

## **What do paradigms look like (and why care anyway)?**

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The glossing of linguistic examples used to be scandalously chaotic; things are improving gradually, as a result of linguists' collective conscience and the availability of the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Now we should move on to consider how we represent the different forms of lexemes – their inflectional paradigms. For some linguists, this reflects key issues about how inflectional morphology works; for others, for whom paradigms are epiphenomena, it is still important to be clear about what can and cannot be inferred from their means of representation. I shall therefore start with nuts--and--bolts issues about presentation of the forms of lexemes, and then analyse instances where the difficulty of presentation shows a real difficulty in understanding. For the presentation of inflectional forms, we conventionally represent different features using different dimensions for each (with difficulties when there are more than two), and split or combine cells according to unspoken conventions about majorities of distinct forms within the lexeme and across lexemes. In one sense such representations are of secondary importance, compared with understanding the phenomenon; however, they can prove a real hindrance – that is why we should care. Turning to the reality of paradigms, there are instances which are truly challenging in their complexity. We look at one of these, found in Archi (Daghestanian). The difficulty is not in the vast scale of the paradigms, for which Archi is famous, but in a small part of the paradigm, where person interacts with gender and number. I shall lay out the issue in detail, showing the several ways in which the paradigm exhibits non--canonical behaviour, which is both hard to grasp and hard to represent.