

External agreement in the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh

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1. Introduction

This paper analyzes the morphosyntactic properties of the general converb of Northern Akhvakh, focusing on a cross-linguistically rare type of agreement, by which a dependent verb agrees both ‘internally’ with its own S/P argument, and ‘externally’ with the S/P argument of the higher verb.¹ This phenomenon, also found in other Andic languages, provides decisive evidence for establishing the type of complex construction to which the converbal construction belongs.²

Akhvakh (*aš^waī mičⁱ*, Russian *axvaxskij jazyk*) belongs to the Andic (sub-)branch of the Northeast Caucasian (or Nakh-Daghestanian) family.³ According to Magomedova & Abdulaeva 2007, Akhvakh has approximately 20 000 speakers. Four dialects are traditionally recognized. One of them is designated as Northern Akhvakh, whereas the other three are grouped under the label of Southern Akhvakh.

Northern Akhvakh is spoken in four villages of the Axvaxskij Rajon in the western part of Daghestan (Tadmagitl’, Lologonitl’, Kudijab-Roso, and Izani), in recent settlements in the lowlands of Daghestan, and in Axaxdərə near Zaqatala (Azerbaijan). The variety of Akhvakh spoken in Axaxdərə, where I have carried most of my field work, does not differ significantly from the varieties of Northern Akhvakh spoken in the Axvaxskij Rajon, and it would not be justified to treat it as a

¹ For a typological survey of possible agreement domains, see (Corbett 2006:54-70). Note immediately that the mechanism of ‘external agreement’ by which dependent verbs agree with an argument of the higher verb cannot be subsumed under the term of ‘long-distance agreement’, since this term as it is currently used refers to a particular variety of ‘internal’ agreement by which a verb agrees with an NP included in a complement clause.

² Northern Akhvakh also has a variety of specialized converbs which have been dealt with in (Creissels Submitted) and are not considered in this paper. The term ‘converbal construction’ must be taken here as an abbreviation for ‘construction involving the general converb’. It is used in the singular because, although *semantic* subtypes of the converbal construction can be recognized, I came across no evidence that would support a distinction between several *syntactically* different constructions involving the general converb.

³ The other Andic languages are Andi, Bagvalal, Botlikh, Chamala, Godoberi, Karata, and Tindi. None of them has a particularly close relationship to Akhvakh. Andic languages are traditionally grouped with Avar and Tsezic languages into a single branch of the Northeast Caucasian family. The other branches of the Northeast Caucasian family are Lak, Dargi (or Dargwa), Lezgi, Khinalug (sometimes considered a marginal member of the Lezgi branch), and Nakh.

separate dialect. The Southern Akhvakh dialects are spoken in one village each (Cegob, Tljanub and Ratlub), all situated in the Šamil'skij Rajon of Daghestan.

Magomedbekova 1967 and Magomedova & Abdulaeva 2007 are the main references on Akhvakh. The analysis proposed in this paper is based on field work carried in Axaxdərə and Tadmagitl'. Like the other Andic languages, Akhvakh has no writing tradition. The transcription used in this paper departs from the API conventions on the following points: alveolar voiceless affricate *c*; palato-alveolar fricatives *š* (voiceless) and *ž* (voiced); palato-alveolar affricates *č* (voiceless) and *ž* (voiced); lateral voiceless affricate *l*; the macron is used for long vowel and strong consonants.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 summarizes the basics of Northern Akhvakh morphosyntax. Section 3 describes the formation and morphological properties of the general converb. Section 4 briefly presents the use of the general converb in the formation of analytic tenses. Section 5 provides a first approach to the converbal construction, examining in particular its properties with respect to argument sharing and recursivity. In section 6, I show that evidence of the asymmetrical nature of the converbal construction can be drawn from the observation of co-reference mechanisms, linear order, embedding, relativization, and negation. In section 7, after defining the distinction between internal and external agreement, illustrated by the participial construction and attributive adjectives, I describe the external agreement of converbs and its limitations, and I show that this atypical agreement mechanism can be viewed as a particular case of another cross-linguistically rare agreement mechanism found in Akhvakh: adverbial agreement. Section 8 summarizes the main conclusions of this study.

2. General remarks on Akhvakh morphosyntax

2.1. Clause structure

Akhvakh clause structure is characterized by flexible constituent order. Case marking and gender-number agreement between the verb and its core arguments are consistently ergative. In contrast, assertive agreement (see section 2.3) follows a split intransitive pattern.

Arguments the identity of which is recoverable from the context can freely be omitted, and unexpressed arguments receiving an arbitrary interpretation are common too.

Causative is the only valency-changing mechanism systematically expressed via verb morphology or grammaticalized periphrases.

2.2 Nouns and noun phrases

Three semantically transparent agreement classes of nouns are distinguished in the singular: human masculine (M), human feminine (F), and non-human (N). The only exceptions to the semantic rule of class assignment are *āde* 'person' and *mik'e* 'child', which in the singular trigger N agreement, whereas the corresponding plural

forms *ãdo* and *mik'eli* regularly trigger HPL agreement. In the plural, the distinction *masculine vs. feminine* is neutralized, resulting in a binary opposition *human plural* (HPL) vs. *non-human plural* (NPL). Noun morphology shows only frozen vestiges of gender prefixes.

In canonical NPs, the head noun stands in final position and is inflected for number and case. In headless NPs (i.e., in NPs the interpretation of which requires retrieving from the context a notion that could be expressed as the head of a canonical NP), class, number and case marks attach to the last word of the NP, whatever its nature.

All noun dependents in canonical NPs optionally take class suffixes agreeing with the head noun, and some adjectives have obligatory class agreement prefixes. However, not all adjectives have class agreement prefixes, noun dependents other than adjectives very rarely occur with agreement suffixes in canonical NPs, and suffixal agreement of adjectives is usual only in the HPL class. Akhvakh ignores case agreement.

Number inflection of nouns is irregular and involves considerable free variation.

The 1st and 2nd person pronouns show irregularities in their case inflection, but they show the same case distinctions as nouns. They are not marked for gender, but an inclusive vs. exclusive distinction is found in the 1st person plural. Akhvakh has no 3rd person pronouns, and uses demonstratives in the discursive function fulfilled by dedicated 3rd person pronouns in other languages.

The absolute form of nominals (used in the extra-syntactic function of quotation or designation, in S or P roles, and in predicate function) has no overt mark. Case suffixes may attach to a stem identical with the absolute form, or to a special *oblique stem*. For a discussion of the historical significance of the oblique stem, see Alekseev 2003:30-82. In the singular, the formation of the oblique stem is very irregular and involves considerable free variation. In the plural, the formation of the oblique stem is more regular. In particular, 'oblique stem markers' expressing class distinctions (M *-š̄u-*, F/N *-ti-*, HPL *-lo-*, NPL *-le-*) are more systematically used in the plural than in the singular. In headless NPs, the use of these oblique stem markers is systematic.

Case inflection includes the following cases directly attached to the oblique stem of the noun:

- ERG (ergative): *-de*
- DAT (dative): *-La*
- GEN (genitive): \emptyset or *-Īi*
- COM (comitative) *-k'ena*
- five series of spatial cases encoding different spatial configurations,⁴ with three cases in each series: ESS (essive) *-i* or *-e*, LAT (lative) *-a*, and EL (elative) *-u(ne)*; *-u*

⁴ The system of spatial cases of Akhvakh departs from the typical Daghestanian pattern in that one of the series (the *-g-* series) is a default series that does not encode a particular spatial configuration, and spatial configurations tend to be encoded by combining NPs showing default configuration marking with locative adverbs showing parallel spatial case inflection, rather than by using semantically marked configuration markers. Moreover, the characteristic consonant of the *-g-* series is not always apparent, due to morphophonological processes (for example, *šaha-ti-ga* 'to the town' can optionally be realized *šaha-t̄-a*).

was identified by Magomedbekova (1967) as ablative proper, and *-une* as perlative, with however a tendency to free variation, and the free variation seems to have generalized.

The purposive case (*-bana*) is an extension of the dative.

The distinction between three spatial cases applies to locative adverbs too.

There are two possible constructions for NP co-ordination: either “NP₁-*k'ena* NP₂”, where *-k'ena* is the suffix of the comitative case (also used for comitative or instrumental adjuncts), or “NP₁-*la* NP₂-*la*”, where *-la* is an additive particle (glossed ADD) also found in contexts in which it corresponds to English ‘also’, ‘in turn’, or ‘even’.

2.3. Verb inflection

Akhvakh verbs differ from all other categories by the fact that they always show an overt inflectional suffix: verbal inflection includes no form that would coincide with the bare stem, or whose inflection would involve prefixes only. There is however a distinction between two classes of verbs: those who obligatorily include a prefixal slot, and those devoid of it.

Suffixal inflection is identical for all verbs and expresses TAM, evidentiality/mirativity, polarity, finiteness, and class agreement with the absolutive argument. Person variations are found in one tense only (the perfective positive), and follow a typologically rare pattern for which I propose the term ‘assertive agreement’. For a detailed presentation of this aspect of the verbal system of Akhvakh, see Creissels 2008a & 2008b.

The prefixal inflection of the verbs that take inflectional prefixes is entirely independent from the distinctions of TAM, evidentiality/mirativity, polarity or finiteness expressed by suffixes. Prefixes invariably express class agreement with the absolutive argument.

The synthetic verb forms that have the ability to head independent clauses are characterized by the following paradigm of suffixes (or combinations of suffixes):⁵

- PF₁ (perfective₁): HPL *-iri*, other classes *-ari* or *-eri*
- PF₂ (perfective₂): HPL *-idi*, other classes *-ada(-CL)*
- PF.NEG (perfective negative): *-ila (-CL)*
- IPF₁ (imperfective₁): *-iri*
- IPF₂ (imperfective₂): HPL *-idi*, other classes *-ida(-CL)*
- IPF₁.NEG (imperfective₁ negative): *-iki*
- IPF₂.NEG (imperfective₂ negative): *-ika(-CL)*
- UW (past unwitnessed): M *-u-wudi*, F *-i-wudi*, N *-a-wudi* or *-e-wudi*, NPL *-ari-wudi* or *-eri-wudi*

⁵ In cases of allomorphic variation, whenever possible I have selected a single quotation form that can be analyzed as a relatively direct representation of the underlying form. Variants are however mentioned in cases of allomorphic variations whose analysis is still problematic at this stage of the investigation. (-CL) signals forms characterized by the optional addition of class agreement markers that may, either occur as separate suffixes, or merge with the last vowel of the preceding suffix.

- UW.NEG (past unwitnessed negative): M *-il-u-wudi*, F *-il-i-wudi*, N *-il-a-wudi* or *-il-e-wudi*, NPL *-il-ari-wudi* or *-il-eri-wudi*
- MIR (mirative): M *-u-wa*, F *-i-wa*, N *-a-wa*, HPL *-aji*, NPL *-ari-wa*
- MIR.NEG (mirative negative): M *-uš-u-wa*, F *-uš-i-wa*, N *-uš-a-wa*, HPL *-uš-aji*, NPL *-uš-ari-wa*
- POT (potential): M/N *-u-wa*, F *-i-wa*, HPL *-oji*, NPL *-uri-wa*
- IMP (imperative): *-a*
- PROH (prohibitive): *-uba*
- OPT (optative): *-a-l̄'a*
- OPT.NEG (optative negative): *-uba-l̄'a*

Additional semantic distinctions are expressed by analytic verb forms in which the auxiliary function is assumed by the copula *godī*, the verb *bik'urula* 'be', or the verb *mičunula* 'be found'.

The list of independent synthetic verb forms given above calls for the following remarks:

- a. The forms labeled 'perfective₁' and 'perfective₂' carry distinctions in the involvement of the assertor (i.e., the speaker in assertive clauses, the addressee in questions) in the event referred to: in assertions, PF₂ is typically used with transitive verbs involving a 1st person A, or intransitive verbs representing controllable events involving a 1st person S, whereas in questions, PF₂ is typically used with transitive verbs involving a 2nd person A, or intransitive verbs representing controllable events involving a 2nd person S (see Creissels 2008a & 2008b for more details). This distinction is neutralized in the negative.
- b. The distinctions PF₁ vs. PF₂ and IPF₁ vs. IPF₂ seem to be historically related, since the PF₁ and IPF₁ suffixes have in common the ending *ri*, contrasting with *da* common to the PF₂ and IPF₂ suffixes. Moreover, PF₂ and IPF₂ share the possibility to be used as participles, whereas PF₁ and IPF₁ are strictly finite verb forms. However, functionally, the choice between IPF₁ and IPF₂ in their use as independent verb forms clearly puts into play aspecto-modal distinctions, and has nothing to do with distinctions in assertor's involvement, or more generally with person distinctions: both forms can express a habitual meaning, but there is a clear tendency to prefer IPF₂ as the marker of habitual aspect, whereas IPF₁ is used in modal contexts in which it is impossible to substitute IPF₂ for it.
- c. UW (past unwitnessed) is typically used to refer to events known by hearsay. It occurs in inferential contexts too, but this use is much less common. UW has no HPL form, and in contexts in which an HPL form of this tense could be expected to occur, Akhvakh speakers use the form of the perfect (an analytic tense consisting of the general converb HPL of the auxiliated verb and the copula in auxiliary function).
- d. MIR (mirative) is a verb form encountered mainly (but not exclusively) in questions. This form is particular common (in fact, almost obligatory) in *why*-questions, which suggests analyzing it as expressing surprise.

Northern Akhvakh has four participles. Each of them is homonymous with one of the independent verb forms listed above, and the distinction between the four forms in question can be described as the combination of two binary distinctions *perfective* vs. *imperfective* and *positive* vs. *negative*. It is interesting to observe that the four independent verb forms coinciding with participles are precisely those characterized by the optional suffixation of a class marker: perfective₂, perfective negative, imperfective₂, and imperfective₂ negative. On the participles of Northern Akhvakh, see (Creissels In press).

Strictly dependent verb forms include a verbal noun (or masdar), an infinitive, a general converb, a progressive converb, and several specialized converbs expressing various semantic types of adverbial subordination. On the specialized converbs of Northern Akhvakh, see (Creissels Submitted).

3. The general converb: morphology

The suffix of the general converb (glossed *CVB*) consists of two formatives. The first one expresses class agreement: *-o-* (M) / *-e-* (F) / *-e-* (N) / *-i-* (HPL) / *-ere-* (NPL). The second one (*-he*) is probably the original converb marker, but it cannot be analyzed as such anymore in Northern Akhvakh, since it has become most of the time optional. For example, the general converbs of *k̄ʷeturula* ‘run’ (stem |*k̄ʷet-*|) and *beq’urula* ‘come (stem |*-eq’-*|) have the forms listed in (1):

(1) *The suffix of the general converb*

M	<i>k̄ʷet-o(he)</i>	<i>w-oq’-o(he)</i>
F	<i>k̄ʷet-e(he)</i>	<i>j-eq’-e(he)</i>
N	<i>k̄ʷet-e(he)</i>	<i>b-eq’-e(he)</i>
HPL	<i>k̄ʷet-i(he)</i>	<i>b-eq’-i(he)</i>
NPL	<i>k̄ʷet-ere(he)</i>	<i>r-eq’-ere(he)</i>

When the formative *-he* is maintained, its vowel may undergo assimilation, which gives rise to variants *-oho* (M) and *-ihi* (HPL). In the speech of my consultants from Axaxdərə, this assimilation is systematic. I also have observed in Axaxdərə a tendency to reduce the agreement morphology of the general converb by using *-e(he)* (already used for F and N agreement) for NPL agreement too, leaving only the M and HPL classes with non-ambiguous agreement marks.

The suffix of the general converb interacts in a specific way with a subclass of verb stems characterized by a special behavior of their final consonant. The verb stems of Northern Akhvakh obligatorily end with a consonant, and the suffixes that can attach to verb stems all begin with a vowel. There is however a subclass of verb stems the final consonant of which is deleted in combination with some suffixes. When this deletion occurs, the last vowel of the stem merges with the initial vowel of the suffix, resulting in a long vowel. The division of verb suffixes into those that trigger the maintenance of stem final unstable consonants and those that trigger their deletion is synchronically arbitrary. In the case of the general converb, the

deletion of stem final unstable consonant occurs in the M, F and NPL classes, whereas the unstable consonant is maintained in the N and HPL classes. An interesting consequence of this distribution is that consonant deletion has become here an indirect means of marking the distinction between the F and N classes, as illustrated in (2).

(2) *Interaction between the suffix of the general converb and stem-final unstable consonants*

	<i>lūrula</i> ‘fear’ (stem Li(b)-)		<i>čōrula</i> ‘wash’ (stem ča(b)-)	
M	<i>L-ōhe</i>	< * <i>Li-ohe</i>	<i>č-ōhe</i>	< * <i>ča-ohe</i>
F	<i>L-ēhe</i>	< * <i>Li-ehe</i>	<i>č-āhe</i>	< * <i>ča-ehe</i>
N	<i>Lib-e(he)</i>		<i>čab-e(he)</i>	
HPL	<i>Lib-i(he)</i>		<i>čab-i(he)</i>	
NPL	<i>L-ēre(he)</i>	< * <i>Li-ere(he)</i>	<i>č-āre(he)</i>	< * <i>čā-ere(he)</i>

As indicated in (2), another peculiarity of such stems is that the formative *-he* is always maintained with such stems in M and F classes, even by speakers who never use it in other contexts.

The negative form of the general converb is obtained by inserting the negative marker *-il-* between the verb stem and the general converb suffix. The negation marker *-il-* triggers the deletion of unstable consonants irrespective of class agreement. For example, *k̄^weturula* ‘run’, *lūrula* ‘fear’ and *čōrula* ‘wash’ have the negative forms of the general converb listed in (3):

(3) *The negative form of the general converb*

	<i>k̄^weturula</i> ‘run’ (stem k̄ ^w et-)	<i>lūrula</i> ‘fear’ (stem Li(b)-)		<i>čōrula</i> ‘wash’ (stem ča(b)-)	
M	<i>k̄^wet-il-o(he)</i>	<i>L-il-o(he)</i>	< * <i>Li-il-o(he)</i>	<i>č-ēl-o(he)</i>	< * <i>ča-il-o(he)</i>
F	<i>k̄^wet-il-e(he)</i>	<i>L-il-e(he)</i>	< * <i>Li-il-e(he)</i>	<i>č-ēl-e(he)</i>	< * <i>ča-il-e(he)</i>
N	<i>k̄^wet-il-e(he)</i>	<i>L-il-e(he)</i>	< * <i>Li-il-e(he)</i>	<i>č-ēl-e(he)</i>	< * <i>ča-il-e(he)</i>
HPL	<i>k̄^wet-il-i(he)</i>	<i>L-il-i(he)</i>	< * <i>Li-il-i(he)</i>	<i>č-ēl-i(he)</i>	< * <i>ča-il-i(he)</i>
NPL	<i>k̄^wet-il-ere(he)</i>	<i>L-il-ere(he)</i>	< * <i>Li-il-ere(he)</i>	<i>č-ēl-ere(he)</i>	< * <i>ča-il-ere(he)</i>

4. The general converb in the formation of analytic tenses

The general converb combines with the copula *godi* or the verb *bik’urula* ‘be’ in auxiliary function to give analytic tenses semantically similar to the English perfect, as in ex. (4) & (5). In the analytic tenses of Akhvakh, the linear order is obligatorily *auxiliated verb* + *auxiliary*, and nothing can be inserted between the auxiliated verb and the auxiliary.

(4) *iš^wada-š^w-e lāgi b-iq̄^w-e godi.*
 ELIC⁶ shepherd-M-ERG sheep N-cut.the.throat.of-CVB.N COP₁.N
 ‘The shepherd has killed a sheep.’

(5) *iš^wada-š^w-e lāgi b-iq̄^w-e b-ik'-a-wudi.*
 ELIC shepherd-M-ERG sheep N-cut.the.throat.of-CVB.N N-be-N-UW
 ‘The shepherd (reportedly) had killed a sheep.’

This aspect of the use of the general converb, which concerns the system of verbal inflection rather than syntax proper, will not be analyzed further in this paper.

5. First approach to the converbal construction

5.1. Definition and illustrations

In this paper, ‘converbal construction’ applies to the biclausal construction formed by the general converb and another verb, in which each of the two verbs manifests its own argument structure. Usually (but not obligatorily – see below) the converb precedes the other verb involved in the construction.

(6) *jaše q̄'e-īa j-et-e j-ī-wi.*
 AXD girl home-ILLAT F-run-CVB.F F-go.F-UW
 ‘The girl went home running.’

(7) *hu-be řaq̄'ilo b-eřaq̄-aj-e g-ūx-ida.*
 AXD DEM-N intelligence N-work-CAUS-CVB.N do-OBLG-IPF₂
 ‘This must be done cleverly.’ (lit. ‘...making the intelligence work.’)

(8) *ak'o-de riī'i b-iř-e q̄'-ā-wi.*
 AXD wife-ERG meat N-cook-CVB.N eat-N-UW
 ‘The wife cooked the meat and ate it.’

(9) *moīa-š^w-e taχi-gune řgora b-eχ-e řhora-ge geī-i tūk-a-wi.*
 AXD Molla-M-ERG pocket-EL bread N-take-CVB.N lake-ESS inside-ESS dip-N-UW
 ‘Molla took some bread from his pocket and dipped it into the lake.’

5.2. The notion of main verb in the converbal construction

Without prejudging the conclusions of a study of other aspects of this construction, the verb which is not in converbal form in such sentences can be identified as the main verb on the basis of the fact that the converb plays no role in

⁶ The origin of the examples is coded as follows : ELIC signals elicited examples, AXD signals examples taken from texts collected in Axaxdərə, and TDM signals examples taken from texts collected in Tadmagitl'.

determining the finiteness properties of the construction. As illustrated by the preceding examples, the construction taken as a whole can function as an independent sentence if the main verb is in a form that has the ability to head independent clauses, and its possibilities of insertion in complex constructions depend entirely on the form taken by the main verb too. For example, it can be inserted in the participial construction if and only if the main verb is in a form that has the ability to head participial clauses, as illustrated by ex. (10), to be compared with (8) above.

- (10) *ak'o-de b-iž-e q'āda rił'i*
 ELIC wife-ERG N-cook-CVB.N eat-PF₂ meat
 'the meat that the wife ate after cooking it'

In ex. (11) and (12), the same converbal construction combining the converb of *belurula* 'herd' with *beq'urula* 'come' in main verb function gives rise to an independent utterance and to an adverbial clause, respectively. The main verb of the converbal construction, which occurs in an independent form in (11), occurs in (12) with the posterior converb ending *-ełi*, whereas no change affects the converb.

- (11) *ruč'u-la b-el-o moła rasadi hā-lā w-oq'-u-wi.*
 AXD flock-ADD N-herd-CVB.M Molla Rasadi village-ILLAT M-come-M-UW
 'Molla Rasadi came to the village herding the sheep.'

- (12) *ĩχe-lā zor-āda ek'wa ruč'u-la b-el-o w-oq'-ełi,*
 AXD river-ILLAT be.thrown-CAUS.PF₂ man herd-ADD N-herd-CVB.M M-come-POST
 'When the man they had thrown in the river came herding the sheep,

ādo damałilaj-i goli.
 person.PL get.astonished-CVB.HPL COP₁.HPL
 the people got astonished.'

Semantically, two types of uses of the converbal construction are particularly common: the converb may add a manner specification to the event encoded by the main verb, as in ex. (6) & (7); it may also encode an event viewed as the first stage of a complex event whose second stage is encoded by the main verb, as in ex. (8) & (9). However, examples that do not fit neatly either of these two semantic characterizations are not rare, as well as examples in which the context implies a relationship that does not boil down either to manner specification or mere sequentiality. The only possible functional characterization of the converbal construction is that it simply points to the existence of a link between two events, constituting the default strategy available whenever the speaker chooses to present two events as related and at the same time considers superfluous a more precise specification of their relationship.

5.3. Argument sharing in the converbal construction

The converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh involves no strict syntactic constraint on argument sharing. The following examples illustrate the following configurations:

- two intransitive clauses sharing their S arguments (13);
- two transitive clauses sharing both their A and P arguments (14);
- two transitive clauses sharing their A arguments only (15);
- co-reference between the S argument of an intransitive clause and the A argument of a transitive clause (16) & (17);
- co-reference between the S argument of an intransitive clause and the P argument of a transitive clause (18);
- argument sharing involving non-core arguments (i.e., arguments encoded as NPs in cases other than the absolute case or the ergative case) (19);
- absence of argument sharing (20) & (21).

(13) *w-ōho w-oq'-u-wi.*

AXD M-go.CVB.M M-come-M-UW

'He went (there) and came (back).' (S = S)

(14) *moła rasadi w-uḡ-o rała-lā zor-ō-wi.*

AXD Molla Rasadi M-seize-CVB.M sea-ILLAT be.thrown-CAUS.M-UW

'They seized Molla and threw him into the sea.' (A = A and P = P)

(15) *bovoda ik'ar-ōho m-ač-uba!*

AXD much enlarge-CVB.M N-tell-PROH

'Don't exaggerate his qualities!' (A = A)

(lit. 'Don't tell (things) enlarging him much!')

(16) *moła simalaḡ-o eḷ'-a-wi...*

AXD Molla get.angry-CVB.M say-N-UW

'Molla got angry and said...' (S = A)

(17) *hade jaše ima-la w-ol-o j-eq'-i-wi ušku-ḷ-a.*

AXD DEM girl father-ADD M-lead-CVB.M F-come-F-UW school-N-LAT

'The girl took her father with her and came to the school.' (A = S)

(18) *če žo-ḷi ḥāki-s^w-e ž-ōho w-ḷ-wi moła rasadi.*

AXD one day-N(ESS) judge-M-ERG call-CVB.M M-go.M-UW Molla Rasadi

'One day Molla Rasadi was called by the judge and went.' (P = S)

(lit. 'One day the judge having called (him) Molla Rasadi went.')

(19) *če ek^wa-s^w-a moła harig-o moła-sū-lira qinaḷ-u-wi.*

AXD one man-M-DAT Molla see-CVB.M Molla-M-ADLAT come.near-M-UW

'A man saw Molla and came near him.'

(the absolutive argument of the converbal clause *mōla* is co-referent with the allative argument of the main clause *mōlašūīra*, and the unexpressed absolutive argument of the main clause is co-referent with the dative argument of the converbal clause *če ek^wašwa*)

(20) *ap'ada boč'o m-aʔ-e g-ūx-ida mik'e.*

AXD nine month N-go-CVB.N make-OBLG-IPF₂ child

‘A baby must be born at the end of nine months.’ (no argument sharing)

(lit. ‘A child must be made nine months having gone’)

(21) *mōla rasadi w-ul'i š^wela-īa m-āne ba-k'i goli.*

TDM Molla Rasadi M-die-CVB.HPL graveyard-ILLAT HPL-go.PROG HPL-be-CVB.HPL COP.HPL

‘Molla Rasadi died, and they were going to the graveyard.’ (no argument sharing)

However, not all possible configurations are equally well attested. There are clear statistical tendencies, but their explanation lies in regularities in text construction rather than in syntactic rules. The systematic study of a corpus constituted by the first 500 converbal constructions in the texts I collected in Axaxdərə gave the following results:

- full core argument sharing is observed in 33,4 % of the cases; this includes converbal constructions consisting of two intransitive clauses sharing their S arguments (20,4 %), and converbal constructions consisting of two transitive clauses sharing both their A and P arguments (13 %);
- partial core argument sharing is observed in 57,2 % of the cases; this includes converbal constructions consisting of two transitive clauses sharing their A arguments only (14,8 %), converbal constructions in which the S argument of an intransitive clause is co-referent with the A argument of a transitive clause (40,4 %), and converbal constructions in which the S argument of an intransitive clause is co-referent with the P argument of a transitive clause (2 %);
- argument sharing involving non-core arguments (in particular, but not exclusively, dative experiencers), concerns 6,2 % of the corpus;
- 3,2 % of the constructions in the corpus involve no argument sharing.

The most striking result of this study is that argument sharing configurations involving one A argument at least constitute 68,2 % of the corpus, whereas P arguments are involved mainly in cases of full core argument sharing between two transitive clauses; co-reference between P and S represents only 2 % of the corpus, and constructions with two transitive clauses sharing their P arguments only are not attested at all.

5.4. Converbal construction and recursivity

Converb chains in which converbs can be analyzed as fulfilling at the same time the role of main verb in their relation to another converb are also attested, as in ex. (22) & (23).

(22) *moġa rasadi muġura-gu L'one t'iġ'-o ʎalaxo heč'-o eġ'-a-wi...*
 AXD Molla Rasadi coffin-EL on.EL jump-CVB.M up stand-CVB.M say-N-UW
 'Molla Rasadi jumped from the coffin, stood up and said ...'

(23) *bač'a-la b-iġ-o ċ'oko-la b-eġ-o*
 AXD wolf-ADD N-cut.the.throat.of-CVB.M wolf-ADD N-take.off-CVB.M
 'I cut the throat of the wolf, took off its skin,

q'ėLeno geġ-i b-iġ-o w-ut'-oġo w-āda mac'eġ-a.
 bag(ESS) in-ESS N-put-CVB.M M-go.straight-CVB.M M-go.PF₂ Matsex-LAT
 put it in my bag and went straight to Matsex.'

However, relatively long chains of converbs describing successive events are not typical of Akhvakh discourse, and in the texts I have collected, sentences such as (23) are quite exceptional. Converb chains are only one of the strategies Akhvakh speakers use when describing sequences of events: they also widely use temporal converbs that encode the relation between the successive events in a more precise way, and sequences of independent clauses linked only by intonation are very common too.

In the corpus of 500 converbal constructions used in section 5.3 to evaluate the relative frequency of the possible configurations of argument sharing in converbal constructions, 9 % of the sentences include a combination of two converbal constructions in which the main verb in one of the two constructions in the converb with respect to a higher verb. Sentences with three successive converbs represent 2 % of the corpus, and sentences with four successive converbs, less than 0.4 %. Interestingly, one of the very few attestations of sentences with four successive converbs comes from one of my youngest informants, a boy who was aged twelve when he gave me the text in question.

6. Symmetry vs. asymmetry in the converbal construction

6.1. Introductory remarks

The status of constructions like the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh, which may constitute the translational equivalent of English clause co-ordination but involve non-autonomous verb forms, is notoriously difficult to establish with respect to the traditional notions of co-ordination and subordination. In the literature, at least three different types of syntactic analyses can be found for functionally similar constructions that do not constitute clear instances of co-ordination:

- They may represent instances of co-subordination, with co-ordinate (parallel) and subordinate (asymmetrical) properties co-occurring within one and the same sentence.
- Depending on semantic factors, they may show variations in their syntactic properties that justify analyzing them as instantiating co-ordination in some of their uses, and subordination in some others. Among Daghestanian languages, such an analysis has been advocated by Kazenin & Testelec (1999) for Tsakhur, and by Polinsky (2007) for Tsez.
- In spite of their translational equivalence with clause co-ordination, they may uniformly show a syntactic behavior consistent with a subordination analysis, as argued by Kazenin (2001) for Bagvalal, a close relative of Akhvakh.

In the case of Akhvakh, my observations point to a situation similar to that described by Kazenin for Bagvalal. I am aware of no case of a converbal construction that would contradict the subordination analysis. By contrast, the texts I have collected include many occurrences of converbal constructions showing characteristics that rule out the co-ordination analysis.

6.2. Evidence from co-reference

A possible criterion for distinguishing clause co-ordination from clause subordination is that, in typical clause co-ordination, the establishment of an anaphoric relation implies that the anaphoric element follows its antecedent. For example, in English, **He_i arrived and John_i put the radio on* is impossible with the reading indicated by co-indexation. By contrast, no linear precedence is required when the antecedent belongs to the construction of the main verb in a subordination construction, and the anaphoric element is included in a subordinate clause. For example, in English, *When he_i arrived, John_i put the radio on* is perfectly normal.

From this point of view, the properties of the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh support a subordination analysis, since texts include many uncontroversial examples of anaphoric relations in which the converbal clause precedes the main clause, and an anaphoric element (most of the time a null-anaphora) included in the converbal clause has its antecedent in the main clause. In ex. (24), in addition to word order, case marking unambiguously shows that the converbal clause includes a null-anaphora the antecedent of which is the ergative argument of the main verb *mōlā rasadide*, and similar examples abound in my texts.

(24) *ʋadi-ga-la w-oq'-o eĭ'-a-wi mōlā rasadi-de aĭ'o-ga...*

AXD down-LAT-ADD M-come-CVB.M tell-N-UW Molla Rasadi-ERG wife-LAT

‘Molla Rasadi came down and told his wife...’

lit. ‘Having come down Molla Rasadi told his wife...’

6.3. Evidence from linear order

In clause co-ordinations receiving a sequential interpretation, the temporal relation between the events is obligatorily reflected in the linear order of the clauses. By contrast, the sequential interpretation of the general converb of Akhvakh is not bound to the linear order *converb – main verb*, which provides additional support to the subordination analysis. For example, a literal translation of the following examples, which constitute the first sentences of two stories told by the same speaker, would be something like ‘A woman, having taken her child, went mowing’ (25) and ‘A woman went to the field, having taken her child’ (26).

(25) *če ak̄'a mik'e-la b-el-e χ-ōnuLa j-ĩ-widi.*
 AXD one woman child-ADD N-take.away-CVB.N mowe-INF F-go.F-UW
 ‘A woman took her child and went mowing.’

(26) *če ak̄'a quri-ga j-ĩ-widi mik'e-la b-el-e.*
 AXD one woman field-LAT F-go.F-UW child-ADD N-take.away-CVB.N
 ‘A woman went to the field with her child.’

6.4. Evidence from embedding

A clear manifestation of asymmetry in the converbal construction is that, very often, the converbal clause is inserted between NPs case-marked as dependents of the main verb and the main verb itself. In ex. (27), the comparison of the converbal construction (a) with the independent clauses (b) and (c) shows that, in sentence (a), the NPs *moġas̄we* and *beġi ekʷas̄ugu* are dependents of the main verb *rãc̄'awi*, not of the converb *harigo*.

(27) a. *moġa-s̄w-e be-ġi ekʷa-s̄u-gu, harig-o, rãc̄'-a-widi...*
 AXD Molla-M-ERG neighborhood-GEN man-M-EL see-CVB.M ask-N-UW
 ‘Molla saw the neighbor and asked him...’
 lit. ‘Having seen him, Molla asked the neighbor...’

ELIC b. *moġa-s̄w-a be-ġi ekʷa harig-u-widi.*
 Molla-M-DAT neighborhood-GEN man see-M-UW
 ‘Molla saw the neighbor.’

ELIC b. *moġa-s̄w-e be-ġi ekʷa-s̄u-gu rãc̄'-a-widi.*
 Molla-M-ERG neighborhood-GEN man-M-EL ask-N-UW
 ‘Molla asked the neighbor.’

6.5. Evidence from relativization

In typical clause co-ordination, the use of relative strategies that do not make use of resumptive pronouns is severely limited by co-reference conditions. For example, in English, *When the light was turned off, the baby started started crying* can be

relativized as *the baby that started crying when the light was turned off*, whereas nothing similar is possible with a clause co-ordination such as *The light was turned off and the baby started crying*.

In Northern Akhvakh, the converbal construction allows for the relativization of the arguments of the main verb within the frame of the participial construction without any particular co-reference constraint, as illustrated by ex. (28)

- (28) *eĭ'-e b-eq'-ida ĭ'āk'a*
 AXD tell-CVB.N N-come-IPF₂ rabbit
 'a rabbit that comes when they tell (it to come)'

6.6. Evidence from negation

Ex. (29) to (31) show that, in the converbal construction, the converb falls under the scope of a negation mark attached to the main verb, which provides support to the subordination analysis. In such cases, literal translations within the frame of clause co-ordination, such as *I will not take the money and will not move from here*, *Hazhiya will not be killed and will be left* or *If rain falls and does not spoil the cotton...*, would result in a complete distortion of meaning, because in clause co-ordination, a negation expressed in the second conjunct cannot have the first conjunct under its scope.

- (29) *ači b-eχ-ĭl-o ha le-ḡune kor-ida gulo.*
 AXD money N-take-NEG-CVB.M DEM place-EL move-IPF₂ COP.NEG.M
 'I will not move from here without taking the money.'

- (30) *eše ima ĭ'war-ida ri-ĭi nuχmatila g^weda ḥažija*
 TDM 1PLE(GEN) father kill-IPF₂ moment-N(ESS) command COP_{2,N} Hazhiya
 'Hazhiya, who was in command when our father was killed,

ĭ'war-ĭl-o w-oĭ-ika.
 kill-NEG-CVB.M M-leave -IPF_{2,NEG}
 will not be left alive.' lit. '... will not be left not being killed.'

- (31) *ĉ'a ĉ'ab-e hōhō b-uq-ēl-ala,*
 AXD rain fall-CVB.N cotton N-get.spoilt-CAUS.NEG-COND
 'If rain does not fall and spoil the cotton,
 lit. 'If rain, having fallen, does not spoil the cotton, ...'

īs-a boḡoda ači b-eq'-iri.
 1PLE-DAT much money N-come-IPF₁
 we may get much money.'

6.7. A note on the additive particle *-la*

It is also worth emphasizing that, although the general converb is regularly used in situations in which English *and* co-ordinates clauses referring to successive events, there is no straightforward correspondence between English clause co-ordination and its possible translational equivalents in Akhvakh. The adnominal additive particle *-la* ‘also’, ‘in turn’, ‘even’ (whose use in NP co-ordination has been mentioned in section 2.2) is widely used in situations that might suggest recognizing it as a possible marker of clause co-ordination, as in ex. (32), but ex. (33) shows that *-la* basically encodes the discourse status of nominal referents regardless of the syntactic status of the clauses involved (since in ex. (33), the subordination of the first clause is unambiguously marked by the use of a specialized converb). The co-occurrence of the suffix of the general converb and the adnominal particle *-la* in sentences such as (34) can be analyzed as additional evidence that they do not operate at the same level.

(32) *mōla rasadi s̄ig-a w-ōl-u-wi, h̄āki-s̄^w-e-la če q̄ati č^waχ̄-ā-wi.*
 AXD Molla Rasadi in.front-LAT M-step-M-UW judge-M-ERG-ADD one palm slap-N-UW
 ‘Molla Rasadi stepped forward, and the judge (lit. the judge in turn) slapped his face.’

(33) *hudu-we w-oq’-iL-eṯi, mōla rasadi-la q̄’e-lā w-ū-wi.*
 AXD DEM-M M-come-NEG-POST Molla Rasadi-ADD home-ILLAT M-go.M-UW
 ‘As the man did not come back, Molla Rasadi in turn went home.’

(34) *h̄āki-s̄^w-e-la w-oχ̄-o kaḅa-la q̄^war-a-wi.*
 AXD judge-M-ERG-ADD M-rejoice-CVB.M paper-ADD write-N-UW
 ‘The judge in turn rejoiced and wrote the document.’

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that I have not found strict syntactic constraints on the use of *-la* in the converbal construction comparable to those mentioned by Kazenin (2001) in his analysis of the converbal construction of Bagvalal.

7. Agreement in the converbal construction

7.1. Preliminary remarks on external agreement

In addition to the evidence discussed so far, a particularly interesting piece of evidence supporting the analysis of the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh as involving subordination is the possibility that the general converb shows two class agreement marks, one of the two class agreement marks being then controlled by the S/P argument of the main verb. Among the examples quoted so far, double agreement occurs in (11), (12), (21), (23), and (29).

The general rule in Akhvakh is that verbs agree with their absolutive (S/P) argument, represented by an NP devoid of overt case marking. As already explained, the verb forms of Northern Akhvakh may have two morphological slots for class agreement. The availability of the prefixal slot (in the same way as the availability of the prefixal agreement slot of adjectives) is determined lexically: some verbs have it, others not. Prefixal agreement is invariably governed ‘internally’ (i.e., by the absolutive argument of the verb). By contrast, suffixal agreement interferes in a complex way with TAM, and is not always governed by the absolutive argument of the verb. Suffixal agreement may be governed ‘externally’, i.e., by a noun that does not belong to the clause headed by the verb in question.

Quite obviously, external agreement is not possible for verb forms heading an independent clause. In independent clauses, if the verb shows both prefixal and suffixal agreement, they are always redundant.

The participial construction constitutes the most obvious case of a construction in which verbs show external agreement, and the double agreement of verb forms in participial function clearly reflects their double status as heads of a verbal clause and noun dependents.

As already stated in section 2.3, Northern Akhvakh has no form that would be used exclusively as a participle, but four of the verb forms that have the ability to head independent clauses also occur in the participial construction, in which they combine the ‘internal’ syntax of verbs with ‘external’ properties identical to those of attributive adjectives. Their behavior will be illustrated here by the form labeled ‘imperfective₂’.

In its independent use, the imperfective₂ is characterized by a suffix *-ida* optionally followed by a class agreement marker, except in the HPL class, in which class agreement is obligatorily apparent in the TAM suffix itself, which takes the form *-idi*. As illustrated by ex. (35) the imperfective₂ in participial function has exactly the same morphological structure, but in the participial construction, the absolutive argument controls prefixal agreement only, whereas suffixal agreement is controlled by the noun modified by the participle phrase. Note that the optional agreement suffix becomes obligatory if the noun modified by the participial phrase is understood.

(35) a. *imo-de jašo-La ači o-ḡ-ida(-be)*.

ELIC father-ERG girl-DAT money N-give-IPF₂(-N)
‘The father gives money to his daughter.’

ELIC b. *jašo-La ači o-ḡ-ida(-we) ima*

girl-DAT money N-give-IPF₂(-M) father
‘the father who gives money to his daughter’

ELIC c. *imo-de ači o-ḡ-ida(-je) jaše*

father-ERG money N-give-IPF₂(-F) girl
‘the daughter to whom the father gives money’

- ELIC d. *imo-de jaše-La o-ḡ-ida(-be) ači*
 father-ERG girl-DAT N-give-IPF₂(-F) money
 ‘the money that the father gives to his daughter’
- ELIC e. *jašo-La ači o-ḡ-ida-we* ‘the one (masc.) who gives money to the girl’
imo-de ači o-ḡ-ida-je ‘the one (fem.) to whom the father gives money’
imo-de jaše-La o-ḡ-ida-be ‘what the father gives to the girl’

Interestingly, a similar phenomenon occurs with adjectives. The difference with verbs in the participial construction is that attributive adjectives rarely manifest their argument structure. But when they do, as in ex. (36), one observes the same distinction between internal and external agreement as with participles.

- (36) a. *k’ehi r-ač’ida(-je) jaše* → *k’ehi r-ač’ida-je*
 ELIC eye.PL NPL-black(-F) girl eye.PL NPL-black(-F)
 ‘a girl with black eyes’ ‘the one (fem.) with black eyes’
- ELIC b. *ḡoso b-ač’ida(-je) jaše* → *ḡoso b-ač’ida-je*
 hair N-black(-F) girl hair N-black(-F)
 ‘a girl with black hair’ ‘the one (fem.) with black hair’
- ELIC c. *ḡoso b-ač’ida(-we) ek’wa* → *ḡoso b-ač’ida-we*
 hair N-black(-M) man hair N-black(-F)
 ‘a man with black hair’ ‘the one (masc.) with black hair’

7.2. External agreement in the converbal construction

A particularly uncontroversial case of external agreement in the converbal construction is provided by ex. (21), repeated here as (37).

- (37) *moḡa rasadi w-ul’-i š’ela-ḡa m-āne ba-k’-i goli.*
 TDM Molla Rasadi M-die-CVB.HPL graveyard-ILLAT HPL-go.PROG HPL-be-CVB.HPL COP.HPL
 ‘Molla Rasadi died, and they were going to the graveyard.’

In this sentence, the M prefix of *w-ul’-i* ‘having died’ expresses agreement with the S argument of ‘die’ *moḡa rasadi*, and the only possible explanation of the HPL suffix is that it expresses agreement with the understood S argument of the main verb ‘go’, since there is no other potential controller of HPL agreement, and the construction of this sentence involves no argument sharing.

Similarly, in ex. (38), the N prefix of the converbs *m-ḡ-o* ‘not having gone’ in sentence (a) and *m-ḡ-ih-i* (same meaning) in sentence (b) is controlled by the S argument of ‘go’ (*ik’a ri* ‘a long time’ in sentence (a), *zama* ‘time’ in sentence (b)), whereas the M suffix of the converb in sentence (a) is controlled by the S argument of the main verb *hudu ek’wa* ‘the man’, and the HPL suffix of the converb in sentence (b) is controlled by the P argument of the main verb *ḡoloḡadi* ‘young people’.

(38) a. *ĩk'a ri-da-la m-ĩl-o hugu ek'wa-la w-ũ'-u-wudi.*
 TDM long time-INT-ADD M-go.NEG-CVB.M DEM man-ADD M-die-M-UW
 'Shortly after that (lit. 'long time not having gone') the man died.'

TDM b. *zama-da-la m-ĩl-ihı ʃoloqadi armija-ĩ-ga žab-iri.*
 time-INT-ADD M-go.NEG-CVB.HPL young.PL army-N-LAT call-PF₁.HPL
 'Shortly after that (lit. 'time not having gone') the young people were called to the army.'

Ex. (23), repeated here as (39), with three successive converbs exhibiting double agreement, shows that external agreement may spread in converb chains.

(39) *bač'a-la b-iq-o c'oko-la b-eq-o,*
 AXD wolf-ADD N-cut.the.throat.of-CVB.M wolf-ADD N-take.off-CVB.M
 'I cut the throat of the wolf, took off its skin,

q'ěLeno geĩ-i b-ıt-o w-ut'-oħo w-ãda mac'eq-a.
 bag(ESS) in-ESS N-put-CVB.M M-go.straight-CVB.M M-go.PF₂ Matsex-LAT
 put it in my bag and went straight to Matsex.'

7.3. Limitations to external agreement

External agreement in the converbal construction is syntactically optional, since constructions with exactly the same morphosyntactic make-up and the same argument sharing configuration may show variations with respect to argument sharing. In such a situation, judgments in elicitation must be used with the greatest caution and cannot be considered as decisive for establishing rules. The observation of spontaneous texts reveals some clear statistical regularities, but the interpretation of some observations may be made difficult not only by morphosyntactic factors, but also by the fact that the various possible configurations that should be systematically tested before putting forward generalizations are very unevenly represented in spontaneous texts.

Given that external agreement does not manifest itself in a dedicated morphological slot, but appropriates a slot normally used for internal agreement, it can be apparent only if the S/P argument of the converb does not belong to the same class as the S/P argument of the main verb (which automatically excludes from the observation of external agreement approximately half of all converbal constructions found in texts). Moreover, given that converbs have the same suffix for F and N agreement (with however different interactions with unstable consonants – see section 3), if one of the S/P arguments involved in the construction is feminine, and the other neuter, external agreement can be apparent only if the converb has a stem ending with an unstable consonant.

External agreement constitutes the rule in configurations in which the S argument of the main verb is masculine singular or human plural (in the corpus of 500 converbal constructions I used for statistical purposes, external agreement is present in more than 80 % of the sentences showing this configuration). If the S argument of

the main verb is feminine singular, external agreement is possible but much less frequent. External agreement is not attested with non-human controllers.

The behavior of potential controllers belonging to the F class is more difficult to evaluate, since the most common configurations in converbal constructions involve a non-human S/P argument in the converbal clause, and in such configurations, external agreement with a feminine singular controller can be apparent only if the converb has a stem ending with an unstable consonant, which represents only a small proportion of the corpus. However, the ability of feminine singular NPs to control external agreement was confirmed by Indira Abdulaeva, to whom I submitted a questionnaire designed to avoid such ambiguities: her answers to the questionnaire show no difference in the acceptability of external agreement with masculine and feminine potential controllers. For example, ex. (17), reproduced here as (40a), does not involve external agreement, but according to her judgment, the variant (40b) with external agreement is equally acceptable.

(40) a. *hade jaše ima-la w-ol-o j-eq'-i-wi ušku-ġ-a.*
 AXD DEM girl father-ADD M-lead-CVB.M F-come-F-UW school-N-LAT
 'The girl took her father with her and came to the school.'

ELIC b. *hade jaše ima-la w-ol-e j-eq'-i-wi ušku-ġ-a.*
 DEM girl father-ADD M-lead-CVB.F F-come-F-UW school-N-LAT
 same meaning

It is equally difficult to evaluate the exact significance of the fact that, in the texts I have collected, the controller of external agreement in the converbal construction is nearly always in S role, very rarely in P role. The point is that, in texts, converbal constructions with a human P in the main clause almost always involve full argument sharing, with consequently a single potential controller of the agreement of the converb, irrespective of the distinction between internal and external agreement. I have however unambiguous examples of external agreement controlled by an NP in P role, such as (41) (in which in the absence of external agreement, the converb of 'do' should be in the N form *gwij-e*) and (42) (in which in the absence of external agreement, the converb of 'come' should be in the N form *b-eq'-e*).

(41) *ãdo-lo-de komoki g-õhe šin-õhe*
 TDM person.PL-HPL-ERG help do-CVB.M hide-CAUS.CVB.M
 'People, by helping and hiding him,

ġk'ar-ãro w-uk'-u-wudi
 treat.with.respect-PROG.M M-be-M-UW
 manifested their respect toward him.'

(42) *ĩgo-ġu sor-o k'wet-u w-ĩda gere qedo ĩ'wãh-ada gula*
 TDM window-EL slip-CVB.M run-INF M-go.IPF₂ Gere after fire-IPF₂ run-INF
 'A bullet fired on Gere who was going to escape through the window

b-eq'-o hu miša-ī̄ l'war-u-wudi.
 N-come-CVB.M DEM place-N(ESS) kill-M-UW
 reached him (lit. came) and killed him on the spot.'

To summarize, external agreement in the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh is a domain in which morphology and text grammar conspire to make particularly difficult the recognition of syntactic constraints.

Kazenin (2001) investigated the same question in Bagvalal (another Andic language), and concluded that external agreement in the converbal construction of Bagvalal is conditioned semantically, not syntactically. According to Kazenin, external agreement emphasizes that the situation to which the converbal construction refers is relevant to the S/P argument of the main verb. The fact that external agreement in Northern Akhvakh is observed only if the S/P argument of the main verb is human is consistent with this hypothesis, and I have no better explanation to put forward.

7.4. External agreement in the converbal construction and adverbial agreement

Returning to syntactic considerations, it is important to notice that the possibility of external agreement in the converbal construction is consistent not only with the double agreement of verb forms in the participial construction and of attributive adjectives, but also with the presence in Northern Akhvakh of another cross-linguistically rare type of agreement: adverbial agreement. This is all the more important because the subordination analysis of the converbal construction implies recognizing converbal clauses as adverbial dependents of the main verb.

Like other Nakh-Daghestanian languages, Northern Akhvakh has several cases of 'adverbial concord', i.e., of adjunct phrases agreeing with the absolutive argument of the clause. This is for example the case of many manner adverbs, such as *īhahime* (M *īhahimo*, HPL *īhahimi*) 'slowly', *hušte* (M *hušto*, HPL *hušti*) 'thus', *č'wige* (M *č'wigo*, HPL *č'wigi*) 'how?', etc. Ex. (43) illustrates the agreement of *č'wige* 'how' with the absolutive argument of the verb it modifies.

(43) a. *č'wig-o me-de hudu ek'wa t'ubal-o w-uk'-ada?*
 TDM how-M 2SG-ERG DEM man bury-CVB.M M-be-PF₂
 'How(M) did you bury that man?'

ELIC b. *č'wig-i me-de hudu ādo t'ubal-i ba-k'-idi?*
 how-HPL 2SG-ERG DEM person.PL bury-CVB.HPL HPL-be-PF₂.HPL
 'How(HPL) did you bury those people?'

Consequently, within the frame of the subordination analysis of the converbal construction, the external agreement of converbs can be viewed as an additional instance of adverbial agreement. The parallelism is apparent in a sentence such as (44), in which the S argument of *wīdo* (*dene* 'I') controls at the same time the

agreement of the manner adverb *hušto* ‘thus (M)’ and the external agreement of the converb *bexo*.

(44) *če žo-ĭ dene-la hušt-o-da x̄ãža-la b-eχ-o*

TDM one day-N(ESS) 1SG-ADD thus-M-INT dagger-ADD N-take-CVB.M

‘One day I too will take a dagger, and in exactly the same way

du waša-s̄u-lira w-īdo

2SG(GEN) son-M-ADLAT M-go.IPF₂.M

will go to your son.’

8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have first shown that the tests commonly used to characterize a complex construction in terms of symmetry vs. asymmetry uniformly support analyzing the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh as involving subordination. After that, I have analyzed a cross-linguistically rare agreement phenomenon found in the converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh which provides additional evidence supporting the subordination analysis. The double agreement of converbs (i.e., the agreement of converbs both with their own S/P argument and with the S/P argument of the main verb) is not an isolated phenomenon in Akhvakh, since a combination of internal and external agreement is found also with participles and attributive adjectives. However, the external agreement of participles and attributive adjectives is straightforwardly controlled by the noun they modify, whereas the external agreement of converbs is controlled by an argument of their head, showing thus some similarity with another cross-linguistically rare agreement phenomenon also found in Northern Akhvakh: the agreement of some adverbs with the S/P argument of the verb they modify.

Abbreviations

ADD: additive particle

ADLAT: adlative

CAUS: causative

CL: class agreement marker

COND: conditional converb

COP: copula

CVB: general converb

DAT: dative

DEM: demonstrative

EL: elative

ERG: ergative

ESS: essive

F: human singular feminine

GEN: genitive
HPL: human plural
ILLAT: illative
INF: infinitive
INT: intensifier
IPF: imperfective
LAT: lative
M: human singular masculine
N: non-human
NEG: negative
NPL: non-human plural
OBLG: obligative
PF: perfective positive
PL: plural
PLE: plural exclusive
POST: posterior converb
PROG: progressive converb
PROH: prohibitive
Q: interrogative
SG: singular
UW: past unwitnessed

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