>
Comparative	1) <i>monʲʃkan</i> 2) <i>monʲ ejʃka/ejʃkan</i>	1) <i>tonʲʃkat</i> 2) <i>tonʲ ejʃka/ejʃkat</i>	1) <i>sonʲʃkanzo</i> 2) <i>sonze ejʃka/ejʃkanzo</i>
Abessive	<i>monʲtʲemenʲ</i>	<i>tonʲtʲemetʲ</i>	<i>sonʲtʲemenze</i>
Translative	<i>monʲksenʲ</i>	<i>tonʲksetʲ</i>	<i>sonʲksenze</i>

**Table 23.15** Moksha personal pronouns in the singular

	1SG	2SG	3SG
Nominative	mon	ton	son
Genitive	mon <sup>j</sup>	ton <sup>j</sup>	son <sup>j</sup>
Dative	1) mon <sup>j</sup> dəjn <sup>j</sup> æ 2) t <sup>j</sup> ejn <sup>j</sup> æ	1) ton <sup>j</sup> dəjt <sup>j</sup> 2) t <sup>j</sup> ejt <sup>j</sup>	1) son <sup>j</sup> dəjnza 2) t <sup>j</sup> ejnza
Partitive	1) mon <sup>j</sup> dədən 2) (mon <sup>j</sup> ) ezdən	1) ton <sup>j</sup> dədət 2) (ton <sup>j</sup> ) ezdət	1) son <sup>j</sup> dədənza 2) (son <sup>j</sup> ) ezdənza
Inessive	1) mon <sup>j</sup> tsən 2) (mon <sup>j</sup> ) esən	1) ton <sup>j</sup> tsət 2) (ton <sup>j</sup> ) esət	1) son <sup>j</sup> tsənza 2) (son <sup>j</sup> ) esənza
Elicative	1) mon <sup>j</sup> tstən 2) (mon <sup>j</sup> ) ezdən (= partitive)	1) ton <sup>j</sup> tstət 2) (ton <sup>j</sup> ) ezdət (= partitive)	1) son <sup>j</sup> tstənza 2) (son <sup>j</sup> ) ezdənza (= partitive)
Illative	1) – 2) (mon <sup>j</sup> ) ezən	1) – 2) (ton <sup>j</sup> ) ezət	1) – 2) (son <sup>j</sup> ) ezənza
Lative	–	–	–
Prolative	1) – 2) (mon <sup>j</sup> ) ezgan	1) – 2) (ton <sup>j</sup> ) ezgat	1) – 2) (son <sup>j</sup> ) ezganza
Comparative	1) mon <sup>j</sup> ʃkan 2) (mon <sup>j</sup> ) eʃkan	1) ton <sup>j</sup> ʃkat 2) (ton <sup>j</sup> ) eʃkat	1) son <sup>j</sup> ʃkanza 2) (son <sup>j</sup> ) eʃkanza
Abessive	mon <sup>j</sup> ftəmən	ton <sup>j</sup> ftəmət	son <sup>j</sup> ftəmənza
Causative	(mon <sup>j</sup> ) inksən	(ton <sup>j</sup> ) inksət	(son <sup>j</sup> ) inksənza

**Table 23.16** Erzya personal pronouns in the plural

	1PL	2PL	3PL
Nominative	min <sup>j</sup>	tin <sup>j</sup>	sin <sup>j</sup>
Genitive	min <sup>j</sup> ek	tink	sinst
Dative	1) min <sup>j</sup> en <sup>j</sup> ek 2) t <sup>j</sup> en <sup>j</sup> ek	1) tin <sup>j</sup> enk 2) t <sup>j</sup> enk	1) sin <sup>j</sup> enst 2) t <sup>j</sup> enst
Partitive <sup>a</sup>	min <sup>j</sup> d'en <sup>j</sup> ek/min <sup>j</sup> d'ed'en <sup>j</sup> ek	tin <sup>j</sup> d'enk/tin <sup>j</sup> d'ed'enk	sin <sup>j</sup> d'est/sin <sup>j</sup> d'ed'est
Inessive	1) min <sup>j</sup> sen <sup>j</sup> ek 2) min <sup>j</sup> ek ejse/ejsen <sup>j</sup> ek	1) tin <sup>j</sup> senk 2) tink ejse/ejsenk	1) sin <sup>j</sup> sest 2) sinst ejse/ejsest
Elicative	1) min <sup>j</sup> sten <sup>j</sup> ek 2) min <sup>j</sup> ek ejste/ejsten <sup>j</sup> ek	1) tin <sup>j</sup> stenk 2) tink ejste/ejst <sup>j</sup> enk	1) sin <sup>j</sup> stest 2) sinst ejste/ejstest
Illative	1) min <sup>j</sup> zen <sup>j</sup> ek 2) min <sup>j</sup> ek ejs/ejzen <sup>j</sup> ek	1) tin <sup>j</sup> zenk 2) tink ejs/ejzenk	1) sin <sup>j</sup> zest 2) sinst ejs/ejzest
Prolative	1) min <sup>j</sup> ganok 2) min <sup>j</sup> ek ezga/ezganok	1) tin <sup>j</sup> gank 2) tink ezga/ezgank	1) sin <sup>j</sup> gast 2) sinst ezga/ezgast
Comparative	1) min <sup>j</sup> ʃkanok 2) min <sup>j</sup> ek ejka/ejkanok	1) tin <sup>j</sup> ʃkank 2) tink ejka/ejʃkank	1) sin <sup>j</sup> ʃkast 2) sinst ejka/ejʃkast
Abessive	min <sup>j</sup> t'em <sup>j</sup> en <sup>j</sup> ek	tin <sup>j</sup> t'em <sup>j</sup> enk	sin <sup>j</sup> t'em <sup>j</sup> est/sin <sup>j</sup> t'em <sup>j</sup> est
Translative	min <sup>j</sup> ksen <sup>j</sup> ek	tin <sup>j</sup> ksenk	sin <sup>j</sup> ksest

**Table 23.17** Moksha personal pronouns in the plural

	1PL	2PL	3PL
Nominative	min <sup>j</sup>	t'in <sup>j</sup>	s'in <sup>j</sup>
Genitive	min <sup>j</sup>	t'in <sup>j</sup>	s'in <sup>j</sup>
Dative	1) min <sup>j</sup> d'əjn <sup>j</sup> ək 2) t'ejn <sup>j</sup> ək	1) t'in <sup>j</sup> d'əjn <sup>j</sup> t' <sup>j</sup> 2) t'ejn <sup>j</sup> t' <sup>j</sup>	1) s'in <sup>j</sup> d'əjst 2) t'ejst
Partitive	1) min <sup>j</sup> d'ədənk 2) (min <sup>j</sup> ) ezdənk	1) t'in <sup>j</sup> d'ədənt 2) (t'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezdənt	1) s'in <sup>j</sup> d'ədəst 2) (s'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezdəst
Inessive	1) min <sup>j</sup> tsənk 2) (min <sup>j</sup> ) esənk	1) t'in <sup>j</sup> tsənt 2) (t'in <sup>j</sup> ) esənt	1) s'in <sup>j</sup> tsəst 2) (s'in <sup>j</sup> ) esəst
Elicative	1) min <sup>j</sup> tstənk 2) (min <sup>j</sup> ) ezdənk (= partitive)	1) t'in <sup>j</sup> tstənt 2) (t'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezdənt (= partitive)	1) s'in <sup>j</sup> tstəst 2) (s'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezdəst (= partitive)
Illative	1) – 2) (min <sup>j</sup> ) ezənk	1) – 2) (t'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezənt	1) – 2) (s'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezəst
Prolative	1) – 2) (min <sup>j</sup> ) ezkənk	1) – 2) (t'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezkənt	1) – 2) (s'in <sup>j</sup> ) ezkəst
Comparative	1) min <sup>j</sup> jkənk 2) (min <sup>j</sup> ) ejkənk	1) t'in <sup>j</sup> jkənt 2) (t'in <sup>j</sup> ) ejkənt	1) s'in <sup>j</sup> jkəst 2) (s'in <sup>j</sup> ) ejkəst
Abessive	min <sup>j</sup> ftəmənk	t'in <sup>j</sup> ftəmənt	s'in <sup>j</sup> ftəməst
Causative	(min <sup>j</sup> ) inksənk	(t'in <sup>j</sup> ) inksənt	(s'in <sup>j</sup> ) inksəst

### 23.3.1.4 Numerals and quantifiers

Ordinal numbers are formed from the cardinal with (E)  $\widehat{-ts'e}$ , (M)  $\widehat{-ts'æ}$ , e.g. (E) колмо kolmo → колмоце kolmo $\widehat{ts'e}$ , (M) колма kolma → колмоце kolmo $\widehat{ts'æ}$  'three → the third', except for the first two ordinals that are irregular: (E) вейке vejke 'one' but васенце vas'en $\widehat{ts'e}$  'the first', кавто kavto 'two' but омбоце ombot $\widehat{ts'e}$  'the second'; (M) фкя fkя 'one' but васенце vas'an $\widehat{ts'æ}$  'the first', кафта kafta 'two' but омбоце ombat $\widehat{ts'æ}$  'the second'. Adverbs for 'how many times' are formed from the cardinal with the suffix (E, M)  $\widehat{-ks't'}$ , e.g. (E) колмоксть kolmo $\widehat{ks't'}$ , (M) колмоксть kolmo $\widehat{ks't'}$  'three times'.

#### (3) Erzya (MokshEr)

Колмо ломанть, монсь нилеце.

kolmo loman<sup>j</sup>-t' mon<sup>j</sup>-s' n'il'e- $\widehat{ts'e}$   
three people-PL 1SG-EMPH four-ORD

'There are three people, I am the fourth.'

Collective quantifiers are formed by the suffix (E)  $\widehat{-n'e-}$ , (M)  $\widehat{-n'ə-}$  and the possessive suffix, e.g. (E) kavto-n'e-n'ek, (M) kafə-n'ə-nk (~ kafə-n'ək) 'we two', (E) kavto-n'e-nk, (M) kafə-n'ə-nt 'you two', (E) kavto-n'e-st, (M) kafə-n'ə-st 'they two' (cf. Bartens 1999: 121.) Examples of these are given in (4) and (5).

#### (4) Erzya (MokshEr)

Те войнасо чавовсть цёранзо. Весе колмонест.  
t'e vojna-so t'avov-s't' t's'ora-nzo  
this war-INE kill-PASS-PST1.3PL son-POSS.3SG  
ves'e kolmo-n'e-st  
all three-COLL-POSS.3PL  
'In this war her sons were killed. All three of them.'

#### (5) Moksha (Bartens 1999: 121)

Сёрма сась тейнек кафонек.  
s'orma sa-s' t'ejn'ək kafən'ək  
letter come-PST1.3SG 1PL.DAT two.COLL.POSS.1PL  
'A letter arrived for both of us.'

### 23.3.1.5 Postpositions

All adpositions are postpositions. Personal pronouns as dependents of postpositions may be represented merely by the corresponding possessive suffix attached to the postposition, as in (6).

#### (6) Erzya (N.E.)

Юткованок ютась ломань.  
jutko-va-nok juta-s' loman<sup>j</sup>  
between-PROL-POSS.1PL come-PST1.3SG person  
'Someone came between us.'

Dependent nouns of postpositions may be in the nominative, genitive, or partitive. The variation between nominative and genitive is conditioned by the characteristics of the dependent noun, e.g. whether it is indefinite or definite. The nominative is used especially with nouns in the indefinite declension (7), but indefinite genitive forms are also possible (8); however, genitive dependents are more often in the definite declension, as in (9) and (10).

## (7) Erzya (MokshEr)

...вейке песь неявсь косо-бути вирь маласо, ...  
vejke pe-s' n'ēja-v-s'  
one end-NOM.DEF.SG see-PASS-PST1.3SG

koso-but'i vir' mala-so  
where-INDEF.PRON forest close-INE  
'...one end [of the street] could be seen somewhere near the forest, ...'

## (8) Erzya (MORMULA)

Ардыть вирень-вирень пачк, пандонь-пандонь трокс, ...  
ard-it' vir'e-n'-vir'e-n' patčək  
run-PRS.3PL forest-GEN-forest-GEN through

pando-n'-pando-n' troks  
mountain-GEN-mountain-GEN over  
'They run through forests, over the hills, ...'

## (9) Erzya (N.E.)

Вирень куншкасо ашты кудо.  
vir'e-n't' kunška-so ašt-i kudo  
forest-GEN.DEF.SG middle-INE be.situated-PRS.3SG house  
'In the middle of the forest, there is a house.'

## (10) Moksha (MokshEr)

Тон итнень квалма арьсят али аф?  
ton it'-t'nən' kəvalma ar's'a-t ali af  
2SG child-GEN.DEF.PL along think-PRS.2SG or NEG  
'Are you thinking of the children or not?'

Furthermore, three postpositions require the partitive form of the dependent: (E) мейле mejl'e, (M) меле mel'æ 'after' (11), (E, M) башка baška 'except' (12), and (E) икеле ikel'e (13), (M) инголе ingəl'æ 'before' (14). However, if the postposition (E) ikel'e, (M) ingəl'æ has a locative meaning 'in front of', the dependent noun is in the nominative or genitive (15).

## (11) Moksha (JT)

Шабатне кафсоце классда меле якасть Ширингузу.  
šaba-t'n'æ kafksə-t's'æ klass-da mel'æ  
child-NOM.DEF.PL eight-ORD class-PART after  
jaka-s't' širinguz-u  
go-PST1.3PL Shiringuzh-LAT  
'The children went to Shiringuzh after the eighth class.'

## (12) Erzya (K)

Мондень башка, тосоль кавксоньгемоньшка иесэ атя.  
mon'd'en' baška, to-so-l'  
1SG.PART except.for that-INE-PST2.3SG

kavkson'gemon'-ška ije-se at'a  
eighty-CPR year-INE man  
'Besides me, there was a man of about eighty years.'

## (13) Erzya (MokshEr)

Сон кулось войнадо икеле.  
son kulo-s' vojna-do ikel'e  
3SG die-PST1.3SG war-PART before  
'He died before the war.'

## (14) Moksha (JT)

Ульсь тя кемзисемге киза тяда инголе.  
ul'-s' t'æ kemz'is'əmge kiza t'æ-da  
be-PST1.3SG this 70 year this-PART

ingəl'æ

before  
'It was seventy years before this.'

## (15) Moksha (MokshEr)

Шобдава, кода фалу, пуромсть алятне лавкаты  
инголи, ...

šobda-va koda falu purəm-s't'  
morning-PROL like always gather-PST1.3PL

al'æ-t'n'æ lavka-t' ingəl'-i  
man-NOM.DEF.PL shop-GEN.DEF.SG in.front.of-LAT  
'In the morning, like always, the men gathered in front of the shop, ...'

**Locative postpositions** form series in two ways (however, see 44.4.4.1 for criticism of the purported fundamental role of this tripartite system). In the first pattern, the postpositions are inflected in the illative, inessive, and elative (e.g. Е кудо вакс kudo vaks-s house near-ILL 'to the vicinity of the house'; кудо вакссо kudo vaks-so house near-INE 'near the house, in the vicinity of the house'; кудо ваксто kudo vaks-sto house near-ELA 'from the vicinity of the house'). Sometimes the lative can be used instead of the illative: (E) кудо малас kudo mala-s house close-ILL ~ малав mala-v house close-LAT 'close to the house'. In the second pattern, the postpositions are inflected in the lative and the partitive, but location is expressed by a form without a suffix (e.g. Е мода алов moda alo-v ground under-LAT '(put/go) underground'; мода ало moda alo ground under '(be) underground'; мода алдо moda al-do ground under-PART 'from underground'). Many postpositions can be inflected also in the prolativ, e.g. (E) вакска vaks-ka near-PROL, ланга langa top-PROL, потмова potmo-va inside-PROL.

### 23.3.2 Verb inflection

The Mordvin verbs are inflected for two conjugations, three tenses, and seven moods. Moreover, the system of non-finite verb forms includes infinitives, participles, and con-verbs with productive as well as some more marginal forms.

#### 23.3.2.1 Subjective and objective conjugation

Both languages have two series of suffixes for person marking in verb inflection, traditionally called the subjective (or indefinite) and objective (or definite) conjugation (see 45.2.2). In the former, only the subject person and number are marked on the verb, while in the latter the verb carries the marking of both the subject and the object person and number. Basically, the subjective conjugation appears in intransitive verbs as well as in transitive verbs with indefinite objects, while the objective conjugation is applied only to transitive verbs with definite objects. The semantics of the verb may additionally play a role in the choice of the conjugation type (see Bernhardt 2020a and references therein). However, the choice of the conjugation is intertwined with the case form of the object and together they express not only the definiteness of the object but in certain instances also its partiality or totality, as well as the perfective or imperfective aspect of the action (see 23.4.4).

Since there are six person-number categories, the different combinations of subject and object person in the objective conjugation would theoretically render thirty-six different endings in all tenses and moods, but in practice there is quite a lot of syncretism in the forms. For example, the Erzya verb form *паласамизь* *pala-samizʲ* can mean ‘you

(pl.) kiss me’, ‘they kiss me’, ‘you (sg. or pl.) kiss us’, ‘s/he kisses us’, or ‘they kiss us’. The personal endings of both the subjective and objective conjugations of the different tenses and moods are given in the following sections.

#### 23.3.2.2 Tense

The three tenses are the present-tense, first past-tense, and second past-tense. In some of the forms the tense marking can be distinguished from the person marking, while in others, the tense and person marking is fused in portman-teau suffixes.

In both Erzya and Moksha, the **present-tense** forms are used when referring to either present or future events. Table 23.18 presents the present-tense paradigms of personal suffixes of the subjective conjugation and Tables 23.19 and 23.20 the paradigms of the objective conjugation. As can be seen in the tables, there is no overt tense marking in the present-tense.

**Table 23.18** Present-tense subjective conjugation in Erzya and Moksha

		Erzya	Moksha
Sg.	1.	-an	-an
	2.	-at	-at
	3.	-i	-aj/-i
Pl.	1.	-tano/-tʲano	-tama/-tʲama
	2.	-tado/-tʲado	-tada/-tʲada
	3.	-itʲ	-ajʲtʲ/-ijʲtʲ

**Table 23.19** Present-tense objective conjugation in Erzya

Object → Subject ↓	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
1SG	-	-tan/-tʲan	-sa	-	-tadizʲ/ -tʲadizʲ	-sinʲ
2SG	-samak	-	-sak	-samizʲ	-	-sitʲ
3SG	-samam	-tanzat/ -tʲanzat	-si	-samizʲ	-tadizʲ/ -tʲadizʲ	-sinʲze
1PL	-	-tadizʲ/ -tʲadizʲ	-sinʲek	-	-tadizʲ/ -tʲadizʲ	-sinʲek
2PL	-samizʲ	-	-sink	-samizʲ	-	-sink
3PL	-samizʲ	-tadizʲ/ -tʲadizʲ	-sizʲ	-samizʲ	-tadizʲ/ -tʲadizʲ	-sizʲ

**Table 23.20** Present-tense objective conjugation of Moksha

Object → Subject ↓	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
1SG	–	-tʲæ	-sa/-t̄sa	–	-tʲædʲæzʲ	-sajnʲæ/ -t̄sajnʲæ
2SG	-samak/ -t̄samak	–	-sak/-t̄sak	-samastʲ/ -t̄samastʲ	–	-sajtʲ/-t̄sajtʲ
3SG	-samanʲ/ -t̄samanʲ	-tanza/ -tʲanza	-si/-t̄si	-samazʲ/ -t̄samazʲ	-tʲædʲæzʲ	-sinʲæ/ -t̄sinʲæ
1PL	–	-tʲædʲæzʲ	-sasʲk/ -t̄sasʲk	–	-tʲædʲæzʲ	-sasʲk/ -t̄sasʲk
2PL	-samastʲ/ -t̄samastʲ	–	-sasʲtʲ/ -t̄sasʲtʲ	-samastʲ/ -t̄samastʲ	–	-sasʲtʲ/ -t̄sasʲtʲ
3PL	-samazʲ/ -t̄samazʲ	-tʲædʲæzʲ	-sazʲ/-t̄sazʲ	-samazʲ/ -t̄samazʲ	-tʲædʲæzʲ	-sazʲ/-t̄sazʲ

Examples (16) and (17) illustrate the formation of the affirmative and negative present-tense forms of the subjective conjugation. Both Erzya and Moksha are pro-drop languages, so the presence of the personal pronoun referring to the subject is not obligatory with any of the finite verb forms.

(16) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 290, 318)

a) моран  
mor-an  
sing-PRS.1SG  
'I sing/I am singing/I will sing'

b) а моран  
a mor-an  
NEG sing-PRS.1SG  
'I do not sing/I am not singing/I will not sing'

(17) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 290, 318)

a) моран  
mor-an  
sing-PRS.1SG  
'I sing/I am singing/I will sing'

b) аф моран  
af mor-an  
NEG sing-PRS.1SG  
'I do not sing/I am not singing/I will not sing'

As can be seen in (16b) and (17b), the negative particles (E) a, (M) аф af are used in the negative forms and the negation pattern is symmetric (see chapter 47); there is no other difference between the affirmative and the negative

phrase except the presence of the negative particle in the latter.

In both languages, the **first past-tense** is the default past-tense and there are no restrictions as to its use. In Erzya, the personal endings of other than the third-person forms of the subjective conjugation include the past-tense marker in -i-, while in Moksha there is no such marker. In Moksha, the palatalization of the dental-alveolars of the endings is the only marker of the past-tense in the first and second persons singular, while in other persons the personal endings are different in the present and first past-tense. The personal paradigms of the first past-tense subjective conjugation are given in Table 23.21 and those of the objective conjugation in Tables 23.22 and 23.23. In (18) and (19) examples of the first past-tense forms are given in both the affirmative and negative.

**Table 23.21** First past-tense subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-inʲ	-nʲ
2SG	-itʲ	-tʲ
3SG	-sʲ	-sʲ
1PL	-inʲek	-mæ
2PL	-idʲe	-dʲæ
3PL	-sʲtʲ	-sʲtʲ

**Table 23.22** First past-tense objective conjugation of Erzya

Object → Subject ↓	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
1SG	–	-it'in <sup>j</sup>	-ija	–	-id'iz <sup>j</sup>	-in <sup>j</sup>
2SG	-imik	–	-ik	-imiz <sup>j</sup>	–	-it <sup>j</sup>
3SG	-imim	-in'z'it <sup>j</sup>	-iz'e	-imiz <sup>j</sup>	-id'iz <sup>j</sup>	-in'z'e
1PL	–	-id'iz <sup>j</sup>	-in'ek	–	-id'iz <sup>j</sup>	-in'ek
2PL	-imiz <sup>j</sup>	–	-ink	-imiz <sup>j</sup>	–	-ink
3PL	-imiz <sup>j</sup>	-id'iz <sup>j</sup>	-iz <sup>j</sup>	-imiz <sup>j</sup>	-id'iz <sup>j</sup>	-iz <sup>j</sup>

**Table 23.23** First past-tense objective conjugation of Moksha

Object → Subject ↓	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
1SG	–	-jt'ən <sup>j</sup>	-jn'æ/ -in'æ	–	-d'æz <sup>j</sup>	-jn'æ/ -in'æ
2SG	-majt <sup>j</sup>	–	-jt'/-it <sup>j</sup>	-mas't <sup>j</sup>	–	-jt'/ -it <sup>j</sup>
3SG	-man <sup>j</sup>	-n'z'æ	-z'æ	-maz <sup>j</sup>	-d'æz <sup>j</sup>	-z'ən <sup>j</sup>
1PL	–	-d'æz <sup>j</sup>	-s'k	–	-d'æz <sup>j</sup>	-s'k
2PL	-mas't <sup>j</sup>	–	-s't <sup>j</sup>	-mas't <sup>j</sup>	–	-s't <sup>j</sup>
3PL	-maz <sup>j</sup>	-d'æz <sup>j</sup>	-z <sup>j</sup>	-maz <sup>j</sup>	-d'æz <sup>j</sup>	-z <sup>j</sup>

(18) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 291, 319)

a) морынь  
mor-in<sup>j</sup>  
sing-PST1.1SG  
'I sang'

b) эзиль мора  
ez<sup>j</sup>-in<sup>j</sup> mora  
NEG.PST-PST1.1SG sing.CNG  
'I did not sing'

(19) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 291, 319)

a) морань  
mora-n<sup>j</sup>  
sing-PST1.1SG  
'I sang'

b) изень мора  
iz<sup>j</sup>-ən<sup>j</sup> mora  
NEG.PST-PST1.1SG sing.CNG  
'I did not sing'

c) ашень мора  
af-ən<sup>j</sup> mora  
NEG.PST-PST1.1SG sing.CNG  
'I did not sing'

The negation pattern of the first past-tense is asymmetric; the negative auxiliary expresses the tense as well as the person and number of the subject and (in the objective conjugation) the object, while the lexical verb is in what is generally called the connegative form. The connegative is originally and still dialectally identical with the affirmative imperative 2SG forms but in the literary languages, the stem of the lexical verb is preferred. In Moksha, the stem-final vowel /ə/ is replaced by /a/, while /ə/ either stays unchanged or is omitted completely.

In Erzya, the negative auxiliary is (E) эзь- ez<sup>j</sup>-, whereas Moksha has two alternative auxiliaries, (M) изь- iz<sup>j</sup>- and аш- af-. According to the standard grammars, (M) iz<sup>j</sup>- and af- are completely interchangeable. However, af- is more frequent and seems to be in a process to replace the original iz<sup>j</sup>- (Hamari, forthcoming). The paradigms of the subjective conjugation of the negative auxiliaries are given in Table 23.24.

**Table 23.24** Subjective conjugation of (E) ez<sup>j</sup>-, (M) iz<sup>j</sup>- and (M) af-

	Erzya ez <sup>j</sup> -	Moksha iz <sup>j</sup> -	Moksha af-
1SG	ez'in <sup>j</sup>	iz'ən <sup>j</sup>	af'ən <sup>j</sup>
2SG	ez'it <sup>j</sup>	iz'ət <sup>j</sup>	af'ət <sup>j</sup>
3SG	ez <sup>j</sup>	iz <sup>j</sup>	af'əz <sup>j</sup>
1PL	ez'in'ek	iz'əmæ	af'əmæ
2PL	ez'id'e	iz'əd'æ	af'əd'æ
3PL	ez't <sup>j</sup>	is't <sup>j</sup>	af'əs't <sup>j</sup>

The objective conjugation is also expressed in the negative auxiliaries. The personal suffixes are identical to the first past-tense objective conjugation of lexical verbs, e.g. (E) ez<sup>j</sup>-imim kunda NEG-3SG>1SG catch.CNG, (M) iz<sup>j</sup>ə-man<sup>j</sup>/afə-man<sup>j</sup> kunda NEG-3SG>1SG catch.CNG 's/he did not catch me' (Cygankin 1980: 316).

As described by Bartens (1999: 131), the **second past-tense** is used to express recurrent or continuous events (habitual) in the past, as well as to express a past event during which another event took place (progressive). The tense marker is (E) -il<sup>j</sup>-, (M) -l<sup>j</sup>-, and it is followed by a personal ending of either the subjective or the objective conjugation. In the objective conjugation of the second past-tense, the personal endings are identical to those of the first past-tense, e.g. (E) -il<sup>j</sup>-imik PST2-2SG>1SG (cf. Table 23.22), (M) -l<sup>j</sup>ə-majt<sup>j</sup> PST2-2SG>1SG (cf. Table 23.23).

The negative particles (E) а а, (M) аф af, are used in the negation of the second past-tense, as in (20) and (21). The negation pattern is again symmetric.

**Table 23.25** Second past-tense subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-il'in <sup>i</sup>	-l'an <sup>i</sup>
2SG	-il'it <sup>i</sup>	-l'at <sup>i</sup>
3SG	-il <sup>i</sup>	-l <sup>i</sup>
1PL	-il'in'ek	-l'amæ
2PL	-il'id'e	-l'ad'æ
3PL	-il't <sup>i</sup>	-l'it

(20) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 292, 318)

a) морыльнь  
mor-il'in<sup>i</sup>  
sing-PST2.1SG  
'I used to sing'

b) а морыльнь  
a mor-il'in<sup>i</sup>  
NEG sing-PST2.1SG  
'I used not to sing'

(21) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 292, 318)

a) моралень  
mora-l'an<sup>i</sup>  
sing-PST2.1SG  
'I used to sing'

b) аф моралень  
af mora-l'an<sup>i</sup>  
NEG sing-PST2.1SG  
'I used not to sing'

Mordvin grammars usually mention an analytic future tense which is formed by using the present-tense form of the auxiliary (E, M) карма- karma- 'begin' accompanied by the so-called second infinitive form of the lexical verb (e.g. Cygankin et al. 2000: 164, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 130–1). However, as pointed out in Hamari and Aasmäe (2015: 297, footnote 4), this construction is not fully grammaticalized as a tense form but still carries an inchoative meaning, e.g. (E) карма морамо karman moramo, (M) карма морамо karman morama 'I will sing/I begin to sing'.

### 23.3.2.3 Mood

In addition to the unmarked indicative, the Mordvin languages have six morphologically marked moods: the imperative, optative, desiderative, conjunctive, conditional, and conditional-conjunctive. The exact functions of the

moods other than the indicative have not been studied in detail, so the descriptions of their uses given here are tentative and mostly based on Erzya. (However, see Kehayov 2020 for a closer inspection on Moksha conditional and conditional-conjunctive.)

In the **imperative**, only the second person forms are possible. The personal suffixes of the subjective conjugation are given in Table 23.26 and those of the objective conjugation in Tables 23.27 and 23.28.

**Table 23.26** The imperative subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
2SG <sup>a</sup>	-k/-t/-t <sup>i</sup>	-k/-t/-t <sup>i</sup>
2PL	-do/-d'e	-da

<sup>a</sup> In both languages, -k appears after a stem-final vowel, -t after a stem-final unpalatalized consonant, and -t<sup>i</sup> after stem-final palatalized consonant.

**Table 23.27** The imperative objective conjugation of Erzya

Object → Subject ↓	1SG	3SG	1PL	3PL
2SG	-mak	-ik	-miz <sup>i</sup>	-it <sup>i</sup>
2PL	-miz <sup>i</sup>	-ink	-miz <sup>i</sup>	-ink

**Table 23.28** The imperative objective conjugation of Moksha

Object → Subject ↓	1SG	3SG	1PL	3PL
2SG	-mak	-k	-mas <sup>i</sup> t <sup>i</sup>	-jt <sup>i</sup> / <sup>i</sup> -it <sup>i</sup>
2PL	-mas <sup>i</sup> t <sup>i</sup>	-s <sup>i</sup> t <sup>i</sup>	-mas <sup>i</sup> t <sup>i</sup>	-s <sup>i</sup> t <sup>i</sup>

For negative imperative (prohibitive), the auxiliaries (E) иля- il'a-, (M) тя- t'a- are used (Table 23.29) and the lexical verb is in the connegative form (see (22) and (23)).

**Table 23.29** The subjective conjugation of (E) il'a-, (M) t'a- in the negative imperative

	Erzya	Moksha
2SG	il'a	t'at
2PL	il'ado	t'ada

(22) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 295, 319)

a) морак  
 mora-k  
 sing-IMP.2SG  
 'sing!'

b) иля мора  
 iɫa mora  
 NEG.IMP.2SG sing.CNG  
 'do not sing!'

(23) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 295, 319)

a) морак  
 mora-k  
 sing-IMP.2SG  
 'sing!'

b) тят мора  
 tʲa-t mora  
 NEG.IMP-2SG sing.CNG  
 'do not sing!'

(24) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 296, 319)

a) моразо  
 mora-zo  
 sing-OPT.3SG  
 'may s/he sing'

b) иля-зо мора  
 iɫa-zo mora  
 NEG-OPT.3SG sing.CNG  
 'may s/he not sing'

(25) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 296, 319)

a) мораза  
 mora-za  
 sing-OPT.3SG  
 'may s/he sing'

b) тяза мора  
 tʲa-za mora  
 NEG-OPT.3SG sing.CNG  
 'may s/he not sing'

The objective conjugation is also possible in negative commands. In these forms, the personal endings given in Tables 23.27 and 23.28 are attached to the negative auxiliary, while the lexical verb remains in the connegative form.

Unlike the imperative, all six personal categories are possible in the Erzya **optative** but in Moksha the first- and second-person plural forms are ungrammatical. The optative marker is -z(a)- and it is followed by the personal endings (Table 23.30).

**Table 23.30** Optative subjective conjugation suffixes in Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-zan	-zan
2SG	-zat	-zat
3SG	-zo/-ze	-za
1PL	-ztano	–
2PL	-ztado	–
3PL	-zt (-st)	-st

With the optative mood the speaker expresses a request, a permission, a wish, or (in the negative) the obstruction of an action or event, but in a less demanding way than when using the imperative. The negative auxiliaries (E) иля- iɫa-, (M) тят- tʲa- of the imperative are also employed in the optative; the personal suffixes of the optative are attached to the auxiliaries, as in (24b) and (25b).

The objective conjugation of the optative is rare in the contemporary languages and the verb forms are usually replaced by constructions in which an optative particle (E) кадык kadik, (M) катк katk is followed by the indicative objective form of the verb. These particles are often also used instead of the optative forms of the subjective conjugation as well. (Cygankin et al. 2000: 180–1, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 144).

The **desiderative** is a counterfactual mood and usually refers to the past, in both main and subordinate clauses. It expresses an intended or desired action, event, or state that was not realized. The markers of this mood are (E) -ikselʲ(i)-, (M) -lʲəksəlʲ-. The personal endings of the subjective conjugation of the desiderative are presented in Table 23.31.

**Table 23.31** The desiderative subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-ikselʲinʲ	-lʲəksəlʲənʲ
2SG	-ikselʲitʲ	-lʲəksəlʲətʲ
3SG	-ikselʲ	-lʲəksəlʲ
1PL	-ikselʲinʲek	-lʲəksəlʲəmæ
2PL	-ikselʲidʲe	-lʲəksəlʲədʲæ
3PL	-ikselʲtʲ	-lʲəksəlʲtʲ

The use of the desiderative mood in Erzya is illustrated in (26).

- (26) Erzya (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 303)  
 Путьксэлинь эмежт, аньс'ак ту-с' пиземе.  
 put-ikseli-n<sup>i</sup> emez-t', an's'ak tu-s' piz'eme  
 plant-DES-1SG vegetable-PL only go-PST1.3SG rain  
 'I intended to plant vegetables, but it started to rain.'

In the objective conjugation, the personal endings following the modal markers are identical to those employed in the past-tenses of the indicative, e.g. (E) kund-ikseli-imik, (M) kunda-l'eksäl'ä-majt' catch-DES-2SG>1SG 'you intended to catch me'.

The negation of the desiderative has different patterns in Erzya and Moksha. In Erzya, the negation is symmetric, as the negative particle precedes the lexical verb which is in the affirmative form (27b). In Moksha, an asymmetric pattern appears; the mood suffix and the personal endings are attached to the negative auxiliary афоль- afäl'-, while the lexical verb appears in the connegative form (28b). In the auxiliary, the Moksha desiderative suffix appears without the initial element in -l'ä-. The negative auxiliary avol'ksel'i- formed on the basis of avol'- has also been attested in Erzya (Paasonen 1953: 012) but it is not used in the contemporary literary language.

- (27) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 300, 318)
- a) морыксэлинь  
 mor-ikseli-n<sup>i</sup>  
 sing-DES-1SG  
 'I intended to sing'
- b) а морыксэлинь  
 а mor-ikseli-n<sup>i</sup>  
 NEG sing-DES-1SG  
 'I didn't intend to sing'
- (28) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 300, 320)
- a) моралексолень  
 mora-l'eksäl'ä-n<sup>i</sup>  
 sing-DES-1SG  
 'I intended to sing'
- b) афолексолень мора  
 afäl'ä-ksäl'ä-n<sup>i</sup> mora  
 NEG-DES-1SG sing.CNG  
 'I didn't intend to sing'

The **conjunctive** mood is used to express an action, event, or state the realization of which is presumed, possible, or wished for. It can refer to either the future or the past and be employed in both main and subordinate clauses.

Example (29) illustrates the use of the conjunctive mood in Erzya.

**Table 23.32** The conjunctive subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-vli <sup>n</sup>	-l'an <sup>i</sup>
2SG	-vli <sup>t</sup>	-l'ät <sup>i</sup>
3SG	-vel <sup>i</sup> /-vol <sup>i</sup>	-l'
1PL	-vli <sup>n</sup> ek	-l'amæ
2PL	-vli <sup>d</sup> e	-l'äd <sup>i</sup> æ
3PL	-vel <sup>t</sup> /-vol <sup>t</sup>	-l'it

- (29) Erzya (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 301)  
 Молевлинь Саранов, балет неевлинь.  
 mol'e-vli-n<sup>i</sup> sarano-v, bal'et n'eje-vli-n<sup>i</sup>  
 go-CONJ-1SG Saransk-LAT ballet see-CONJ-1SG  
 'If I went to Saransk, I would see a ballet.'

In Erzya, either symmetric or asymmetric negation can be formed in the conjunctive. The symmetric one is based on the negative particle (E) а а (30a), while the negative auxiliary аволь- avol'- appears in the asymmetric pattern (30b). The lexical verb is in its affirmative form in the former and in the connegative form in the latter.

- (30) Erzya (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 302)
- a) а молевлинь Саранов, балет а неевлинь  
 а mol'e-vli-n<sup>i</sup> sarano-v, bal'et а n'eje-vli-n<sup>i</sup>  
 NEG go-CONJ-1SG Saransk-LAT ballet NEG  
 see-CONJ-1SG  
 'if I did not go to Saransk, I would not see a ballet'
- b) аволинь моле Саранов, балет аволинь нее  
 avol'i-n<sup>i</sup> mol'e sarano-v, bal'et avol'i-n<sup>i</sup>  
 NEG-1SG go.CNG Saransk-LAT ballet NEG-1SG  
 n'eje  
 see.CNG  
 'if I did not go to Saransk, I would not see a ballet'

When comparing Tables 23.25 and 23.32 it can be seen that the paradigm of the Moksha conjunctive mood is identical to the paradigm of the second past-tense, whereas in Erzya, the suffixes of the conjunctive mood have a modal marker in -v- preceding the personal endings similar to those of the second past-tense. However, even Moksha makes a distinction between the second past-tense and the conjunctive mood under negation; the negative auxiliary (M) афоль- afäl'- is employed in the conjunctive, while the negation of the second past-tense is based on the negative particle (M) аф af (see (21b)). Examples of both affirmative and negative forms of the conjunctive in Moksha are given in (31).

(31) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 297, 320)

- a) моралень  
mora-lʲə-nʲ  
sing-CONJ-1SG  
'if I would sing'
- b) афолень мора  
afəlʲə-nʲ mora  
NEG.CONJ-1SG sing.CNG  
'if I would not sing'

Just as in the desiderative mood, the objective conjugation of the conjunctive mood is formed by using the personal endings identical to those of the past-tenses of the indicative. These are attached to the mood marker, e.g. (E) kunda-vʲi-mik, (M) kunda-lʲə-majtʲ catch-CONJ-2SG>1SG 'if you would catch me'.

The **conditional** mood is employed when referring to a future action, event, or state the realization of which is a condition to the realization of another action, event, or state. The conditional is only employed in subordinate clauses, while the main clause has an indicative verb form in the present-tense. (Cygankin et al. 2000: 171, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 135–6.) The personal paradigms of the subjective conjugation of the conditional mood are given in Table 23.33.

**Table 23.33** The conditional subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-inʲdʲerʲan	-nʲdʲærʲan
2SG	-inʲdʲerʲat	-nʲdʲærʲat
3SG	-inʲdʲerʲaj	-nʲdʲærʲæj
1PL	-inʲdʲerʲatano	-nʲdʲærʲatama
2PL	-inʲdʲerʲatado	-nʲdʲærʲatada
3PL	-inʲdʲerʲajtʲ	-nʲdʲærʲæjtʲ

An example of the use of the conditional mood in Erzya is presented in (32).

- (32) Erzya (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 301)  
Молиндерян Саранов, балет неян.  
molʲ-inʲdʲerʲa-n sarano-v, balʲet nʲej-an  
go-COND-1SG Saransk-LAT ballet see-PRS.1SG  
'If I go to Saransk, I will see a ballet.'

The objective conjugation of the conditional mood is formed by attaching the personal endings identical to those of the present-tenses of the indicative to the mood marker, e.g. (E) kund-inʲdʲerʲa-samak, (M) kunda-nʲdʲærʲa-samak catch-COND-2SG>1SG 'if you catch me'.

The negation of the conditional mood is symmetric: the negative particles (E) a a, (M) аф af are used and the lexical verb appears in its affirmative form (see (33) and (34)).

(33) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 298, 318)

- a) морындерян  
mor-inʲdʲerʲa-n  
sing-COND-1SG  
'if I sing'
- b) а морындерян  
a mor-inʲdʲerʲa-n  
NEG sing-COND-1SG  
'if I do not sing'

(34) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 298, 318)

- a) морандряян  
mora-nʲdʲærʲa-n  
sing-COND-1SG  
'if I sing'
- b) аф морандряян  
af mora-nʲdʲærʲa-n  
NEG sing-COND-1SG  
'if I do not sing'

The **conditional-conjunctive** (Table 23.34) is a conditional, counterfactual mood. It usually refers to the past and expresses an action, event, or state that was not realized. The mood is exclusively used in subordinate clauses; the predicate verb of the main clause is often in the conjunctive mood. (Cygankin et al. 2000: 172, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 136–7.)

**Table 23.34** The conditional-conjunctive subjective conjugation of Erzya and Moksha

	Erzya	Moksha
1SG	-inʲdʲerʲavʲinʲ	-nʲdʲærʲæʲənʲ
2SG	-inʲdʲerʲavʲitʲ	-nʲdʲærʲæʲətʲ
3SG	-inʲdʲerʲavolʲ	-nʲdʲærʲæʲlʲ
1PL	-inʲdʲerʲavʲinʲek	-nʲdʲærʲæʲəmæ
2PL	-inʲdʲerʲavʲidʲe	-nʲdʲærʲæʲədʲæ
3PL	-inʲdʲerʲavolʲtʲ	-nʲdʲærʲæʲlʲtʲ

In (35), an example of the use of the conditional-conjunctive mood in Erzya is given.

- (35) Erzya (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 302)  
Молиндерявлинъ Саранов, балет неевлинъ.  
molʲ-inʲdʲerʲavʲli-nʲ sarano-v, balʲet nʲeje-vʲi-nʲ  
go-COND-1SG Saransk-LAT ballet see-CONJ-1SG  
'if I had gone to Saransk, I would have seen a ballet'

In the formation of the objective conjugation, the personal endings of the past-tenses of the indicative are utilized (Cygankin et al. 2000: 184–5, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 146). These are attached to the mood marker, e.g. (E) kund-in'd'er'avli-imik, (M) kunda-n'd'ær'æl'ə-majt' catch-COND CONJ-2SG>1SG 'if you had caught me'.

Under negation, the negative particles (E) a a, (M) aф af are employed and the lexical verbs appear in the affirmative form, as in (36b) and (37b). Thus, the negative pattern is symmetric. However, the negative auxiliary (E) avo'l', (M) afə'l' can alternatively be used. In these asymmetric negative constructions the mood marker can be attached either to the lexical verb, as in (36c) and (37c) or, in Erzya, the negative auxiliary (36d) (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 302). In the latter case, the negative auxiliary expresses the subject person twice.

(36) Erzya (Hamari and Aasmäe 2015: 302)

a) молиндерявлинь  
mol'-in'd'er'avli-n'  
go-COND CONJ-1SG  
'if I had gone'

b) а молиндерявлинь  
а mol'-in'd'er'avli-n'  
NEG go-COND CONJ-1SG  
'if I had not gone'

c) аволинь молиндеря  
avo'l'-in' mol'-in'd'er'a  
NEG-1SG go-COND.CONJ.CNG  
'if I had not gone'

d) аволиньдерявлинь моле  
avo'l'-in'-d'er'avli-n' mole  
NEG-1SG-COND.CONJ-1SG go.CNG  
'if I had not gone'

(37) Moksha

a) морандярялень  
mora-n'd'ær'al'ə-n'  
sing-COND CONJ-1SG  
'if I had sung' (Cygankin 1980: 299)

b) аф морандярялень  
af mora-n'd'ær'al'ə-n'  
NEG sing-COND CONJ-1SG  
'if I had not sung' (Cygankin 1980: 318)

c) афольхть тиендяря  
afə'l'-t' t'ijə-n'd'ær'a  
NEG-3PL do-COND.CONJ.CNG  
'if they had not done' (MokshEr)

In Moksha there are also negative suffixes (M) -ft'ær'a-/-ft'ær'æ- for the conditional mood and -ft'ær'al'ə-/-ft'ær'æl'ə-

for the conditional-conjunctive (e.g. Bartens 1999: 141) but these are quite rare in the contemporary language.

23.3.2.4 Non-finites

The non-finite verb forms include infinitives, participles, and converbs (cf. chapter 48).

There are three **infinitives** that are all based on an m-element (e.g. Cygankin 1980: 270–6, Cygankin et al. 2000: 154–5, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 113–17). We will follow Bartens (1999: 144–51) and refer to these forms as the first, second, and third infinitive. The infinitives are regularly used as complements of verbal phrases but certain forms also appear as independent predicates (see 23.4.2).

The ending of the first infinitive is (E) -ms (dialectally -mks), (M) -ms (dialectally -mäs). In these forms, the m-element is followed by the illative case suffix -s except in those Erzya dialects in which the translative suffix -ks is used. The first infinitive is mainly used as a complement, as in (38) and (39).

(38) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 270)

эряви ушодомс урокось  
er'av-i uʃodo-ms uroko-s'  
must-PRS.3SG start-INF1 lesson-NOM.DEF.SG  
'the lesson must start'

(39) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 270)

эряви ушедомс уроксь  
er'av-i uʃədə-ms urok-s'  
must-PRS.3SG start-INF1 lesson-NOM.DEF.SG  
'the lesson must start'

The second infinitive suffix is (E) -mo, -me, (M) -ma. This infinitive is most often employed in contexts in which some type of (metaphorical) directionality is involved, e.g. in inchoative/future tense constructions, such as (40) and (41).

(40) Erzya (Bartens 1999: 128)

карман кортамо  
karma-n korta-mo  
start-PRS.1SG speak-INF2  
'I'm starting to speak/I will speak'

(41) Moksha (Bartens 1999: 128)

карман корхтама  
karma-n korta-ma  
start-PRS.1SG speak-INF2  
'I'm starting to speak/I will speak'

In the third infinitive, the m-marker is followed by the partitive case suffix: (E) -mado, -m(o)do, -m(e)d'e, (M) -mda. This infinitive is used together with verbs that would also require a nominal modifier in the partitive case, e.g. 'be

afraid of', 'be ashamed of'. Verbs with meanings such as 'forbid, restrain', 'avoid', 'stop' also require the third infinitive as a complement; examples of the last-mentioned can be seen in (42) and (43).

- (42) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Морыцясь лоткась морамодо...  
 mor-its'a-s' lotka-s' mora-modo  
 singer-PTCP-NOM.DEF.SG stop-PST1.3SG sing-INF3  
 'The singer stopped singing...'

- (43) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 И вдруг Колоткин лоткась морамда...  
 i vdrug kolotkin lotka-s' mora-mda  
 and suddenly Kolotkin stop-PST1.3SG sing-INF3  
 'And suddenly Kolotkin stopped singing...'

In addition to verbs, infinitives can also function as complements of adjectives (44) or nouns (45).

- (44) Erzya (N.E.)  
 Эйкаштне анокольт лисемс ушов сокссо  
 арьтнеме.  
 ejkakʃ-t'n'e anoko-l'tʃ l'is'e-ms  
 child-NOM.DEF.PL ready-PST2.3PL leave-INF1  
 uʃo-v soks-so ar't'n'e-me.  
 out-LAT ski-INE drive-INF2  
 'The children were ready to go out to ski.'

- (45) Moksha (MORMULA)  
 Тейнек пинге явомс.  
 t'ejn'æk pingæ javə-ms.  
 1PL.DAT time separate-INF1  
 'It is time for us to part.'

There are both present-tense and past-tense **participles** in both languages. Furthermore, the participles can be classified as either active or passive. They mainly function as modifiers.

Among the present participles, the active form is (E) -i, -its'a, (M) -i, -j. In Erzya, the original -i is still used dialectally but in the standard language only the form -its'a is used; the latter consists of the original -i and an additional derivational suffix (Bartens 1999: 152, Cygankin et al. 2000: 219–20). In both Erzya and Moksha the active forms appear only as attributes, e.g. (E) морыця ломань morits'a loman', (M) морай ломань moraj loman' 'a singing person'. The present participles are also used as agent nouns, e.g. (E) морыця morits'a, (M) морай moraj 'a singer'.

The passive present-participle suffix is (E, M) -(v)iks; -v- is actually the derivational passive suffix which is followed by the i-suffix of the present participle as well as the translative case suffix in -ks, as in (46) and (47).

- (46) Erzya (Koljadënkov and Zavodova 1962: 323)  
 весенень вечкевикс ломань  
 ves'e-n'en'j vetʃke-viks loman'j  
 all-DAT love-PTCP person  
 'a person loved by all'
- (47) Moksha (Koljadënkov and Zavodova 1962: 323)  
 сембонди кельговикс ломань  
 s'embə-n'd'i keligə-viks loman'j  
 all-DAT love-PTCP person  
 'a person loved by all'

Another passive present participle is formed with the suffix (E, M) -ma. Bartens (1999: 151–2) calls these forms infinitive-participles, since some of their functions are typical of infinitives. The participle in -ma has a modal meaning, as it refers to an action that needs to be performed. It can be used both as an attribute ((48)–(49)) and a nominal predicate ((50)–(51)).

- (48) Erzya (Bartens 1999: 151)  
 монь теема тевесь  
 mon'j t'eje-ma t'ev'e-s'j  
 1SG.GEN do-PTCP job-NOM.DEF.SG  
 'the job that I have to do'
- (49) Moksha (Bartens 1999: 151)  
 монь тиема тевезе  
 mon'j t'ijə-ma t'evə-z'æ  
 1SG.GEN do-PTCP job-POSS.1SG  
 'the job that I have to do'
- (50) Erzya (Bartens 1999: 151)  
 монень молямаль вирев  
 mon'en'j mol'e-ma-l'j vir'e-v  
 1SG.DAT go-PTCP-PST2.3SG forest-LAT  
 'I had to go to the forest'
- (51) Moksha (Bartens 1999: 151)  
 тейне тумаль ошу  
 t'ejn'æ tu-ma-l'j oʃ-u  
 1SG.DAT go-PTCP-PST2.3SG town-LAT  
 'I had to go to the town'

The most frequent past-tense participles are (E) -z' and (M) -f. In both languages, these participles can be interpreted as either active or passive: intransitive verbs prompt an active reading, transitive verbs a passive one. The participles can be used both as attributes and nominal predicates, e.g. (E) соказь мода sokaz' moda 'ploughed soil', модась соказь modas' sokaz' 'the soil is ploughed', (M) сокаф мода sokaf moda 'ploughed soil', модась сокаф modas' sokaf 'the soil is ploughed'.

Erzya also has a past-tense participle in -vt/-vt'. However, as pointed out by Bartens (1999: 152–3), it is used only in

contexts in which the participle itself has an attribute in a genitive form; this attribute can be either the agent of the construction (52) or a temporal adverb (53).

(52) Erzya (Evsev'ev 1963: 289)

тетянь рамавт лишмесь  
tjet'a-n<sup>i</sup> rama-vt lišme-s<sup>i</sup>  
father-GEN buy-PTCP horse-NOM.DEF.SG  
'the horse bought by the father'

(53) Erzya (Evsev'ev 1963: 289)

Кизэнь рамавт скал...  
kize-n<sup>i</sup> rama-vt skal  
summer-GEN buy-PTCP cow  
'the cow that was bought in the summer...'

In both languages, the past-tense participles have special negative forms that have the negative particle *apak* followed by the connegative form of the verb, e.g. (E) *apak soda*, (M) *apak sodak* 'not known'. The negative forms can be used in both attributive (54a) and predicate (54b) positions. The same negative forms also serve as negatives of the converbs in (E, M) *-z<sup>i</sup>*.

(54) Erzya (Bartens 1999: 154)

a) *apak soda tейтерь*  
*apak soda t'ejter<sup>i</sup>*  
NEG know.CNG girl  
'an unknown girl'

b) *сон акак сизе*  
*son apak s'ize*  
3SG NEG tire.CNG  
's/he is not tired'

Finally, both languages have a past-tense participle in *-n<sup>i</sup>*. This passive participle is not as frequent as the ones mentioned before but it still seems to be productive, e.g. (E, M) *рамань кши рaman<sup>i</sup> kš<sup>i</sup>* 'the bread that has been bought' (Bartens 1999: 154).

The **converbs** are mainly used as modal or temporal adverbials. The most frequent converb (E, M) *-z<sup>i</sup>* has both of these functions in both languages. Modal uses can be seen in (55) and (56), and temporal in (57) and (58). In Erzya, this suffix is formally identical with the past-tense participle in *-z<sup>i</sup>*.

(55) Erzya (Koljadënkov and Zavodova 1962: 325)

Эйкакшось авардезь сась кудов.  
ejkakšo-s<sup>i</sup> avard'e-z<sup>i</sup> sa-s<sup>i</sup> kudo-v  
child-NOM.DEF.SG cry-CVB come-PST1.3SG house-LAT  
'The child came home crying.'

(56) Moksha (Koljadënkov and Zavodova 1962: 325)

Шабась авардезь сась куду.  
šaba-s<sup>i</sup> avard'e-z<sup>i</sup> sa-s<sup>i</sup> kud-u  
child-NOM.DEF.SG cry-CVB come-PST1.3SG house-LAT  
'The child came home crying.'

(57) Erzya (Cygankin 1980: 358)

обедэнь ютазь  
obede-n<sup>i</sup> juta-z<sup>i</sup>  
meal-GEN pass-CVB  
'after the ending of the meal'

(58) Moksha (Cygankin 1980: 359)

шинь валгозь  
š<sup>i</sup>-n<sup>i</sup> valgə-z<sup>i</sup>  
sun-GEN set-CVB  
'when the sun was setting'

In both languages, there are several converbs that are based on the *m*-suffix followed by a case suffix, e.g. (E) *-msto*, *-mste*, (M) *-msta* (< *m* + elative); (M) *-mäs*, *-ms* (< *m* + illative); (M) *-mäk* (< *m* + ?former lative); (E, M) *-mga* (< *m* + prolative) (Bartens 1999: 155–6). In addition, Moksha has several converb forms in which a postposition has been attached to the suffix in *-m*, e.g. (M) *er'askədämbatäk* '(by) hurrying' (< *er'askədä* 'hurry' + *-m* + *patäk* 'through'), *šopodämšovär* '(while) getting dark' (< *šopodä* 'get dark' + *-m* + *šovär* 'together').

In the converb in (E) *-do*, (M) *-da* the partitive suffix is attached to the verb stem (Bartens 1999: 156–7). This converb is no longer productive in either of the two languages but is encountered in certain frequent forms, such as (E) *озадо ozado*, (M) *озада ozada* 'sitting'.

### 23.3.3 Derivation

Derivation is a very common means of word formation in the Mordvin languages and both Erzya and Moksha have a large number of derivational suffixes. However, not all suffixes are equally productive. Below, examples of frequent Erzya and Moksha derivational suffixes are presented.

#### 23.3.3.1 Derivation of nouns

##### 23.3.3.1.1 Denominal

- (E) *-ke*, *-in'e*, *-n'e*, *-ne*; (M) *-kæ*, *-n'æ* (also in the derivation of adjectives): diminutive: (E) *пикске pikske*, (M) *пикскя pikskæ* 'rope (dim.)' (E, M *пикс piks* 'rope'), (E)

валнэ valne, (M) валня valnʲæ ‘word (dim.)’ (E, M вал val ‘word’)

- (E, M) -ks (identical with the translative case suffix; also deverbal): nouns denoting something that is used for or in connection with the referent of the base word: (E, M) ямкс jamks ‘grits’ (E, M ям jam (E) ‘soup’, (M) ‘porridge’), (E, M) суркс surks ‘ring’ (E, M сур sur ‘finger’); names of trees: (E) пизёлкс pizʲolks, (M) пизелкс pizʲəlks ‘rowan tree’, (E пизёл pizʲol, M пизел pizʲəl ‘rowanberry’)
- (E) -t̄ci; (M) -ʃi: abstract nouns: (E) парочи parot̄ci, (M) пароши parəʃi ‘goodness’ (E паро paro, M пара para ‘good’)

(Bartens 1999: 106–7, Cygankin et al. 2000: 35–7, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 75–9.)

### 23.3.3.1.2 Deverbal

- (E, M) -ks (identical with the translative case suffix; also denominal): result or purpose of an action: (E) пуромкс puromks, (M) пуромкс purəmkks ‘meeting, gathering’ (E пуромо- puromo-, M пуромо- purəmə- ‘assemble, gather together’)
- (E) -me; (M) -mæ: instrument or component of an action: (E) видьме vidʲme, (M) видьме vidʲmæ ‘seed’ (E виде- vidʲe-, M виде- vidʲə- ‘sow’)
- (E) -мо, -ма; (M) -ма: general nominalizer: (E) эрямо erʲamo, (M) эряма erʲama ‘life’ (E, M эря- erʲa- ‘live’); instrument of an action (E) изамо izamo, (M) инзама inzama ‘harrow [n.]’ (E иза- iza-, M инза- inza- ‘harrow [v.]’)

(Bartens 1999: 106–7, Cygankin et al. 2000: 35–7, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 75–9.)

### 23.3.3.2 Derivation of adjectives

#### 23.3.3.2.1 Denominal

- (E) -j, -v; (M) -i, -u: general adjectivizer: (E) келей kelʲej, (M) кели kelʲi ‘broad’ (E келе kelʲe, M келе kelʲæ ‘breadth’), (E) ловов lovov, (M) лову lovʲu ‘snowy’ (E, M лов lov ‘snow’)
- (E, M) -nʲ (identical with the genitive case suffix): material, origin: (E) кевень kevenʲ, (M) кевень kevənʲ ‘of stone, stony’ (E, M кев kev ‘stone’)
- (E, M) -ʃka (identical with the comparative case suffix); size, approximate: (E, M) алашашка alaʃaʃka ‘as big as a horse’ (E, M алаша alaʃa ‘horse’)
- (E) -vtomo, -vtʲeme, -tomo, -tʲeme, -teme; (M) -ftama (identical with the abessive case suffix); privative: (E) сельмевтеме sʲelʲmɛvtʲeme, (M) сельмофтома sʲelʲmɔftoma ‘eyeless; blind’ (E сельме sʲelʲme, M сельме sʲelʲmæ ‘eye’)

(Bartens 1999: 109–11, Cygankin et al. 2000: 37–9, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 92–3.)

#### 23.3.3.2.2 Others

- (E) -ke, -inʲe, -nʲe, -ne; (M) -kæ, -nʲæ (also in the derivation of denominal nouns): diminutive: (E) човине t̄čovinʲe, (M) шуваня juvanʲæ ‘thin, slender’ (cf. E чова ‘thin’)
- (E) -иза; (M) -за: moderative: (E) коськижа kosʲkiza ‘rather dry’ (E коське kosʲke ‘dry’), (M) шапамажа ʃapamaʒa ‘rather sour’ (M шапама ʃapama ‘sour’)

(Bartens 1999: 109–11, Cygankin et al. 2000: 37–9, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 89.)

### 23.3.3.3 Derivation of adverbs

#### 23.3.3.3.1 Denominal

- (E) -ste, -sto; (M) -sta (identical with the elative case suffix): modal: (E) превейстэ prʲevejste ‘wisely, sensibly’ (E превей prʲevej ‘wise, sensible’); (M) ёнюста jonʲusta ‘wisely, sensibly’ (M ёню jonʲu ‘wise, sensible’); (E) -sʲtʲe only in парсте parsʲtʲe ‘well’ (E паро paro ‘good’)

(Bartens 1999: 165–6, Cygankin et al. 2000: 45–6, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 187–9.)

#### 23.3.3.3.2 Others

- (E) -t̄sʲek; (M) -t̄sʲək: modal: (E) меельцек mejʲlʲt̄sʲek, мельцек melʲt̄sʲek, (M) мельцек melʲt̄sʲək ‘one after another’ (E мееле mejʲle, мейле mejʲle, M меле melʲæ ‘after, later’)
- (E, M) -sʲtʲ, -ksʲtʲ: recurrence: (E, M) весть vesʲtʲ ‘once’ (E ве ve, вейке vejke, M фкя fkæ ‘one’); (E) кавксть kavksʲtʲ, (M) кафксть kafksʲtʲ ‘twice’ (E кавто kavto, M кафта kafta ‘two’)

(Bartens 1999: 165–6, Cygankin et al. 2000: 45–6, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 187–9.)

### 23.3.3.4 Derivation of verbs

#### 23.3.3.4.1 Denominal

- (E, M) -ija-: general verbalizer: (E, M) алыя- alija- ‘lay eggs’ (E, M ал al ‘egg’)
- (E) -kado-, -gado-; (M) -kədə-, -gədə-; -lgədə-: translative: (E) козякадо- kozʲakado-, (M) козякодо- kozʲakədə- ‘get rich’ (E козя kozʲa (n., a.), M козя kozʲæ (a.) ‘rich’)
- (E) -kavto-, -gavto-; (M) -kəftə-, -gəftə-; -lgəftə-: factitive: (E) козякавто- kozʲakavto-, (M)

- козякофто- *koz'akəftə* 'make rich' (E козя *koz'a* (n., a.), M козя *koz'æ* (a.) 'rich')
- (E) -mo-, -me-; (M) -mә-: translative: (E) валдомо- *valdomo-*, (M) валдомо- *valdәmә-* 'brighten' (E валдо *valdo* (n., a.), M валда *valda* 'light')
  - (E) -no-, -n'e-, -na-, -n'a-; (M) -nә-, -n'ә-, -na-, -n'ә-: descriptive verbs from ideophones: (E) варно- *varno-*, (M) варна- *varna-* 'caw' (E, M вар *var* 'sound of a crow')
  - (E) -s'kado-; (M) -s'kәdә-: translative: (E) ламбаськадо- *lambas'kado-*, (M) ламбаськодо- *lambas'kәdә-* 'become sweet' (cf. E ламбамо *lambamo*, M ламбама *lambama* 'sweet')

(Bartens 1999: 158–61, Cygankin et al. 2000: 39–44, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 170–2.)

#### 23.3.3.4.2 Deverbal

- (E) -d'e-; (M) -d'ә-: momentaneous correlates to derivations in (E) -je-; (M) -jә-: (E) кивчкаде- *kivčkad'e-*, (M) кфчяде- *kəftčәd'ә-* 'flash (once)' (no base word)
- (E) -je-; (M) -jә-: frequentative correlates to derivations in (E) -d'e-; (M) -d'ә-: (E) кивчкае- *kivčkajе-*, (M) кфчие- *kəftčijә-* 'flash (repeatedly)' (no base word)
- (E) -k'jnо-, -k'jn'e-; (M) -jәndә-, -jәn'd'ә-; -k'jn'ә-: frequentative: (E) суюкнякшно- *s'ukon'ak'jnо-*, (M) суюкнякшне- *s'ukәn'ak'jn'ә-* 'bow (repeatedly)' (E суюкня- *s'ukon'a-*, M суюкня- *s'ukәn'a-* 'bow (v.)')
- (E) -n'e-; (M) -n'ә-: frequentative: (E) путне- *putn'e-*, (M) путне- *putn'ә-* 'put (repeatedly), arrange' (E путо- *puto-*, M путо- *putә-* 'put')
- (E) -no-, -n'e-; (M) -ndә-, -n'd'ә-: frequentative: (E) лазно- *lazno-*, (M) лазондо- *lazәndә-* 'cleave, split (repeatedly), chop' (E лазо- *lazo-*, M лазо- *lazә-* 'cleave, split')
- (E) -s'e-; (M) -s'ә-: frequentative: (E) рамсе- *rams'e-*, (M) рамсә- 'buy (repeatedly)' (E, M рама- *rama-* 'buy')
- (E) -vo-, -ve-; (M) -vә-: passive, automative (anticausative), modal (valency-changing): (E) путово- *putovo-*, (M) путово- *putәvә-* 'be put, placed; be able to be put, placed' (E путо- *puto-*, M путо- *putә-* 'put, place')
- (E) -vto-, -vt'e-; (M) -ftә-, -ft'ә-: causative (valency-changing): (E) оймавто- *ojmavto-*, (M) ваймафто- *vajmaftә-* 'let rest' (E ойма- *ojma-*, M вайма- *vajma-* 'rest')
- (E) -z'e-; (M) -z'ә-: inchoative: (E) кирвазе- *kirvaz'e-*, (M) крвьязе- *kәr'vәz'ә-* 'burst into flames, start burning' (E кирва- *kirva-* 'blaze, flare, flame')
- (E) -z'leve-; (M) -z'ләvә-: inchoative (often involuntary/surprising action): (E) моразеве- *moraz'leve-*, (M) моразеве- *moraz'ләvә-* 'start singing' (E, M мора- *mora-* 'sing')

(Bartens 1999: 158–61, Cygankin et al. 2000: 39–44, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 157–61.)

## 23.4 Syntax

The syntax of the Mordvin languages differs from the syntax of their closest sister languages in two important respects: i. The objective conjugation enables object marking by way of a suffix (see 23.3.2.1) and ii. Predicate nouns, adjectives, locative expressions, and non-finites can be conjugated in person and tense.

### 23.4.1 Word order

The Mordvin languages display head-final NPs, postpositional phrases, and head-final relative clauses (see Non-finites 23.3.2.4), though relative clauses can also be placed after their heads (see 23.4.5.3). Auxiliaries are usually preverbal. It is typical of transitive, intransitive, and non-verbal predicate clauses that the subject precedes the predicate but the word order depends on information structuring and the clause type (see 23.4.3). In transitive clauses the basic word order is SVO; nevertheless, SOV is also common. Variation of word order should be a target of further research; examples of variation are given in (59)–(63).

#### SVO

- (59) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Мон ордатфста венептине книганыть.  
*mon ordat-f-sta ven'әpt'i-in'ә*  
 1SG get.angry-PTCP-ELA hand-PST1.1SG>3SG  
*kn'iga-n'ә-t'*  
 book-DIM-GEN.DEF.SG  
 'I handed over the book angrily.'

#### SOV

- (60) Moksha (JT)  
 Мирдезе кулось, ськамон шабатнень трясайне.  
*mir'd'ә-z'ә kulә-s'*  
 husband-POSS.1SG die-PST1.3SG  
*s'kamә-n jaba-t'n'әn' tr'a-sajn'ә*  
 alone-POSS.1SG child-GEN.DEF.PL raise-PRS.1SG>3PL  
 'My husband died, I am bringing up my children alone.'

#### VOS

- (61) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Истямокс васенцеде неизе Анкань Сёдор.  
*ist'amo-ks vas'en'tse-d'e n'e-iz'e*  
 such-TRSL first-PART see-PST1.3SG>3SG  
*anka-n' s'odor*  
 Anka-GEN Sëdor  
 'This was the first time Sëdor saw Anka like this.'

## VSO

- (62) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Вечксы сон калонь кундсеманть.  
 vet'k-si son kalo-n<sup>i</sup> kund's'e-ma-n<sup>tj</sup>  
 love-PRS.3SG>3SG 3SG fish-GEN catch-NMLZ-GEN.DEF.SG  
 'He loves to catch fish.'

## OVS

- (63) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Те легенданть монень ёвтниэ эрзянь ве цёра,...  
 t'e legenda-n<sup>tj</sup> mon'en<sup>i</sup> jov'tn<sup>i</sup>-iz'e  
 this story-GEN.DEF.SG 1SG.DAT tell-PST1.3SG>3SG  
 er'z'a-n<sup>i</sup> ve t'sora  
 Erzya-GEN one man  
 'This story was told to me by an Erzya man,...'

## 23.4.2 Phrase structure

## 23.4.2.1 Noun phrases

Noun phrases consist of a noun in indefinite, definite, or possessive declension, which may be preceded by a modifier phrase. Normally, modifiers do not agree in number or case e.g. (E) од тейтертненень od t'e't'er<sup>i</sup>-t'n'en<sup>i</sup>en<sup>i</sup> young girl-DAT.DEF.PL, (M) од стирнятненди od s't'ir<sup>i</sup>-n<sup>i</sup>æ-t'n'en<sup>i</sup>d<sup>i</sup> young girl-DIM-DAT.DEF.PL 'to the young girls', see also examples (64)–(65). There are some exceptions, such as the adjective (E) паро paro 'good' which may agree in number, as in (66).

- (64) Moksha (JT)  
 Мазыста панчть шаваняда оцю панчфне,...  
 mazi-sta pant'et<sup>i</sup> šavan<sup>i</sup>æ-da o'ts'u  
 beautiful-ELA open.PST1.3PL plate-PART big  
 pant'ef-n<sup>i</sup>æ  
 flower-NOM.DEF.PL  
 'Flowers bigger than a plate opened beautifully,...'
- (65) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Сэнь качамнеть томбале неявить вишка коробкине ёнов молиця ошонь кудотне.  
 sen<sup>i</sup> kat'gam-n<sup>e</sup>-n<sup>tj</sup> tombal'e n'eja-v-it<sup>i</sup>  
 blue smoke-DIM-GEN.DEF.SG other.side see-PASS-PRS.3PL  
 viška korobk-in'e jono-v mol<sup>i</sup>-it's'a  
 small box-DIM side-LAT go-PTCP  
 o'fo-n<sup>i</sup> kudo-t'n'e  
 town-GEN house-NOM.DEF.PL  
 'On the other side of the blue smoke one can see the little town houses which resemble (lit. 'go to the side of') little boxes.'
- (66) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Ванодо, келя, кодат парт ломанть улить минек моданть лангсол  
 vano-do, kel'a, koda-t par-t loman<sup>i</sup>-t<sup>j</sup>  
 see-IMP.2PL reputedly how-PL good-PL person-PL  
 ul<sup>i</sup>-it<sup>i</sup> min<sup>i</sup>ek moda-n<sup>tj</sup> lang-so  
 be-PRS.3PL 1PL.GEN country-GEN.DEF.SG top-INE  
 'See, there are, they say, such good people in our world.'

Modifiers preceding the modified noun can be adjectives (possibly modified by adverbs such as (E) пек пек, (M) пяк пæk 'very') (67), inflected nouns (68)–(70), or even nouns in the nominative, such as лафту laftu 'shoulder' in (71). Adjectives can be formed with derivational suffixes, but also, case-inflected adjectives may function as modifiers. Sometimes the same suffix can be interpreted either as a case ending or as a derivational suffix, such as the suffix -n<sup>i</sup>, which forms both genitives and adjective derivatives, see Kudaev (1985), 23.3.1.1 and 23.3.3.2.

- (67) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 ...уле сельме аф пяк кепаз алясь.  
 ul<sup>i</sup>æ s'el'mæ af pæk kepaза al<sup>i</sup>æ-s<sup>i</sup>  
 grey eye NEG very tall man-NOM.DEF.SG  
 '...the not very tall man with grey eyes'
- (68) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 ...кецямонь вайгелесь ульнесь авань,...  
 ket's'a-mo-n<sup>i</sup> vajgel'e-s<sup>i</sup>  
 feel.joy-NMLZ-GEN voice-NOM.DEF.SG  
 ul<sup>i</sup>-n<sup>e</sup>-s<sup>i</sup> ava-n<sup>i</sup>  
 be-FREQ-PST1.3SG mother-GEN  
 '...the happy voice was mother's,...'
- (69) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Тястонь сире ломаттне корхнихть:...  
 t'æ-stə-n<sup>i</sup> sir<sup>i</sup>æ lomatt'n<sup>i</sup>æ ko'p<sup>i</sup>-n<sup>i</sup>-ij<sup>tj</sup>  
 this-ELA-GEN old person.NOM.DEF.PL speak-FREQ-PRS.3PL  
 'The old people who are from here speak: ...'
- (70) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Ётнезень маластонь вирьса сембе яннятнень.  
 jot-n<sup>i</sup>æ-z'ən<sup>i</sup> mala-stə-n<sup>i</sup> vir<sup>i</sup>-sa  
 walk-FREQ-PST1.3SG>3PL close-ELA-GEN forest-INE  
 s'embæ jan<sup>i</sup>-n<sup>i</sup>æ-t'n'en<sup>i</sup>  
 all path-DIM-GEN.DEF.PL  
 'He walked all the paths in the nearby forest.'
- (71) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Кабинетса, эседонза башка, озафоль ведьгемоньшка кизоса, средний сереса, кели лафту аля.  
 kabin'et-sa es<sup>i</sup>-t'ədə-nza baška oza-f-əl<sup>i</sup>  
 room-INE self-PAR-POSS.3SG except.for sit-PTCP-PST2.3SG  
 ved'gemən<sup>i</sup>-ška kizə-sa s'iedn<sup>i</sup>æj s'er<sup>i</sup>ə-sa  
 fifty-CPR year-INE middle length-INE

keli laftu alʲæ  
wide shoulder man  
'In the room, except for him, there was sitting a middle-sized broad-shouldered man, about fifty years old.'

### 23.4.2.2 Verb phrases

A predicate may be a simple verbal predicate consisting of the finite form of a verb or a compound verbal predicate consisting of a finite and a non-finite verb. A verbal phrase may also consist of only a non-finite form.

#### 23.4.2.2.1 Finite verb forms

The predicate verb always displays person agreement, and agreement holds between the verb and the subject as well as the definite object (see 23.4.4). As both arguments S and O can be encoded suffixally, pronominal subjects or objects can be left out (pro-drop). Also non-verbal parts-of-speech function as predicates (see 23.4.3).

#### 23.4.2.2.2 Non-finite verb forms

Several verbs may get a non-finite verb as a complement (e.g. Bartens 1999: 144–52). These are illustrated in (72)–(74). (See also 23.3.2.4.)

#### (72) Moksha (MORMULA)

Седиец аф ламонь лоткась пиксомда.  
sʲedʲijʲə-t̃s af lamə-nʲ lotka-sʲ piksə-mda  
heart-POSS.3SG NEG lot-GEN stop-PST1.3SG beat-INF3  
'Slowly her/his heart stopped beating (hard).'

Non-finite forms may get possessive suffixes, in which case the suffix expresses the object, see (73) and (74).

#### (73) Erzya (MORMULA)

Ней сонсь покш братост сыргась сасамонк.  
nʲej sonʲ-sʲ, pokʃ brato-st  
now 3SG-EMPH big brother-POSS.3PL

sirga-sʲ sasa-mo-nok  
leave-PST1.3SG catch-INF2-POSS.1PL  
'Now he himself, their big brother set out to catch us.'

#### (74) Moksha (MORMULA)

Sa-ʃənʲdʲi-sʲtʲ varʒa-mə-nza velʲə-nʲ  
come-FREQ-PST1.3PL look-INF2-POSS.3SG village-GEN  
sʲembæ lomətʲnʲæ...  
all person.NOM.DEF.PL  
'All the people of the village came to see him...'

Non-finites may function also as predicates. When functioning as predicates, they usually express some kind of modality. Non-finites as predicates can express e.g. necessity, as in (75), or possibility, as in (76).

#### (75) Erzya (N.E.)

Те столентъ ванськавтомс!  
tʲe stolʲe-nʲtʲ vanʲsʲkavto-ms  
this table-GEN.DEF.SG clean-INF1  
'This table has to be cleaned!'

#### (76) Moksha (MORMULA)

Мезьса тага лездомс стирть, кода ванфтомс куломать езда...  
mezʲ-sa taga ʲezdə-ms sʲtʲirʲ-tʲ  
what-INE again help-INF1 girl-GEN.DEF.SG  
koda vanftə-ms kuləma-tʲ ez-da  
how protect-INF1 death-GEN.DEF.SG POSTP-PART  
'By what, again, can the girl be helped, how to protect her from death?'

In the past-tense, copula or non-verbal conjugation can be used, see examples (50) and (51) in 23.3.2.4.

### 23.4.2.3 Adverbial phrases

Adverbial phrases can occur in any position in a sentence. Adverbials can be modified by intensifiers (E) пек пек, (M) пяк пяк 'very', or (E) истямо isʲtʲamo, (M) стама stama 'so, like that'. (Bartens 1999 : 164–6.)

#### (77) Erzya (MokshEr)

Судом пек парсте мари!  
sudo-m pek parʲsʲtʲe marʲ-il  
nose-POSS.1SG very well smell-PRS.3SG  
'My nose can smell very well!'

#### (78) Moksha (MokshEr)

Яков Максимович кайгиста рахазевсь.  
jakəv maksiməvʲitʲ kajg-i-sta raxa-zʲəv-sʲ  
Jakov Maksimovič sound-PTCP-ELA laugh-INCH-PST1.3SG  
'Jakov Maksimovič burst into loud laughter.'

### 23.4.2.4 Quantifier phrases

In quantifier phrases, the quantified noun following the numeral may be in the nominative plural or singular. According to the grammars, the plural appears with the numerals 2–10 in both languages, e.g. (E) кавто велеть kavto velʲe-tʲ two village-PL 'two villages', (M) кафта кизот kafta kizə-t two year-PL 'two years'. With the numeral 1 and from 11 onwards, the singular is used in Moksha, whereas both singular and plural are possible in Erzya from 11 onwards, e.g. (E) кемголмово моро(т) кемголмово моро(-т) thirteen song(-PL) 'thirteen songs'; (M) кемгафтува киза кемгафтува киза 'twelve years' (Cygankin et al. 2000: 121, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 98). However, according to Bartens (1999: 119–20) there is variation between the singular and plural with all numerals. Moreover, if the noun following

the numeral is inflected its number depends on the definiteness: an indefinite noun is in the singular and a definite noun in the plural, e.g. (E) кавто тракторсо kavto traktor-so two tractor-INE ‘in two tractors’ but (E) вете книгатненъ vet'e kn'iga-t'n'en' five book-GEN.DEF.PL ‘of the five books’ (Bartens 1999: 120).

In addition to the nominative, also the partitive singular is possible in Moksha nouns, as in (M) сяда ломаньда s'ada loman'-da hundred person-PART ‘hundred people’ (Bartens 1999: 119).

Nouns quantified with (E) ламо lamo, (M) лама lama ‘much, many, a lot of’, and (E) аламо a-lamo, (M) аф лама af lama, кржа kərʒa ‘not much, little’ are either in the nominative singular, nominative plural, or partitive singular, e.g. (E) ламо ломань lamo loman' ‘many people’, (M) лама шаба lama šaba ‘many children’; (E) ламо ярмакт lamo jarmak-t much money-PL ‘a lot of money’, (M) лама шабат lama šaba-t much child-PL ‘many children’; (E) ламо тумодо lamo tumo-do much oak-PART ‘many oaks’, (M) лама шабада lama šaba-da much child-PART ‘many children’ (Bartens 1999: 120–1).

#### 23.4.2.5 Comparison of adjectives

The comparison of adjectives is expressed analytically. In the comparative, the adjective is not inflected but the standard of comparison is marked with the partitive suffix, as in (79) and (80). However, the postposition (E, M) коряс kor'as ‘with respect to’ is sometimes used to mark the standard (see (82)).

(79) Erzya (Bartens 1999: 109)

кизэ теледе паро  
kize tʲelʲe-dʲe paro  
summer winter-PART good  
‘summer is better than winter’

(80) Moksha (Bartens 1999: 109)

кизось тялода цебарь  
kizə-s' tʲalə-da tʲs'ebær'  
summer-NOM.DEF.SG winter-PART good  
‘summer is better than winter’

If the standard is not mentioned, the pronoun (E) s'e, (M) s'æ ‘it, that’ in the partitive form ((E) седе s'edʲe, (M) сяда s'ada) precedes the adjective, e.g. (E) седе мазый s'edʲe mazij, (M) сяда мазы s'ada mazi ‘more beautiful’. In Moksha, an enclitic particle -nga is often attached to the partitive form of the pronoun, e.g. (M) сядонга мазы s'adənga mazi ‘more beautiful’. In both languages, the partitive form of the pronoun is in the process of grammaticalization into a comparative marker and can be found in constructions in which the standard of comparison is present as well, as in (81) and (82).

(81) Erzya (Imajkina 1996: 116)

Сэнь панарось ашо панардонть седе вадря.  
sen' panarə-s' ašo panar-don'tʲ  
blue shirt-NOM.DEF.SG white shirt-PART.DEF.SG  
s'e-dʲe vadr'a  
it-PART nice  
‘The blue shirt is nicer than the white shirt.’

(82) Moksha (Poljakov 1995: 28)

Тумось сяда сери келуть коряс.  
tumə-s' s'a-da s'er'i kelu-tʲ  
oak-NOM.DEF.SG it-PART tall birch-GEN.DEF.SG  
kor'as  
with.respect.to  
‘The oak is taller than the birch.’

Superlative constructions are also formed analytically, with two types of markers: either a partitive form of (E) весе ves'e : весеме- ves'eme-, (M) сембе s'embæ ‘all’ (e.g. (E) весемеде мазый ves'emed'e mazij, (M) сембода мазы s'embəda mazi ‘the most beautiful’), or a borrowed superlative marker. The latter type includes (E) сех s'ex (or its partitive form сехте s'ext'e) from Russian vsex ‘of all’ and (E, M) самый samaj from the Russian superlative marker samoj, as well as the particles (E) энь ejen', (M) инь in' probably from Tatar. Examples: (E) сехте мазый s'ex(t'e) mazij, самый мазый samaj mazij, энь мазый ejen' mazij ‘the most beautiful’, (M) самый ёмла samaj jomla ‘the smallest’, инь оцю in' ocs'u ‘the biggest’ (Bartens 1999: 109).

#### 23.4.3 Clause structure

Mordvin clauses can be classified on a morphosyntactic and semantic basis. There are clauses with verbal predicates and clauses with non-verbal predicates. Verbal predicate clauses can be transitive or intransitive. Non-verbal predicate clauses belong to the clauses expressing stative relations. Other clauses which express stative relations are locative, existential, and possessive clauses, clauses expressing environmental conditions and circumstances. Necessive constructions build their own clause type. The clause types differ morphosyntactically; the word order is not rigid but each clause type has its own characteristic word-order patterns, see 23.4.1. Transitive clauses can be formed by a single predicate verb, which is inflected in objective conjugation (see 23.3.2.1). Often the object is a lexical noun and the verb is inflected by suffixes of the objective conjugation or, under specific circumstances, the subjective conjugation. For example, if the object is indefinite, subjective conjugation is

used, as in (83) (see in detail 23.4.4). For more examples of transitive clauses see 23.4.1.

- (83) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Ёвкстынь лембе кемть, ...  
 jovkst-in<sup>i</sup> l'embe kem-t<sup>i</sup>  
 put.on-PST1.1SG warm boot-PL  
 'I put on warm boots, ...'

In intransitive clauses, the verb is inflected in the subject-ive conjugation, see (84) and (85).

- (84) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Ломантне эрясть апак сёвно, ...  
 lomant<sup>i</sup>-t<sup>i</sup>n<sup>i</sup>e er<sup>i</sup>a-st<sup>i</sup> apak s'ovno  
 person-NOM.DEF.PL live-PST1.3PL NEG fight.CNG  
 'People lived without fighting, ...'

- (85) Moksha (JT)  
 Тунда нармоттне састь лямбе ширьде.  
 tunda narmot<sup>t</sup>n<sup>i</sup>æ sa-s<sup>t</sup>i l'æmbæ  
 spring bird.NOM.DEF.PL come-PST1.3PL warm  
 fir<sup>i</sup>d<sup>æ</sup>  
 from.side  
 'In the spring the birds came from the South.'

Non-verbal predicates can be conjugated like verbs. Present-tense nominal predicates in the third persons do not need any suffixal marking (86), but first- or second-person (87)–(88) and past-tense suffixes are attached to the nominal predicate. Erzya allows simple juxtaposition without person marking for the first and second persons as well (89), although in Standard Erzya conjugation is preferred. Of the past-tenses, only the second past-tense is possible for nominal predicates (90)–(91), which means that the opposition of the first and second past is neutralized in non-verbal conjugation. Copulas are used for carrying the marking of mood, and it is possible to use a copula instead of nominal predication in other cases as well (Turunen 2010; Kholodilova 2016). Under negation, the particles (E) а, (M) аf are used in both the present and the second past-tense (90). In Erzya, non-verbal predicates can alternatively be negated with the negative particle (E) аволь avol<sup>i</sup>.

- (86) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Тяни сембось пяк питни.  
 t<sup>i</sup>æn<sup>i</sup> s'emba-s<sup>i</sup> pæk pit<sup>n</sup>i  
 now everything-NOM.DEF.SG very expensive  
 'Everything is now very expensive.'

- (87) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Мон чумовтоман!  
 мон t<sup>i</sup>umo-vtom-an  
 1SG guilty-ABE-PRS.1SG  
 'I am innocent!'

- (88) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 ...а мон аф попан, ...  
 а mon af pop-an  
 but 1SG NEG priest-PRS.1SG  
 '...but I am not a priest ...' (MokshEr)

- (89) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Тон эрзянь тейтерька?  
 ton er<sup>i</sup>z<sup>i</sup>a-n<sup>i</sup> t<sup>e</sup>jt<sup>e</sup>r<sup>i</sup>-ka  
 you Erzya-GEN girl-DIM  
 'Are you an Erzya girl?'

- (90) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Цёрась сон а берянель.  
 t<sup>i</sup>s'ora-s<sup>i</sup> son а ber<sup>i</sup>an<sup>i</sup>-e<sup>i</sup>  
 man-NOM.DEF.SG 3SG NEG bad-PST2.3SG  
 'He wasn't a bad man.'

- (91) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Максим сидеста тевфтомоль.  
 maks'im s'id<sup>e</sup>-sta t<sup>e</sup>v-ft<sup>e</sup>m<sup>e</sup>-l<sup>i</sup>  
 Maksim dense-ELA work-ABE-PST2.3SG  
 'Maksim was often without work.'

Tables 23.35 and 23.36 illustrate the similar conjugation markers of non-verbal and verbal predicates. It is noteworthy that also other encoding patterns of non-verbal predication are possible, see Turunen (2011a) for details.

**Table 23.35** Present-tense paradigms of non-verbal conjugation and verbal subjective conjugation in Erzya

	Non-verbal			Verbal
	Noun 'man'	Adjective 'beautiful'	Locative 'at home'	Verb 'sing'
1SG	t <sup>i</sup> s'ora-n	mazij-an	kudo-s-an	mor-an
2SG	t <sup>i</sup> s'ora-t	mazij-at	kudo-s-at	mor-at
3SG	t <sup>i</sup> s'ora	mazij	kudo-so	mor-i
1PL	t <sup>i</sup> s'ora-tano	mazij-t <sup>i</sup> ano	kudo-so-tano	mora-tano
2PL	t <sup>i</sup> s'ora-tado	mazij-t <sup>i</sup> ado	kudo-so-tado	mora-tado
3PL	t <sup>i</sup> s'ora-t	mazij-t <sup>i</sup>	kudo-so-t	mor-it <sup>i</sup>

Clauses expressing external or environmental conditions typically lack a canonical (nominative NP) subject. The clause may consist only of one NP, as in (92). Clauses may begin with a spatial or temporal adverbial, see (93). Non-verbal conjugation can be employed in this clause type as well, as in (94). This clause type may also encode inner circumstances: human experiences, feelings, and mental states, as in (95) and (96). If there is an experiencer, it is encoded usually in the dative and it precedes the predicate, see (97).

**Table 23.36** Past-tense paradigms of non-verbal conjugation and verbal subjective conjugation in the second past tense in Erzya

	Non-verbal			Verbal
	Noun 'man'	Adjective 'beautiful'	Locative 'at home'	Verb 'sing'
1SG	ts'ora-l'in <sup>j</sup>	mazije-l'in <sup>j</sup>	kudo-so-l'in <sup>j</sup>	mor-il'in <sup>j</sup>
2SG	ts'ora-l'it <sup>j</sup>	mazije-l'it <sup>j</sup>	kudo-so-l'it <sup>j</sup>	mor-il'it <sup>j</sup>
3SG	ts'ora-l <sup>j</sup>	mazije-l <sup>j</sup>	kudo-so-l <sup>j</sup>	mor-il <sup>j</sup>
1PL	ts'ora-l'in <sup>iek</sup>	mazije-l'in <sup>iek</sup>	kudo-so-l'in <sup>iek</sup>	mor-il'in <sup>iek</sup>
2PL	ts'ora-l'id <sup>e</sup>	mazije-l'id <sup>e</sup>	kudo-so-l'id <sup>e</sup>	mor-il'id <sup>e</sup>
3PL	ts'ora-l't <sup>j</sup>	mazije-l't <sup>j</sup>	kudo-so-l't <sup>j</sup>	mor-il't <sup>j</sup>

(92) Erzya (MokshEr)

Чопода.  
tšopoda  
dark  
'It is dark.'

(93) Moksha (JT)

Кудса валда.  
kud-sa valda  
house-INE light  
'It is light in the house.'

(94) Erzya (P)

Ушосонть тундоль.  
ušo-son't<sup>j</sup> tundo-l<sup>j</sup>  
outside-INE.DEF.SG spring-PST2.3SG  
'It was spring outside.'

(95) Erzya (MokshEr)

Седейсэнэ апароль.  
s'ed<sup>ej</sup>-se-nze a-paro-l<sup>j</sup>  
heart-INE-POSS.3SG NEG-good-PST2.3SG  
'There was a bad feeling in his heart.'

(96) Moksha (MokshEr)

Пароль кизефнемс тянь кувалма, ...  
pa-rə-l<sup>j</sup> kizəf-nə-ms tʃæ-n<sup>j</sup> kuvalma  
good-PST2.3SG ask-FREQ-INF1 this-GEN about  
'It was good to ask about it, ...'

(97) Erzya (MokshEr)

Течи монень ульнесь пек стака.  
tʃetɛ'i mon'en<sup>j</sup> ul<sup>j</sup>-n'e-s<sup>j</sup> pek staka  
today 1SG.DAT be-FREQ-PST1.3SG very hard  
'It was very difficult for me today.'

Existential clauses are characterized by a clause-initial adverbial of location (98), as well as environmental/state-of-

affairs clauses. Both clause types may lack the locative adverbial (99), or display a temporal adverbial in the beginning.

(98) Erzya (MokshEr)

Тосо ульнесь суро.  
to-so ul<sup>j</sup>-n'e-s<sup>j</sup> s'uro  
that-INE be-FREQ-PST1.3SG wheat  
'There was wheat.'

(99) Moksha (MokshEr)

Корхтайхть, ульсь фкя атя.  
koɾta-j't<sup>j</sup>, ul<sup>j</sup>-s<sup>j</sup> fkæ atʃæ  
speak-PRS.3PL be-PST1.3SG one man  
'They say, there was a man.'

In the Mordvin languages, existential and locative sentences can be distinguished from each other on the basis of the encoding of predication (cf. chapter 51). In existential sentences there is a copula 'be', generally in the present-tense, whereas in a locative sentence there is no copula but non-verbal conjugation is used. Furthermore, as in Hungarian, locative sentences typically have a canonical subject which is in the topical, sentence-initial position and often marked as definite.

Predicative possession is expressed with an existential-like construction (cf. 51.5.2) with the possessor in the genitive, preceding the 'be' verb; the possessee is marked with a possessive suffix referring to the possessor (100)–(102). Pronominal possessors can be omitted (102).

(100) Erzya (K)

Нама, моньгак улить пехетень.  
nama, mon<sup>j</sup>-gak ul<sup>j</sup>-it<sup>j</sup> pexete-n<sup>j</sup>  
of.course 1SG.GEN-FOC be-PRS.3PL sin-POSS.1SG  
'Of course, I have my sins, too.'

- (101) Moksha (JT)  
Монь ули алашазе.  
mon<sup>1</sup> ul<sup>1</sup>-i alʃa-zʲæ  
1SG.GEN be-PRS.3SG horse-POSS.1SG  
'I have a horse.'
- (102) Moksha (JT)  
Иденза аш, эряй ськамонза.  
idɛn-zʲa aʃ, erʲa-j sʲkamə-nzʲa  
child-POSS.3SG NEG live-PRS.3SG alone-POSS.3SG  
'S/he does not have children, s/he lives alone.'
- (103) Erzya (N.E.)  
Тонавтомсат важоме!  
tonavto-ms-at vazod<sup>1</sup>e-me  
teach-INF1-PRS.2SG work-INF2  
'You should be taught to work!'
- (104) Erzya (MORMULA)  
Модемс ульнесь венъ куншкава.  
mol<sup>1</sup>e-ms ul<sup>1</sup>-n<sup>1</sup>e-s<sup>1</sup> ve-n<sup>1</sup> kunʃka-va  
go-INF1 be-FREQ-PST1.3SG night-GEN middle-PROL  
'One had to go (there) at midnight.'
- (105) Erzya (MORMULA)  
Пинесь эряви наказамс.  
pin<sup>1</sup>e-s<sup>1</sup> erʲav-i nakaza-ms  
dog-NOM.DEF.SG must-PRS.3SG punish-INF1  
'The dog must be punished.'
- (106) Erzya (MokshEr)  
Авантень сеедьстэ савкшны яксемс те кияванть  
вирев.  
ava-n<sup>1</sup>tʲen<sup>1</sup> s<sup>1</sup>ejed<sup>1</sup>ste sav-kʃn-i  
mother-DAT.DEF.SG often must-FREQ-PRS.3SG  
jak-s<sup>1</sup>e-ms tʲe kija-van<sup>1</sup>tʲ vir<sup>1</sup>e-v.  
go-FREQ-INF1 this road-PROL.DEF.SG forest-LAT  
'The mother must often walk along this road to the forest.'
- (107) Moksha (MORMULA)  
Лама сталмода савсь няемс велень эряйхненди.  
lama stalmə-da sav-s<sup>1</sup> nʲæjə-ms  
much trouble-PART must-PST1.3SG see-INF1  
vel<sup>1</sup>ə-n<sup>1</sup> erʲaʃnʲən<sup>1</sup>d<sup>1</sup>i  
village-GEN inhabitant.DAT.DEF.PL  
'The inhabitants of the village had to take a lot of trouble.'
- (108) Erzya (N.E.)  
Тесэ нельзя таргамс.  
tʲese n<sup>1</sup>elʲzʲa targa-ms  
here prohibited smoke-INF1  
'It is prohibited to smoke here.'

Table 23.37 Erzya stative relation clauses

Clause type	Morphosyntactic characteristics				
	definite subject	non-verbal conjugation PRS and PST	ul <sup>1</sup> ems-copula in PRS	ul <sup>1</sup> n <sup>1</sup> ems in PST	negator aras <sup>1</sup>
nominal predicate	x	x	-	x	-
adjectival predicate	x	x	-	x	-
locative predicate	x	x	-	x	x
environmental states	-	x	-	x	-
existential clause	-	-	x	x	x
possessive clause	-	-	x	x	x

- (109) Moksha (Kholodilova 2016: 233)  
 Тейня нильзель те торть.  
 t'e'n'æ n'il'zə-l' t'e tor'tj  
 1SG.DAT prohibited-PST2.3SG this cake  
 'This cake was prohibited for me.'

There are several impersonalization strategies in Mordvin. Impersonal sentences are formed with a polysemic derivational suffix that has, among other readings, a passive meaning (Salo 2006; see also 23.3.3.4.2 and (110)). In addition, first infinitives (-ms) are used to build impersonal constructions (111). Generic impersonal clauses are also built by third-person-plural verb forms (112). Furthermore, second-person singular can be used in a generic sense (113).

- (110) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Секс весемь тееви Законь коряс.  
 sje-ks ves'e-me-sj  
 that-TRSL everything-NOM.DEF.SG  
 t'eje-v-i zakono-nj kor'as.  
 do-PASS-PRS.3SG law-GEN according  
 'That is why everything is done according to the Law.'

- (111) Erzya (N.E.)  
 Кшинть а стака панемс.  
 kʃi-n'tj a staka pan'e-ms  
 bread-GEN.DEF.SG NEG hard bake-INF1  
 'It is not hard to bake bread.'

- (112) Erzya (N.E.)  
 Тесэ а таргить.  
 t'e-se a targ-itj  
 this-INE NEG smoke-PRS.3PL  
 'It is not allowed/possible to smoke here.'

- (113) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Лац работат – ярмакце кармай улема.  
 lats' robot-at jarmak-tʃæ  
 well work-PRS.2SG money-POSS.2SG.  
 karma-j ul'ə-ma  
 start-PRS.3SG be-INF2  
 'If you work well, you will have money.'

### 23.4.4 Object marking

In both languages, four cases can be used in object marking: the nominative, the genitive, the inessive, and (with certain verbs) the partitive. The choice of the case form is intertwined with the choice between the subjective and objective conjugations of transitive verbs. The object marking of Erzya has been studied more profoundly (e.g. Alhoniemi 1991, Bernhardt 2016) than that of Moksha and, therefore, in the

following this topic is treated mainly from the viewpoint of Erzya.

#### 23.4.4.1 Nominative object

An object in the nominative case can only be used together with the subjective conjugation of verbs. Moreover, only the indefinite nominative can appear in this context, as in (114). These constructions do not express the aspect of the action (Koljadënkov 1959: 281).

- (114) Erzya (Alhoniemi 1991: 20)  
 Сон с'им-с' тѣѣ stopka.  
 3SG drink-PST1.3SG tea glass  
 'S/he drank a glass of tea.'

With verbs meaning 'eat' and 'drink', the partitive case is used in the marking of partial objects (23.4.4.4). However, according to Alhoniemi (1991: 24–5), the nominative can be used in this context when a general or an iterative action needs to be expressed, as in (115).

- (115) Erzya (Alhoniemi 1991: 25)  
 Мон с'им-ан паро тѣѣ.  
 1SG drink-PRS.1SG good tea  
 'I drink good tea.' (i.e. 'I like to/always drink good tea.')

#### 23.4.4.2 Genitive object

An object in the genitive is usually marked definite and either the subjective or the objective conjugation of verbs can be used. When the subjective conjugation is employed the aspect is imperfective (116), while objective conjugation marks the perfective aspect (117). As the objective conjugation always marks the perfective aspect, objective conjugation in the present-tense implies future reference (the action will be completed in the future); however, the verb may refer to an action which is going on at the moment, if the verb refers to an emotionally intensive action (Alhoniemi 1996: 148–9, Bernhardt 2016: 59–61).

- (116) Erzya (Aasmäe 2012b: 92)  
 Авась морась моронть.  
 ava-sj mora-sj moro-n'tj  
 woman-NOM.DEF.SG sing-PST1.3SG song-GEN.DEF.SG  
 'The woman was singing the song.'
- (117) Erzya (Aasmäe 2012b: 92)  
 Авась моризе моронть.  
 ava-sj mor-iz'e moro-n'tj  
 woman-NOM.DEF.SG sing-PST1.3SG>3SG song-GEN.DEF.SG  
 'The woman sang the song.'

Definiteness can also be shown by a possessive suffix, as in (118) and (119). However, since the nominative and genitive forms of possessive declension are identical except for certain kinship terms, only these kinship terms can be unambiguously recognized as genitive objects (Koljaděnkov 1954: 201, Bernhardt 2016: 26).

- (118) Erzya (Aasmäe 2012b: 92)  
 Авась морась **моронзо**.  
 ava-s<sup>j</sup> mora-s<sup>j</sup> **moro-nzo**  
 woman-NOM.DEF.SG sing-PST1.3SG>3SG song-POSS.3SG  
 ‘The woman was singing her song.’

- (119) Erzya (Aasmäe 2012b: 92)  
 Авась моризе **моронзо**.  
 ava-s<sup>j</sup> mor-iz'e **moro-nzo**  
 woman-NOM.DEF.SG sing-PST1.3SG>3SG song-POSS.3SG  
 ‘The woman sang her song.’

The indefinite genitive appears in three occasions: in proper nouns, pronouns (especially personal and demonstrative pronouns), and objects of infinitives (Alhoniemi 1991: 22, Bartens 1999: 91). An Erzya example of a personal pronoun as an object is given in (120).

- (120) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Тосо тонь кияк а учи, ...  
 toso **ton<sup>j</sup>** kijak a ut̄e-i  
 there 2SG.GEN nobody NEG wait-PRS.3SG  
 ‘Nobody is waiting for you there, ...’

#### 23.4.4.3 Inessive object

The subjective conjugation of a transitive verb can also be combined with a definite inessive object. In fact, Bernhardt (2016: 63–4) shows that when the verb is in subjective conjugation, a semantically definite object is in the inessive more often than in the genitive case. An object in the inessive case indicates that the action is irresultative or imperfective (Alhoniemi 1991: 27).

In Erzya, the definite inessive case can be expressed by either the synthetic case suffix (121) or the analytic postpositional construction (122), but in the marking of the object, the postpositional forms are used almost exclusively (Alhoniemi 1991: 27).<sup>7</sup> When the object is a personal pronoun, the pronoun is usually dropped in Erzya and the possessive suffix of the postposition refers to the person in question (122).

- (121) Erzya (Imajkina 1996)  
 Пиземесь **модасонть** начты.  
 piz'eme-s<sup>j</sup> **moda-son<sup>t<sup>j</sup></sup>** nat̄et-i  
 rain-NOM.DEF.SG soil-INE.DEF.SG make.wet-PRS.3SG  
 ‘The rain makes the ground wet.’

<sup>7</sup> Bartens (1999: 96) gives examples of the use of objects in the indefinite inessive forms, as well, but these are extremely rare.

- (122) Erzya (MokshEr)  
 Кода сынъ учость **эйсэнъ** неть читненъ перть ...  
 koda sin<sup>j</sup> ut̄e-o-s<sup>t<sup>j</sup></sup> **ej-se-n<sup>j</sup>**  
 how 3PL wait-PST1.3PL POSTP-INE-POSS.1SG  
 n'et<sup>j</sup> t̄e-i-t'n'en<sup>j</sup> per<sup>t<sup>j</sup></sup>  
 those day-GEN.DEF.PL during  
 ‘How they waited for me during those days ...’

In Moksha, only the postpositional case form is available in the inessive object, as in (123) and (124); note that in (123), the clause-initial postpositional construction in the inessive is locative, while the clause-final postpositional construction marks the object.

- (123) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 Лоткама васттненъ эса ломаттне учихть  
**троллейбусъ эса**.  
 lotka-ma vast-t'n'en<sup>j</sup> e-sa lomāt<sup>t<sup>j</sup></sup>n'æ  
 stop-PTCP place-GEN.DEF.PL POSTP-INE person.NOM.DEF.PL  
 ut̄e-ij<sup>t<sup>j</sup></sup> **trol'lejbus-t<sup>j</sup>** e-sa  
 wait-PRS.3PL trolleybus-GEN.DEF POSTP-INE  
 ‘At the stops, people are waiting for the trolleybus.’

- (124) Moksha (MokshEr)  
 ...кивок велеста вешенди **эсот**.  
 kivək velə-sta veʃən'di-i **e-sə-t**  
 someone village-INE look.for-PRS.3SG POSTP-INE-POSS.2SG  
 ‘...someone from the village is looking for you.’

#### 23.4.4.4 Partitive object

With verbs meaning ‘eat’ or ‘drink’ the partiality vs totality of the object is expressed through the choice of either the partitive (indefinite or definite) or the genitive. A partial object is in the partitive, as in (125)–(126). In Erzya the definite elative appears if the postpositional construction is used (127), since there is no partitive form of the postposition *ej-*. (Alhoniemi 1991: 21, 23–5.) When the object is in the partitive (or postpositional elative), the predicate verb can only appear in the subjective conjugation, which makes the distinction between the perfective and imperfective aspect irrelevant.

- (125) Erzya (Alhoniemi 1991: 21)  
 Сон симсь **чайде**.  
 son s'im-s<sup>j</sup> **t̄eaj-d'e**  
 3SG drink-PST1.3SG tea-PART  
 ‘S/he drank/was drinking tea.’
- (126) Erzya (Alhoniemi 1991: 21)  
 Сон симсь **те винадонть**.  
 son s'im-s<sup>j</sup> **t̄e vina-don<sup>t<sup>j</sup></sup>**  
 3SG drink-PST1.3SG this liquor-PART.DEF.SG  
 ‘S/he drank/was drinking (some of) this liquor.’

- (127) Erzya (Alhoniemi 1991: 21)  
 Сон симсь **те винанть эйтэ**  
 son s'im-s' **t'e vina-n'tj** **ej-ste**  
 3SG drink-PST1.3SG this liquor-GEN.DEF.SG POSTP-ELA  
 'S/he drank/was drinking (some of) this liquor.'

When a total object is concerned the object is in the definite genitive form and the verb is in the objective conjugation (128). The aspect is perfective. However, the combination of subjective conjugation and object in indefinite nominative is also possible in certain contexts (see 23.4.4.1).

- (128) Erzya (Alhoniemi 1991: 21)  
 Сон симизе **се веденть**.  
 son s'im-iz'e **s'e ved'e-n'tj**  
 3SG drink-PST1.3SG>3SG that water-GEN.DEF.SG  
 'S/he drank (all of) that water.'

### 23.4.5 Clause combining

#### 23.4.5.1 Coordination and subordination with finite dependent clauses

Coordinating conjunctions are of Russian origin, e.g. (E) ды di, (M) и i 'and', (E) эли eli, (M) или ili 'or', (E, M) а a 'but'. Subordinating conjunctions are constructed from native pronominal elements, such as (E) кодак kodak 'when', (E) кода koda, (M) куда kаda 'when, if, like', (E) секс s'eks, (M) сяс s'as 'therefore' or borrowed from Russian, such as (E, M) што s'to 'that' (E) штобу s'tobu, (M) штоба s'toba 'in order that'. (Bartens 1999: 167, Cygankin et al. 2000: 256–9, Aljamkin et al. 2000: 201–7.)

- (129) Erzya (N.E.)  
 Кодак молян школав, сестэ кортан тонавтицянтъ марто.  
 kodak mol'an s'kola-v, s'es'te  
 when go-PRS.1SG school-LAT then  
 korta-n tonavtits'a-n'tj marto  
 talk-PRS.1SG teacher-GEN.DEF.SG with  
 'When I go to school, then I'll talk with the teacher.'

- (130) Erzya (N.E.)  
 Минь вирьстэ ускинек ламо пенгть, штобу телня а кельмевлинек.  
 min'j vir'-ste usk-in'ek lamo peng-tj  
 1PL forest-ELA carry-PST1.1PL much fire.wood-NOM.PL  
 s'tobu t'e'lj-n'a a kel'me-vli-n'ek  
 so.that winter-TEMP NEG freeze-COND-1PL  
 'We carried a lot of wood from the forest in order not to feel cold in the winter.'

- (131) Moksha (MORMULA)  
 Кодама валхт мумс штоба азомс тядятнень-  
 алятнень кенярдемаснон, мзярда син тага нязезь  
 шумбра и таза цёраснон.  
 kodama val'-t mu-ms s'toba azə-ms  
 what.kind word-PL find-INF1 in.order.that tell-INF1  
 t'æd'æ-t'n'an'-al'æ-t'n'an'  
 mother-GEN.DEF.PL-father-GEN.DEF.PL  
 ken'ær'də-ma-snən məz'arda s'in taga  
 joy-NMLZ-GEN.POSS.3PL when 3PL again  
 n'æjə-z'j s'umbra i taza  
 see-PST1.3PL>3SG healthy and strong  
 ts'ora-snən  
 man-GEN.POSS.3PL  
 'What kind of words can one find to tell of the joy of parents when they saw again their healthy and strong son?'

- (132) Moksha (MORMULA)  
 kаda s'æ ping-s af purəm-ij'tj  
 if that time-ILL NEG gather-PRS.3PL  
 s'embæ od lomat't'n'æ, kаda  
 all young person.NOM.DEF.PL if  
 af anəkla-saz'j s'embæ-tj,  
 NEG prepare-PRS.3PL>3SG everything-GEN.DEF.SG  
 mez'æ son kiz'əfn'ə-s'j, esta pəltə-sin'æ  
 what 3SG ask-PST1.3SG then burn-PRS.3SG>3PL  
 kudə-n't'an', paks'æ-n't'an', a  
 house-GEN.POSS.2PL field-GEN.POSS.2PL but  
 t'in'ts'an'j piks'-s'ə-t'æd'æz'  
 2PL.EMPH.GEN beat-FREQ-PRS.3SG>2PL  
 lok'fə-sa kulə-ms  
 whip-INE die-INF1  
 'If by then all the young people have not gathered together, if they do not prepare everything that he asked for, he will burn your houses, your fields, but as for you yourselves, he will beat you to death with a whip.'

#### 23.4.5.2 Non-finite subordination

Non-finite verb forms are used to construct dependent clauses. Examples (133)–(135) with converbs express simultaneity. (See 23.3.2.4 and chapter 48 for more details.)

- (133) Erzya (MORMULA)  
 Парсте эрить-аштить, монгак ютамсто совсинь тенст.  
 par's't'e er'-it'-ašt'-it', mon-gak  
 well live-PRS.3PL-be-PRS.3PL 1SG-FOC

**juta-msto** sovs<sup>i</sup>-in<sup>i</sup> t'enst  
go-CVB visit-PST1.1SG 3PL.DAT  
'They live well, when I was going around, I visited them.'

kona-n<sup>i</sup> s'æs'k-in'æ mon<sup>i</sup>ts<sup>i</sup>  
which-GEN win-PST1.1SG>3SG 1SG.EMPH  
'This was probably the first book which I won.'

## (134) Moksha (MokshEr)

Пенсияс тумстонза од кочкаф велень оцюняти сон  
тядякс лямбоста мярьгсь:...

pensija-s **tu-mstə-nza** od kotĕka-f  
pension-ILL leave-CVB-POSS.3SG new choose-PTCP

vel'ə-n<sup>i</sup> o<sup>i</sup>ts'un'æ-t'i son t'æd'a-ks  
village-GEN chief-DAT 3SG mother-TRSL

l'æmbə-sta mæ'r'g-s<sup>i</sup>  
warm-ELA say-PST1.3SG

'When he retired, he said to the newly chosen village chief, warmly like a mother:...'

## (135) Erzya (MokshEr)

Меельцекс мон кутмордынъ цѣратнень, ды  
сюкпрянь ёвтамга алтынъ тенст кучомс  
казнекс эсь книган.

mej<sup>i</sup>l'ŕs'e-ks mon kutmord-in<sup>i</sup> t's'ora-t'n'en<sup>i</sup>  
last-TRSL 1SG hug-PST1.1SG man-GEN.DEF.PL

di s'ukpr'a-n<sup>i</sup> **jovta-mga** alt-in<sup>i</sup>  
and thank-GEN tell-CVB give-PST1.1SG

t'enst kutĕo-ms kazn'e-ks es<sup>i</sup> kn'iga-n  
they.DAT send-INF1 gift-TRSL own book-POSS.1SG  
'Finally, I hugged the men and saying thanks gave them my own book to be sent as a gift.'

## 23.4.5.3 Relative clauses

Prenominal relative clauses can be constructed by participles (see 23.3.2.4), postnominal relative clauses by finite forms with the relative pronoun (E, M) *kona* *kona* 'which', see examples (136) and (137). In addition, all interrogative pronouns can be used as relative pronouns (Bartens 1999: 117).

## (136) Erzya (MokshEr)

Сѣрматнеде, конатнень авась получинзе фронтсто,  
весемезэ кавто.

s'orma-t'n'ed'e kona-t'n'en<sup>i</sup> ava-s<sup>i</sup>  
letter-PART.DEF.PL which-GEN.DEF.PL woman-NOM.DEF.SG

poluĕ-in'ze front-sto ves'eme-ze kavto  
receive-PST1.3SG>3SG front-ELA all-POSS.3SG two  
'Of the letters which the woman received from the front, there are altogether two.'

## (137) Moksha (MokshEr)

Шяць, тя васенце книганясель, конань сяськине  
монць.

ŕæt<sup>i</sup> t'æ vas'ən'ts'æ kn'iga-n'æ-s<sup>i</sup>-ə<sup>i</sup>  
maybe this first book-DIM-NOM.DEF.SG-PST2.3SG

## 23.5 Lexicon

## 23.5.1 Word formation

The main means of word formation are derivation and compounding. Derivation was already treated in 23.3.3, so in this section only different types of compounding are discussed.

In both languages the difference between a compound word and a phrase is hard to define and this is not always consistently shown in the orthography (Bartens 1999: 88–9); e.g. (E) *судо варя sudo var'a* or *судоваря sudovar'a* 'nostril' (*судо sudo* 'nose' + *варя var'a* 'hole'). As was mentioned in 23.2.5.1, assimilation in the word boundary is marked in the orthography if the components are written as one word, e.g. (E, M) *ведьгев ved'gev* 'watermill' (E, M *ведь ved'* 'water' + *кев kev* 'stone'); according to Bartens (ibid.), the assimilation can be regarded as a criterion for interpreting a word as a compound. Sometimes sounds can be lost in the word boundary, e.g. (E) *тулевкс tul'evks* 'young pig' (E *туво tuvo* 'pig' + *левкс l'evks* 'young of an animal'), (M) *лаймарь lajmar<sup>i</sup>* 'bird cherry' (M *лайме lajmæ* 'bird cherry tree' + *марь mar<sup>i</sup>* 'apple, fruit'). In addition to nouns, adjectives can appear as first components of compounds, as in (E, M) *одава odava* 'stepmother' (од *od* 'new' + *ава ava* 'mother').

A copulative construction is a special type of a compound that consists of two heads (e.g. Bartens 1999: 105). These are found in nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Copulative constructions often express superordinate concepts; the components refer to two separate but related referents but the meaning of the construction is more than the sum of its parts. When nouns are involved, both components are usually in the plural, e.g. (E) *пенчть-вакант pentĕt'-vakant*, (M) *куцюфт-шаванят kuts'uft-ŕavan'at* 'kitchen utensils' (lit. 'spoons-cups'). Similar constructions exist in adjectives, e.g. (E) *виде-паро vid'e-paro*, (M) *виде-пара vid'æ-para* 'true, real, truthful' (lit. 'straight-good') (Bartens 1999: 110).

Within verbs, superordinate concepts can also be formed, e.g. (E) *киштемс-морамс kif'tems-morams*, (M) *кштимс-морамс kŕtims-morams* 'have fun, party' (lit. 'dance-sing'). Moreover, there are compound verbs in which the latter part is found only in the compound, not as an independent verb, e.g. (E) *якамс-пакамс jakams-pakams* 'wander, roam', (M) *якамс-шяямс jakams-ŕejams* (E, M *якамс jakams* 'go'). There are also compound verb pairs in which the second component has an aspectual effect on the first one; for example, the verb (E) *tee- tjeje-*, (M) *тие- tija-* 'do' is used

to give a punctual or perfective meaning to the first component, e.g. (E) кортамс-теемс kortams-tʲejems, (M) корхтамс-тиемс koṛtams-tʲijəms ‘talk (for a while)’ (E корта- korta-, M корхта- koṛta- ‘talk’) (Bartens 1999: 157).

Reduplication produces distributive adverbs, e.g. (E) шкань-шкань ʃkanʲ-ʃkanʲ ‘at times, occasionally’ (E шка ʃka ‘time’, -nʲ GEN), (M) пингонь-пингонь piŋənʲ-piŋənʲ ‘at times, occasionally’ (M пинге piŋə ‘time’, -nʲ GEN) (Bartens 1999: 92).

### 23.5.2 Loanword strata

There are old loanwords with an Iranian background that entered the language at stages before the Proto-Mordvin period. In Common Mordvin loanword strata words of Iranian, Baltic, Turkic, and Russian origin can be identified. Some loanwords from different sources are listed below. (Grünthal 2012a, Serebrennikov 1967: 245–56, Zaicz 1998: 213–14, Paasonen 1897.)

- i. Iranian: (E) alʲa, (M) alʲæ ‘man’, (E, M) lomanʲ ‘person’, (E) pitʲnʲe, (M) pitʲnʲæ ‘price’; (E) vasta ‘spouse’, (E) virʲez, (M) verəz ‘lamb(kin)’.
- ii. Baltic: (E, M) al ‘egg’, (E, M) karks ‘belt’, (E, M) kardaz ‘yard’, (E) lango (M) langa ‘surface, cover’, (E) pejelʲ, (M) pejelʲ ‘knife’, (E) penge, (M) pengə ‘log, firewood’, (E) purʲginʲe, (M) purʲgənʲæ ‘thunder’, (E) simenʲ, (M) sʲimənʲ, ‘root; tribe’, (E) tʲoʒonʲ, (M) tʲoʒənʲ ‘thousand’, (E, M) virʲ ‘forest’.
- iii. Turkic: **Middle Bulgarian/Old Chuvash** (E) kenʲdʲal, (M) kelda ‘bedbug’, (E) komolʲa, (M) komlʲæ ‘hops’, (E) kʲʃumanʲ, (M) kuʃmanʲ ‘radish’, (E) sʲukoro, (M) tʲsʲukər ‘(millet) cake’, (M) aʲjəra, aʲjra ‘cool (weather)’, (E, M) ava ‘woman, mother’, (E) sʲirʲtʲ, (M) sʲirʲək ‘ash’. **Tatar in both** (E, M) alaʃa ‘horse’, (E, M) aʲdʲa- ‘drive’, (E) aʲjgor, (M) aʲjgər ‘stallion’, (E, M) tʲsʲora ‘man, boy’, (E, M) jarmak ‘money’, (E) paksʲa, (M) paksʲæ ‘field, meadow’, (E) karʃo, (M) karʃa ‘opposite’, (E) pek, (M) pək ‘very’. **Only Erzya** (E) tolkun ‘wave’, (E) utʲsʲa ‘backbone’. **Only Moksha** (M) aru ‘clean’, (M) tʲsʲebærʲ ‘good’, (M) ʃra, ʃəra ‘table’, (M) ezna ‘brother-in-law’, (M) isa ‘willow’, (M) konak ‘guest’, (M) osal ‘bad, weak’, (M) utʲsʲəz ‘cheap’.
- iv. Slavic: (E, M) rozʲ ‘rye’, (E) vesʲe ‘all’; Newer loans from Russian: (E) robotʲa-, (M) rabota- ‘work’, (E) koziʲaʲka, koziʲejka ‘wife, mistress of the house’, (M) tʲutsʲə ‘cloud’.

The amount of Russian loans grows in Erzya and Moksha all the time, in modern languages there are no phoneme sub-

stitutions: (E, M) datʲea ‘villa, summer house’, (E, M) flag ‘flag’, (E, M) xudoʒnʲik ‘artist’, etc.

## 23.6 Text

### 23.6.1 Erzya text example

(138) Алкукс меремс, минек  
alkuks merʲe-ms minʲek  
true say-INF1 1PL.GEN

покштятне-бабатне  
pokʃtʲa-tʲnʲe-baba-tʲnʲe  
grandfather-NOM.DEF.PL-grandmother-NOM.DEF.PL

ульнестъ превейдеяк превейть, секс  
ulʲ-nʲe-sʲtʲ prʲevej-dʲe-jak prʲevej-tʲ sʲe-ks  
be-FREQ-PST1.3PL wise-PAR-FOC wise-PL it-TRSL

што муизъ те эрямо  
ʃto mu-izʲ tʲe ɛrʲa-mo  
that find-PST1.3PL>3SG this live-NMLZ

тарканть.  
tarka-nʲtʲ  
place-GEN.DEF.SG

‘To tell the truth, our grandparents were very wise as they found this living place.’

(139) Эрва ёндо виресь кутмордазь  
erʲva jon-do virʲe-sʲ kutmorda-zʲ  
every direction-PART forest-NOM.DEF.SG embrace-CVB

кутморды минек веленть, секскак  
kutmord-i minʲek velʲe-nʲtʲ sʲe-ks-kak  
embrace-PRS.3SG 1PL.GEN village-GEN.DEF.SG it-TRSL-FOC

кодаткак даволт-вармат а  
koda-t-kak davol-t-varma-t a  
which-PL-FOC storm-PL-wind-PL NEG.PRS

токить сонзэ.  
tok-itʲ sonze  
touch-PRS.3PL 3SG.GEN

‘From every direction our village is embraced by the forest and that is why no kind of storm or wind can touch it.’

(140) Велесэнек, конанень мерить Мурза  
velʲe-se-nʲek kona-nʲenʲ merʲ-itʲ murza  
village-INE-POSS.1PL which-DAT say-PRS.1PL Murza

веле эрзякс, эрить важодема  
 vel'e er'z'a-ks, er'i-it' vazod'e-ma  
 village Erzya-TRSL live-PRS.3PL work-NMLZ

вечкиця ломанть.  
 vet'ek-its'a loman'i-t'  
 love-PTCP person-PL

'In our village, which is called Murza village in Erzya,  
 people live who love to work.'  
 (Š)

касфтомань монь  
 kas-ftə-man' mon'  
 grow-CAUS-PST1.3SG>1SG 1SG.GEN

щавазе, сон ашезе  
 s:ava-z'æ, son aʃə-z'æ  
 grandmother-POSS.1SG 3SG NEG.PST1-3SG>3SG

сода рузонь кяльть.  
 soda ruzə-n' kæl'-t'.  
 know.CNG Russian-GEN language-GEN.DEF.SG

'When I was little, until I was five years old, I was  
 raised by my grandmother, she didn't know Russian.'  
 (Ko)

### 23.6.2 Moksha text example

- (141) Мон шачень-касонь Мордовия  
 mon ʃat'ə-n'-kasə-n' mordovija  
 1SG be.born-PST1.1SG-grow-PST1.1SG Mordovija
- республикаса, Торбеева велеса мокшень  
 r'espublika-sa, torbejeva vel'ə-sa mokʃə-n'  
 republic-INE Torbejeva village-INE Moksha-GEN
- семьяса— национальностень коряс  
 s'em'ja-sa nats'ional'nos't'ə-n' kor'as  
 family-INE nationality-GEN with.respect.to
- мокшан.  
 mokʃa-n.  
 Moksha-PRS.1SG

'I was born and raised in the Republic of Mordovija, in  
 Torbejeva village, in a Moksha family—I am Moksha  
 by nationality.'

- (142) Тядязе-алязе стане жа  
 t'æd'zə-z'æ-al'zə-z'æ stan'æ za  
 mother-POSS.1SG-father-POSS.1SG like.that same
- мокшет, шачсть Носакино велеса  
 mokʃə-t, ʃat'ə-s't' nosakino vel'ə-sa  
 Moksha-PL be.born-PST1.3PL Nosakino village-INE
- (велеть лемоц тусь  
 (vel'ə-t' l'emə-ts tu-s'  
 village-GEN.DEF.SG name-POSS.3SG go-PST1.3SG
- сядонголень мокшень лемста Носкай).  
 s'jadəngə'lə-n' mokʃə-n' l'em-sta noskaj).  
 it.PART.before-GEN Moksha-GEN name-ELA Noskaj

'My parents were likewise Moksha people, they were  
 born in Nosakino village (the name of the village  
 came from an earlier Moksha name, Noskaj).'

- (143) Ёмлянаста, вете кизонень топодемс,  
 jomla-n'ə-sta, vet'æ kizə-n'ən' topəd'ə-ms,  
 small-DIM-ELA five year-DAT.DEF.SG fill-INF1

### 23.7 Further reading

The most extensive academic grammars of Mordvin languages are Evsev'ev (1963 [1929], 1931), Koljaděnkov (1954, 1959), Koljaděnkov and Zavodova (1962), Cygankin and Devaev (1975), and Cygankin (1980), which were all published in the Soviet Union and are only available in Russian. Another grammar in Russian is the large-scale grammar of Moksha written from a typological perspective and edited by Toldova and Xolodilova (2018). In addition, both languages have a rather recent grammar written in the native languages: Cygankin et al. 2000 (in Erzya) and Aljamkin et al. 2000 (in Moksha). Grammatical descriptions written in other languages are either very old (e.g. Ahlqvist 1861 and Wiedemann 1865 in German) or quite brief (e.g. Paasonen 1953 in German, and Erdődi 1968 and Keresztes 1990 in Hungarian). There are also a few historical grammars such as Bubrix (1953 in Russian), Serebrennikov (1967 in Russian), Bartens (1999 in Finnish), and Keresztes (2011 in Hungarian). The descriptions published in English are rather short articles that only give the general outline of the languages (e.g. Raun 1988a and Zaicz 1998). A concise but informative description of the dialects of both Erzya and Moksha is Feoktistov (1990 in both German and Russian).

### Acknowledgements

This chapter was prepared as a part of the project *The Descriptive Mordvin Grammar*, funded by Kone Foundation, to which we would like to express our gratitude. We would also like to thank Natalia Ermakov, a native speaker of Erzya, who helped us in eliciting and checking the Erzya examples.