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. This agreement phenomenon, also found in other Andic languages, provides decisive evidence for establishing the nature of the converbal construction.[1]

Akhvakh (*aš^{w}aīi mič̄'i*, Russian *axvaxskij jazyk*) belongs to the Andic (sub-)branch of the Northeast Caucasian (or Nakh-Daghestanian) family.[2] 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".

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[1] In contrast to "specialized converbs", "general converbs" do not inherently specify the nature of the semantic relationship between the event they encode and that encoded by the independent verb they combine with, and lend themselves to a variety of contextual interpretations. Northern Akhvakh also has a variety of specialized converbs which have been dealt with in Creissels (2011) 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 have come across no evidence supporting a distinction between several *syntactically* different constructions involving the general converb.

[2] 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.

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 (Kamyškutan, Sovetskoe), and in Axaxdərə near Zaqatala (Azerbaijan). 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 out in Axaxdərə, Tadmagitl' and Sovetskoe. Like the other Andic languages, Akhvakh has no writing tradition. The transcription used in this paper departs from the IPA conventions on the following points: alveolar voiceless affricate *c*; palato-alveolar fricatives *š* (voiceless) and *ž* (voiced); palato-alveolar affricates *č* (voiceless) and *ǯ* (voiced); lateral voiceless affricate *ɬ*; the macron is used for long vowels 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: agreement of adjuncts with the S/P argument of the same verb. 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.

Arguments whose identity is recoverable from the context can freely be omitted, and unexpressed arguments receiving an arbitrary or unspecified 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). In the plural, the distinction *masculine* vs. *feminine* is neutralized, resulting in a binary opposition *human plural* (HPL) vs. *non-human plural* (NPL). The only exceptions to the semantic rule of class assignment are *ãde* '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 canonical NPs, the head noun stands in final position and is inflected for number and case. Number inflection of nouns is irregular and involves a considerable amount of free variation. In headless NPs (i.e., complex NPs whose head noun has been elided), gender-number and case markers attach to the noun dependent, which, in the absence of an overt head noun, constitutes the last word of the NP.

Most noun dependents in canonical NPs optionally include gender-number suffixes agreeing with the head noun. In addition to that, some adjectives have obligatory gender-number agreement prefixes. However, not all adjectives have gender-number 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 does not have case agreement.

The 1st and 2nd person pronouns show irregularities in their case inflection, but distinguish the same cases as nouns. Akhvakh has an inclusive pronoun distinct from the 1st person plural pronoun, but no 3rd person pronoun proper; demonstratives are used in the discursive function fulfilled by dedicated 3rd person pronouns in other languages.

The nominative (alias absolutive), 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 nominative, or to a special *oblique stem* (signaled in the glosses as …$_{o}$, e.g. "N$_{o}$"). In the singular, the formation of the oblique stem is very irregular

and involves a considerable amount of free variation. The standard "oblique stem markers" added to the nominative form of nouns and expressing gender-number distinctions (M_o *-sū-*, F_o/N_o *-ɬi-*) are found only with some nouns, and are often in free variation with other types of oblique stem formation. In the plural, the use of the oblique stem markers HPL_o *-lo-* and NPL_o *-li-* or *-le-* is more regular. In headless NPs, the use of the standard oblique stem markers is systematic.

The case system of Northern Akhvakh includes the following cases:

- three "syntactic cases": ERG (ergative) *-de*, DAT (dative) *-ʟa*, and GEN (genitive) *Ø(-AGR)* or *-īi*;[3]
- three spatial cases: LOC (locative) *-i* or *-e*, ALL (allative) *-a*, and ABL (ablative) *-u(ne)*;
- three peripheral cases or case-like forms: COM (comitative) *-k'ena*, ESS (essive) *-ɬe* or *-ɬ-AGR* and MDT (mediative) *-guɬe* or or *-guɬ-AGR*;[4]
- two postpositional clitics, CAUSAL *-ʁana* attached to the "dallative" form of nouns (see below), and VERS (versative) *-sa* attached to the allative.

The spatial case markers are common to nouns and spatial adverbs. In noun inflection, they are normally preceded by *orientation markers* (OR) expressing types of spatial configurations ('in', 'under', etc.), which can be dropped only under specific conditions. Northern Akhvakh has five productive orientation markers (*-g-*, *-χar-* ~ *-īir-*, *-q̄-*, *-ī'i-*, and *-īi-*) and vestiges of a sixth orientation marker *-r-*. A straightforward semantic characterization is possible only for two of them (*-χar-* ~ *-īir-* 'beside' and *-ī'i-* 'under'). The other three are polysemous in such a way that no simple semantic characterization is possible, and the use of semantically motivated

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[3] Personal pronouns, M nouns and HPL nouns have a genitive form involving no specific marker, but characterized by optional gender-number agreement with its heads. In the absence of an optional agreement marker, this form is identical to the oblique stem. The genitive marker *-īi* is used with F, N and NPL nouns, and occasionally with M and HPL nouns too, but never with personal pronouns.

[4] Although this is not absolutely obligatory, the essive and mediative suffixes are most of the time followed by a suffix marking gender-number agreement with the S/P argument. The same set of agreement markers is found in several types of forms (including the general converb – see Sections 3 and 7.4) fulfilling adverbial functions. Note that the mediative suffix can be decomposed as 'OR_1 (*g*) + ABL (*u*) + ESS'.

labels could only give a distorted image of their meanings. This is the reason why I prefer to simply number them in the order in which they are listed above. For more details on the meanings of the orientation markers of Akhvakh, see Creissels (2009b). Given the topic of this paper, it is sufficient to mention here that OR_1 *-g-* can be viewed as a default orientation marker that does not specify a particular spatial configuration by itself.

The encoding of spatial relationships may involve a construction in which a noun phrase referring to the "orienter" combines with a spatial adverb or locational noun. This construction is functionally similar to the adposition phrases found in other languages (in the sense that the spatial configuration is encoded by the spatial adverb or locational noun), but formally different in that the NP referring to the orienter and the spatial adverb or locational noun exhibit parallel spatial case inflection:

*q'ẽɬeno-g-**e** geī-**i***	|bag-OR_1-LOC inside-LOC|	'in the bag' (static location)
*q'ẽɬeno-g-**a** geī-**a***	|bag-OR_1-ALL inside-ALL|	'into the bag'
*q'ẽɬeno-g-**u** geī-**u***	|bag-OR_1-ABL inside-ABL|	'out of the bag'

A problematic aspect of the Akhvakh case system is the existence of a syncretic noun ending *-a* neutralizing the distinction between dative *-ɬa* and allative$_1$ *-g-a*. This ending is found in contexts where it can be substituted by forms unambiguously identifiable as dative or allative$_1$, and is therefore analyzable as an allomorph either of the dative or of the allative$_1$, but it also occurs in contexts where it seems impossible to decide whether it constitutes an allomorph of the dative or of the allative$_1$. The existence of such contexts suggests recognizing an additional case, called here *dallative*, whose distribution overlaps with that of the dative and allative$_1$.

There are two possible constructions for NP co-ordination: either "NP_1-*k'ena* NP_2", where *-k'ena* is the suffix of the comitative case (also used for comitative adjuncts), or "NP_1-*la* NP_2-*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 always exhibit an overt inflectional suffix, but with respect to prefixal inflection, they divide into two morphological classes: those including a prefixal slot that cannot be left empty, and those that cannot take prefixes. The prefixal inflection of the verbs that take inflectional

prefixes is limited to the expression of gender-number agreement with the nominative argument (S or P).

Suffixal inflection is identical for all verbs and expresses TAM, evidentiality/mirativity, polarity, finiteness, and gender-number agreement with the nominative argument. Person distinctions are involved in the contrast between the forms labeled here "perfective$_1$" and "perfective$_2$", but they follow a typologically rare pattern called "conjunct/disjunct system" in the literature. For a detailed presentation of this aspect of the verbal system of Akhvakh, which can be analyzed as a particular type of mirativity marking rather than person marking proper, see Creissels (2008a and 2008b).[5]

The synthetic verb forms that can head independent clauses are characterized by the following paradigm of suffixes (or combinations of suffixes):[6]

– perfective$_1$	HPL *-iri*, other classes *-ari* or *-eri*
– perfective$_2$	HPL *-idi*, other classes *-ada* or *-ad(a)-AGR*
– 'short' perfective[7]	HPL *-i*, other classes *-a*
– perfective negative	*-iL-a*, *iL-a-AGR* or *iL-AGR*
– perfective$_3$[8]	*-AGR-wudi*
– perfective$_3$ negative	*-iL-AGR-wudi*

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5 Morphologically, the suffixal inflection of verbs is predominantly agglutinative, with endings beginning with a vowel added to stems ending with a consonant, but there is a class of verb stems ending with an "unstable consonant" whose deletion triggers fusion of the preceding vowel with the first vowel of the ending (see Section 3).

6 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 listed only in cases of allomorphic variations that do not lend themselves straightforwardly to such an analysis. AGR stands for 'gender-number agreement marker'. The inflectional forms of the verb do not behave in a uniform way with respect to gender-number agreement, but these variations have no obvious relationship with finiteness. Note also that there are several sets of agreement markers whose distribution lends itself to no generalization.

7 This form occurs, sometimes obligatorily and sometimes optionally, in contexts in which it can be analyzed as a variant, either of Perfective$_1$ or Perfective$_2$.

8 Perfective$_3$ has no form expressing HPL agreement. In contexts in which Perfective$_3$ would be expected, the presence of a HPL nominative argument triggers the use of the perfect (an analytic tense combining the general converb of the auxiliated verb with the copula in auxiliary function).

– perfective$_4$	*-AGR-wa*
– perfective$_4$ negative	*-uš-AGR-a*
– imperfective$_1$	*-iri*
– imperfective$_2$	*-ida* or *-id(a)-AGR*
– imperfective$_1$ negative	*-iki*
– imperfective$_2$ negative	*-ika* or *-ik(a)-AGR*
– potential[9]	HPL *-oji*, other classes *–AGR-wa*
– imperative	*-a*
– prohibitive	*-uba*
– optative$_1$ (general optative)	*-ɬ'a* added to the imperative (*-a*)
– optative$_1$ negative	*-ɬ'a* added to the prohibitive (*-uba*)
– optative$_2$ (restricted to wishes that specifically involve the addressee)	*-ada* followed by a gender-number suffix agreeing with the addressee irrespective of the syntactic role of the 2nd person pronoun in the clause
– apprehensive	*-gole* added to the conditional converb (*-ala*)[10]

The two imperfectives are used interchangeably in assertive or interrogative clauses referring to habitual or permanent events, and the imperfective$_2$ tends to be more frequent in this use, but the imperfective$_1$ also has modal uses in which it cannot be replaced by the imperfective$_2$.

The four perfectives do not differ in their TAM value, but only in their evidentiality/mirativity implications. The perfective$_1$ and the perfective$_2$ have in common the implication that the speaker has a direct knowledge of the event (s)he is relating. The perfective$_2$ adds to this meaning the implication that the assertor (1st person in declarative clauses, 2nd person in questions) was actively involved in the event. The perfective$_3$ implies indirect knowledge (inference or hearsay), and the perfective$_4$ may encode either surprise, or a particular attitude of the speaker imposing him/herself as an epistemic authority.

Additional TAM or evidentiality/mirativity values are expressed by analytic verb forms with the copula *godi*, the verb *bik'uruɬa* 'be', or the verb *mičunuɬa* 'be found' in auxiliary function.

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[9] The potential and perfective$_4$ markers are equally *-wa*, but they do not have the same accentual properties, and they combine with different sets of gender-number agreement markers.

[10] The conditional converb is a strictly dependent verb form, but the apprehensive derived from it by means of the addition of *-gole* may head independent as well as subordinate clauses.

Akhvakh has no form specialized in participial function, but four of the independent verb forms listed above are also used as participles: perfective$_2$, perfective negative, imperfective$_2$, and imperfective negative$_2$. On the participles of Northern Akhvakh, see Creissels (2009a).

Strictly dependent verb forms include a verbal noun or "masdar" (*-e*), an infinitive (*-uruʟa*), a spatial form (*-iɬ̄-i/a/u(ne)* 'at/to/from the place where…'), a general converb, a progressive converb (*-ere*), and several specialized converbs expressing various semantic types of adverbial subordination. The general converb constitutes the main topic of this paper. On the other converbs of Northern Akhvakh, see Creissels (2011).

3. The general converb: morphology

The general converb has no specific marker. It results from the combination of the verb stem with a complex suffix also found in other types of forms that share the property of having an adverbial function (taking "adverbial" in a relatively broad sense). We will return to this point in Section 7.4, but note immediately that this is the reason why no specific gloss is used for the ending of the general converb, and one of its two formatives is glossed as ADV.

The first formative of the suffix used to form the general converb expresses gender-number agreement: *-ō-* (M) / *-ē-* ~ *-ā-* (F and N) / *-ī-* (HPL) / *-erē-* ~ *-arē-* (NPL). In the F, N and NPL classes, the variant with *a* is clearly becoming obsolete: *a* does not occur in the speech of younger speakers, whereas it still alternates with *e* in the speech of older speakers. This variation, like the variation between *-ari* and *-eri* in the perfective$_1$, is probably a vestige of a former distinction, well-preserved in the other Andic languages, between two morphological classes of verb stems selecting different perfective markers (Magomedbekova 1967: 86).

The second formative of the ending of the general converb, glossed ADV, is optional. Its realization varies as follows: it is realized as *-hi* when preceded by the HPL agreement marker *-ī-*, as *-he* or *-ho* when preceded by the M agreement marker *-ō-*, and as *-he* with the other agreement markers. For example, the general converb of *k̄'ʷeturuʟa* 'run' has the forms listed in (1):

(1) The suffix of the general converb

M	*k̄'ʷet-ō(-he)*	~	*k̄'ʷet-ō(-ho)*
F	*k̄'ʷet-ē(-he)*	~	*k̄'ʷet-ā(-he)*
N	*k̄'ʷet-ē(-he)*	~	*k̄'ʷet-ā(-he)*
HPL	*k̄'ʷet-ī(-hi)*		
NPL	*k̄'ʷet-erē(-he)*	~	*k̄'ʷet-arē(-he)*

The suffix of the general converb interacts in a specific way with a subclass of verb stems that are characterized by a special behavior of their final consonant. The verb stems of Northern Akhvakh obligatorily end in a consonant, and the suffixes that can attach to verb stems invariably begin with a vowel. There is, however, a subclass of verb stems whose final consonant is deleted in combination with specific suffixes.[11] When this deletion occurs, the last vowel of the stem merges with the initial vowel of the suffix, resulting in a long vowel. When forms are segmented, the symbol "ˬ" signals boundaries at which this process occurs. The division of verb suffixes into those that trigger the retention 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 consonants occurs in the M, F and NPL classes, whereas unstable consonants are retained in the N and HPL classes. An interesting consequence of this distribution is that, with such verbs, consonant deletion has become 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

	ʟūruʟa 'fear' (stem |*ʟi(b)*-|)		*čōruʟa* 'wash' (stem |*ča(b)*-|)	
M	*ʟˬō-he*	<**ʟi-ō-he*	*čˬō-he*	<**ča-ō-he*
F	*ʟˬē-he*	<**ʟi-ē-he*	*čˬā-he*	<**ča-ē-he*
N	*ʟib-ē(-he)*		*čab-ē(-he)*	
HPL	*ʟib-ī(-hi)*		*čab-ī(-hi)*	
NPL	*ʟˬērē(-he)*	<**ʟi-erē(-he)*	*čˬārē(-he)*	<**ča-erē(-he)*

As indicated in (2), another peculiarity of such stems is that the formative *-he* is always retained 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 *-iʟ-* between the verb stem and the general converb suffix. The negation marker *-iʟ-* triggers the deletion of unstable consonants irrespective of gender-number agreement. For example, *k̄'ʷeturuʟa* 'run', *ʟūruʟa* 'fear' and *čōruʟa* 'wash' have the negative forms of the general converb listed in (3):

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[11] For a detailed account of this aspect of Akhvakh morphology, see Creissels (2009c).

(3) The negative form of the general converb

	k̄'ʷeturuʟa 'run' (stem |*k̄'ʷet-*|)	*ʟūruʟa* 'fear' (stem |*ʟi(b)-*|)		*čōruʟa* 'wash' (stem |*ča(b)-*|)	
M	*k̄'ʷet-iʟ-ō(-he)*	*ʟ̌ūʟ-ō(-he)*	<**ʟi-iʟ-ō(-he)*	*č̌ēʟ-ō(-he)*	<**ča-iʟ-ō(-he)*
F	*k̄'ʷet-iʟ-ē(-he)*	*ʟ̌ūʟ-ē(-he)*	<**ʟi-iʟ-ē(-he)*	*č̌ēʟ-ē(-he)*	<**ča-iʟ-ē(-he)*
N	*k̄'ʷet-iʟ-ē(-he)*	*ʟ̌ūʟ-ē(-he)*	<**ʟi-iʟ-ē(-he)*	*č̌ēʟ-ē(-he)*	<**ča-iʟ-ē(-he)*
HPL	*k̄'ʷet-iʟ-ī(-hi)*	*ʟ̌ūʟ-ī(-hi)*	<**ʟi-iʟ-ī(-hi)*	*č̌ēʟ-ī(-hi)*	<**ča-iʟ-ī(-hi)*
NPL	*k̄'ʷet-iʟ-erē(-he)*	*ʟ̌ūʟ-erē(-he)*	<**ʟi-iʟ-erē(-he)*	*č̌ēʟ-erē(-he)*	<**ča-iʟ-erē(-he)*

4. The general converb in the formation of analytic tenses

Combined with the copula *godi* or the verb *bik'uruʟa* 'be' in auxiliary function, the general converb forms analytic tenses that are semantically similar to the English perfect, as in (4) and (5). In the analytic tenses of Northern Akhvakh, the linear order is obligatorily *auxiliated verb* + *auxiliary*, and nothing can be inserted between the auxiliated verb and the auxiliary.

(4) *išʷada-sʷ-e lãgi* ***b-iq̄ʷ-ē-he*** *godi.*
ELIC[12] shepherd-M_o-ERG sheep N-slaughter-N-ADV COP.N
'The shepherd has slaughtered a sheep.'

(5) *išʷada-sʷ-e lãgi* ***b-iq̄ʷ-ē-he*** *b-ik'ʷ-a-wudi.*
ELIC shepherd-M_o-ERG sheep N-slaughter-N-ADV N-be-N-PF_3
'The shepherd had slaughtered a sheep.'

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

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

5. First approach to the converbal construction

5.1. Definition and illustrations

In this paper, the term "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 (which of course does not exclude the possibility of argument sharing). Usually (but not obligatorily – see below) the converb precedes the other verb involved in the construction.

(6) *jaše q̄'eɪ̄-a* ***j-et-ē*** *j-ɪ̄̃-wi.*
AXD girl at.home-ALL F-run-F[ADV] F-go.F-PF_3
'The girl went home running.'

(7) *hu-be ʕaq̄'ilo* ***b-ešaq̄-aj-ē*** *g̬ūx̄-ida.*
AXD DIST-N intelligence N-work-CAUS-N[ADV] do̬OBLG-IPF_2
'This must be done cleverly.' (lit. '…making the intelligence work.')

(8) *ak̄'o-de riɪ̄'i* ***b-iž-ē*** *q̄'̬ã̄-wi.*
AXD $wife_o$-ERG meat N-cook-N[ADV] eat̬N-PF_3
'The wife cooked the meat and ate it.'

(9) *molā-s̄^{w}-e taχi-g-une ĩgora* ***b-eχ-ē***
AXD Molla-M_o-ERG $pocket_o$-OR_1-ABL bread N-take-N[ADV]
ĩhora-g-e geɪ̄-i tũk-a-wi.
lake-OR_1-LOC inside-LOC dip-N-PF_3
'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 anticipating the results of a study dealing with 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 determining the finiteness properties of the construction. As is 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 can 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 can head participial clauses, for example the perfective$_2$, as in (10), to be compared with (8) above.

(10) *ak̄’o-de* ***b-iž-ē*** *q̄’ˬā̄da riL̄’i*
ELIC wife$_o$-ERG N-cook-N[ADV] eatˬPF$_2$ meat
‘the meat that the wife ate after cooking it’

In (11) and (12), which constitute two successive sentences in the text from which they have been extracted, the same converbal construction combining the converb of *beʟuruʟa* ‘herd’ with *beq’uruʟa* ‘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) (*w-oq’-u-wi*), carries the perfective converb ending *-ēł̄i* in (12) (*w-oq’-ēł̄i*), whereas the converb (*b-eʟ-ō*) remains unchanged.

(11) *ruc̄’u-la* ***b-eʟ-ō*** *mol̄a rasadi hã-L̄-a*
AXD flock-ADD N-herd-M[ADV] Molla Rasadi village-OR$_5$-ALL
w-oq’-u-wi.
M-come-M-PF$_3$
‘Molla Rasadi came to the village herding the sheep.’

(12) *ĩχ̄e-L̄-a zor-āda ek’ʷa ruc̄’u-la* ***b-eʟ-ō***
AXD river-OR$_5$-ALL slip-CAUS.PF$_2$ man herd-ADD N-herd-M[ADV]
w-oq’-ēł̄i, ãd-o damałilaj-ī goli.
M-come-PF.CVB person-PL get.astonished-HPL[ADV] COP.HPL
‘When the man they had thrown in the river came herding the sheep, 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 (6) and (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 (8) and (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 to either 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 a more precise specification of their relationship unnecessary.

5.3. Argument sharing in the converbal construction

The converbal construction of Northern Akhvakh involves no strict syntactic constraint on argument sharing. The examples in (13)–(21) illustrate the following configurations:

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

(13) ***w-ɔ̃̄-ho*** *w-oq'-u-wi.*
AXD M-go.M-ADV M-come-M-PF_3
'He went (there) and came (back).' (S = S)

(14) *molā rasadi* ***w-uχ̄-ō*** *rała-ɬ̄-a* *zor-ō-wi.*
AXD Molla Rasadi M-seize-M[ADV] sea-OR_5-ALL slip-CAUS.M-PF_3
'They seized Molla and threw him into the sea.' (A = A and P = P)

(15) *boʁoda* ***ĩk'a-r-ō-ho*** *m-ač-uba!*
AXD much large-VBZ-CAUS.M-ADV N-tell-PROH
'Don't exaggerate his qualities!' (A = A)
(lit. 'Don't tell (things) enlarging him much!')

(16) *molā* ***šimalaχ̄-ō*** *eɬ̄'-a-wi …*
AXD Molla get.angry-M[ADV] say-N-PF_3
'Molla got angry and said…' (S = A)

(17) *ha-di jaše ima-la* ***w-oʟ-ō*** *j-eq'-i-wi ušku-ɬ̄-a.*
AXD PROX-SL girl father-ADD M-lead-M[ADV] F-come-F-PF_3 school-N_O-ALL
'The girl took her father with her and came to the school.' (A = S)

(18) *če žo-ɬ̄-i ħãki-s̄ʷ-e* ***ž̌ō-ho*** *w-ū̃-wi moĪa rasadi.*
AXD one day-N_o-LOC judge-M_o-ERG call-M-ADV M-go.M-PF_3 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-s̄ʷ-a moĪa* ***harig-ō*** *moĪa-s̄u-ɪ̄ir-a*
AXD one man-M_o-DAT Molla see-M[ADV] Molla-M_o-OR_2-ALL come.
qinaɬ-u-wi.
near-M-PF_3
'A man saw Molla and came near him.'
(the nominative argument of the converbal clause *moĪa* is co-referent with the allative argument of the main clause *moĪas̄uɪ̄ira*, and the unexpressed nominative argument of the main clause is co-referent with the dative argument of the converbal clause *če ek'ʷas̄wa*)

(20) *ap'ada boc̄'o* ***m-a?-ē*** *ǧūx̄-ida mik'e.*
AXD nine month N-go-N[ADV] makěOBLG-IPF_2 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) *moĪa rasadi* ***w-uɪ'-ī*** *šʷela-ɪ̄a m-āne*
TDM Molla Rasadi M-die-HPL[ADV][13] graveyard-OR_5-ALL HPL-go.PROG
b-ak'-ī goli.
HPL-be-HPL[ADV] 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%);

[13] The presence of a HPL agreement marker in this form is an instance of "external agreement", which will be discussed in section 7.

– 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), is found in 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 covers only 2% of the corpus, and constructions with two transitive clauses sharing their P arguments only are not attested at all.

5.4. Converb chains

Example (22) illustrates the case of a converb chain in a sentence containing a single independent verb form (*woīādo* 'sent').

(22) *x̄ʷani-la* ***b-eʟ-ō-he*** *baza-g-a-la* ***w-ō̃-he***
SOV horse-ADD N-lead-M-ADV market-OR_1-ALL-ADD M-go.M-ADV
ʟašanoda *ʁuruš̌i-ɬ̄-a* *x̄ʷani-la* ***o-x̄-ō***
three.hundred rouble-N_o-DAL horse-ADD N-give-M[ADV]
ʁad-iga ***w-oq'-ō*** *hu-du* *ači-la* ***b-eχ-ō***
down-ALL M-come-M[ADV] DIST-SL money-ADD N-take-M[ADV]
ʁe-īi *ek'ʷa* *w-oī-ād-o* *hi-l-a* *o-x̄-u.*
neighborhood-GEN man M-walk-$CAUS.PF_2$-M DIST-UL-ALL N-give-INF
'I took the horse, went to the market, sold the horse for 300 roubles, came down, took this money,and sent a neighbor up there to give [the money to the girl's parents].'

In such converb chains, it seems at first sight possible to analyze each converb (with the exception of the first one) as fulfilling at the same time the role of main verb in relation to the converb that precedes it. However, I have

not been able to find evidence supporting this analysis in any of the converb chains I have examined. By contrast, it is easy to find clause chains in which agreement suggests a "bunch-like" structure in which all converbs depend on the same main verb, as in (23).

(23) *bač'a-la* ***b-iq̄-ō*** *č'oko-la* ***b-eq̄-ō***
AXD wolf-ADD N-cut.the.throat.of-M[ADV] skin-ADD N-take.off-M[ADV]
q'ẽɬen^{w}-e *geL̄-i* ***b-iɬ-ō*** ***w-ut'-ō-ho*** *w-ãda*
bag-LOC in-LOC N-put-M[ADV] M-go.straight-M[ADV] M-go.PF$_2$
mac'eq̄-a.
Matsex-ALL
'I cut the throat of the wolf, took off its skin, put it in my bag and went straight to Matsex.'

In this example, analyzing *biq̄ō* as a dependent of *beq̄o*, and *beq̄o* as a dependent of *biɬō*, would create a difficulty with the rule of external agreement established in Section 7. According to this rule, if the suffixal agreement of a converb is not governed by the S/P argument of the converb, it is governed by the S/P argument of the main verb. The point is that in (23), the suffix of both *biq̄ō* and *beq̄ō* expresses M agreement, whereas none of the first three converbs in this chain has a masculine S/P argument. Consequently, analyzing this construction as an instance of recursion would necessitate a substantial complexification of the agreement rule. In the absence of clear evidence supporting the recursion analysis, the hypothesis of a "bunch-like" structure is therefore preferable.

Long chains of converbs describing successive events are not typical of Akhvakh discourse, and in the texts I have collected, sentences such as (22) 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 two converbs associated with the same main verb. Sentences with three successive converbs represent 2% of the corpus, and sentences with four or five successive converbs, less than 0.4%.

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 a translational equivalent of English clause co-ordination, but which 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 (Foley & Van Valin 1984), 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 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, linear precedence is not a necessary condition 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 (24), in addition to word order, case marking unambiguously shows that the converbal clause includes a null-anaphora whose antecedent is the ergative argument of the main verb *molā rasadide*. Similar examples abound in my texts.

(24) *ʁad-iga-la* ***w-oq'-ō*** *eɬ'-a-wi* *molā rasadi-de*
AXD down-ALL-ADD M-come-M[ADV] tell-N-PF$_3$ Molla Rasadi-ERG
ak̄'o-g-a …
wife$_o$-OR$_1$-ALL
'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. The following examples, which constitute the first sentences of two stories told by the same speaker, could be literally rendered as '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-eɬ-ē*** *χ̬̄ōnuɬa* *j-ĩ̃-widi.*
AXD one woman child-ADD N-take.away-N[ADV] mow_INF F-go.F-PF$_3$
'A woman took her child and went mowing.'

(26) *če* *ak̄'a* *quri-g-a* *j-ĩ̃-widi* *mik'e-la* ***b-eɬ-ē.***
AXD one woman field-OR$_1$-ALL F-go.F-PF$_3$ child-ADD N-take.away-N[ADV]
'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 that are case-marked as dependents of the main verb and the main verb itself. In (27), the comparison of the converbal construction (a) with the independent clauses (b) and (c) shows that, in sentence (a), the NPs *moɬāsʷe* and *ʁeīi ekʼʷaāsugu* are dependents of the main verb *rãc̄ʼawi*, not of the converb *harigō.*

(27) a. *moɬa-sʷ-e* *ʁe-ī-i* *ekʼʷa-sū-g-u,* ***harig-ō,***
AXD Molla-M_o-ERG neighborhood-GEN man-M_o-OR_1-ABL see-M[ADV]
rãc̄ʼ-a-widi …
ask-N-PF_3
'Molla saw the neighbor and asked him…'
lit. 'Having seen him, Molla asked the neighbor…'

ELIC b. *moɬa-sʷ-a* *ʁe-ī-i* *ekʼʷa harig-u-widi.*
Molla-M_o-DAT neighborhood-GEN man see-M-PF_3
'Molla saw the neighbor.'

ELIC b'. *moɬa-sʷ-e* *ʁe-ī-i* *ekʼʷa-sū-g-u* *rãc̄ʼ-a-widi.*
Molla-M_o-ERG neighborhood-GEN man-M_o-OR_1-ABL ask-N-PF_3
'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 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 (28):

(28) ***eī-ē*** *b-eqʼ-ida* *ī-ʼãkʼa*
AXD tell-N[ADV] N-come-IPF_2 rabbit
'a rabbit that comes when they tell (it to come)'

6.6. Evidence from negation

Examples (29) and (30) show that, in the converbal construction, the converb falls under the scope of a negation marker attached to the main verb, which provides support to the subordination analysis (cf. also Schackow et al. this volume on the scope of negation in converb constructions). 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,* or *Hazhiya will not be killed and will not be left*, 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-iɪ-ō*** *ha le-q̄-une kor-ida guɪo.*
AXD money N-take-NEG-M[ADV] PROX place-OR_3-ABL move-IPF_2 COP.NEG.M
'I will not move from here without taking the money.'

(30) *ēše ima ɬ'ʷar-ida ri-ɬ̄-i nuχmałila gʷeda ħažija*
TDM $1PL_o$[GEN] father kill-IPF_2 moment-N_o-LOC command COP.N Hazhiya
ɬ'ʷar-iɪ-o *w-oɬ̄-ika.*
kill-NEG-M[ADV] M-leave-IPF_2.NEG
'Hazhiya, who was in command when our father was killed, will not be left alive.' lit. '…will not be left not being killed.'

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

It is also worth emphasizing that, although the general converb is regularly used in situations where 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 (31), but the example in (32) shows that *-la* basically encodes the discourse status of nominal referents regardless of the syntactic status of the clauses involved (since in (32), the subordination of the first clause is unambiguously marked by the use of a specialized converb). The co-occurrence of the suffix marking the general converb and the adnominal particle *-la* in sentences such as (33) can be regarded as additional evidence that they do not operate at the same level.

(31) *molā rasadi šig-a w-oī-u-wi, ħãki-s̄ʷ-e-la če q̄ati*
AXD Molla Rasadi in.front-ALL M-step-M-PF_3 judge-M_o-ERG-ADD one palm
č̌ʼʷaχ̌ˬā-wi.
slapˬN-PF_3
'Molla Rasadi stepped forward, and the judge (lit. the judge in turn) slapped his face.'

(32) *hudu-we w-oqʼ-iʟ-ēɬ̄i, molā rasadi-la q̄ʼeī-a*
AXD DIST-M M-come-NEG-PF.CVB Molla Rasadi-ADD at.home-ALL
w-ũ̄-wi.
M-go.M-PF_3
'As the man did not come back, Molla Rasadi in turn went home.'

(33) *ħãki-s̄ʷ-e-la* ***w-oχ̄-ō*** *kaʁa-la q̄ʷar-a-wi.*
AXD judge-M_o-ERG-ADD M-rejoice-CVB.M paper-ADD write-N-PF_3
'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[14]

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 for the general converb to show two gender-number agreement markers, one of the two gender-number agreement markers being controlled by the S/P argument of the main verb. Among the examples provided so far, double agreement occurs in (11), (12), (21), (22), (23), and (29).

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[14] For a typological survey of possible agreement domains, see Corbett (2006: 54–70). Note 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.

The general rule in Akhvakh is that verbs agree with their nominative (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 gender-number 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 do not. Prefixal agreement is invariably governed "internally" (i.e., by the nominative argument of the verb). By contrast, suffixal agreement is not always governed by the nominative 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 dependents of a head noun.

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 can 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 with the form labeled "imperfective$_2$".

In its independent use, the imperfective$_2$ is characterized by a suffix *-ida* optionally followed by a gender-number agreement marker, except in the HPL class, in which gender-number agreement is obligatory. As illustrated by (34), the imperfective$_2$ in participial function has exactly the same morphological structure, but in the participial construction, the nominative 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 not overtly expressed.

(34) a. *imo-de jašo-ɬa ači o-x̄-ida(-be).*
ELIC father$_o$-ERG girl$_o$-DAT money N-give-IPF$_2$(-N)
'The father gives money to his daughter.'

ELIC b. *jašo-ɬa ači o-x̄-ida(-we) ima*
girl$_o$-DAT money N-give-IPF$_2$(-M) father
'the father who gives money to his daughter'

ELIC c. *imo-de ači o-x̄-ida(-je) jaše*
father$_o$-ERG money N-give-IPF$_2$(-F) girl
'the daughter to whom the father gives money'

ELIC d. *imo-de jašo-ʟa o-x̄-ida(-be) ači*
father$_o$-ERG girl$_o$-DAT N-give-IPF$_2$(-N) money
'the money that the father gives to his daughter'

ELIC e. *jašo-ʟa ači o-x̄-ida-we*
girl$_o$-DAT money N-give-IPF$_2$-M
'the one (masc.) who gives money to the girl'

ELIC f. *imo-de ači o-x̄-ida-je*
father$_o$-ERG money N-give-IPF$_2$-F
'the one (fem.) to whom the father gives money'

ELIC g. *imo-de jašo-ʟa o-x̄-ida-be*
father$_o$-ERG girl$_o$-DAT N-give-IPF$_2$-N
'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 own argument structure. But when they do, as in (35), the same distinction between internal (prefixal) and external (suffixal) agreement can be observed.

(35) a. *k'eh-i r-ač'ida(-je) jaše* → *k'eh-i 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. *ʁoso b-ač'ida(-je) jaše* → *ʁoso 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. *ʁoso b-ač'ida(-we) ek'ʷa* → *ʁoso b-ač'ida-we*
hair N-black(-M) man hair N-black-M
'a man with black hair' 'the one (masc.) with black hair'

7.2. External agreement in the converbal construction

A particularly clear case of external agreement in the converbal construction is provided by example (21), repeated here as (36).

(36) *molā rasadi* ***w-uʟ'-ī*** *šʷela-Ɬ-a* *m-āne*
TDM Molla Rasadi M-die-HPL[ADV] graveyard-OR_5-ALL HPL-go.PROG
b-ak'-ī *goli.*
HPL-be-HPL[ADV] COP.HPL
'Molla Rasadi died, and they were going to the graveyard.'

In this sentence, the M prefix of *w-uʟ'-ī* 'having died' expresses agreement with the S argument of 'die' *molā rasadi*, and the only possible explanation of the HPL suffix is that it expresses agreement with the unexpressed 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 (37), the N prefix of the converbs *m-īʟ-ō* 'not having gone' in sentence (a) and *m-īʟ-ī-hi* (same meaning) in sentence (b) is controlled by the S argument of 'go' (*ĩk'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 *ʕoloqādi* 'young people'.

(37) a. *ĩk'a* *ri-da-la* ***m-īʟ-ō*** *hu-gu* *ek'wa-la*
TDM long time-INT-ADD N-go.NEG-M[ADV] DIST-LL man-ADD
w-uʟ'-u-wudi.
M-die-M-PF_3
'Shortly after that (lit. 'long time not having gone') the man died.'

TDM b. *zama-da-la* ***m-īʟ-ī-hi*** *ʕoloqa-di* *armija-ɬ̄i-g-a*
time-INT-ADD N-go.NEG-HPL-ADV young-PL army-N_o-OR_1-ALL
žab-iri.
call-PF_1.HPL
'Shortly after that (lit. 'time not having gone') the young people were called to the army.'

Example (23), repeated here as (38), with three successive converbs exhibiting double agreement, shows that in converb chains, several successive converbs may agree with the S/P argument of the same independent verb form. As already discussed in Section 5.4, this provides decisive evidence against a recursion analysis of converb chains.

(38) *bač'a-la* ***b-iq̄-ō*** *č̄'oko-la* ***b-eq̄-ō***
AXD wolf-ADD N-cut.the.throat.of-M[ADV] skin-ADD N-take.off-M[ADV]
q'ĕʟen^{w}-e geī-i ***b-iɬ-ō*** ***w-ut'-ō-ho*** *w-ā̆da*
bag-LOC in-LOC N-put-M[ADV] M-go.straight-M[ADV] M-go.PF$_2$
mac'eq̄-a.
Matsex-ALL
'I cut the throat of the wolf, took off its skin, put it in my bag and went straight to Matsex.'

7.3. Limitations to external agreement

External agreement in the converbal construction is not automatic, and constructions with the same argument sharing configuration may show variations with respect to agreement. The observation of spontaneous texts reveals some clear statistical regularities, but their interpretation is complicated not only by morphosyntactic factors, but also by the fact that the various possible configurations that should be systematically tested before making generalizations are very unevenly represented in spontaneous texts.

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

It is easy to establish that external agreement constitutes the rule when 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). The behavior of feminine singular or neuter potential controllers is more difficult to evaluate on the basis of textual data, because the configurations in which external agreement triggered by a feminine singular or neutral controller can manifest itself unambiguously are relatively rare, and consequently statistical considerations would have little relevance, given the size of the corpus I have at my disposal. All I can say in this respect is that Indira Abdulaeva's reactions to a questionnaire designed to

test the possibility of external agreement in unambiguous configurations revealed no difference in the behavior of potential controllers belonging to different agreement classes.

It is equally difficult to evaluate the exact significance of the fact that, in the unambiguous cases of external agreement in the converbal construction occurring in the texts I have collected, the controller is most of the time in S role, and only rarely in P role. The point is that in texts, the configurations making it possible to unambiguously detect external agreement controlled by the P argument of a transitive main verb are not frequent. I have unambiguous examples of external agreement controlled by an NP in P role, however, such as (39) (where in the absence of external agreement, the converb of 'do' would appear as *guj-ē*[*-he*]) and (40) (where in the absence of external agreement, the converb of 'come' would appear as *b-eq'-ē*[*-he*]).

(39) *ãd-o-lo-de* *komoki* ***gˬō-he*** ***šin-ō-he***
TDM person-PL-HPL-ERG help doˬM[ADV] hide-CAUS.M-ADV
ĩk'ar-ār-o *w-uk'-u-wudi*
treat.with.respect-PROG-M M-be-M-PF_3
'People, by helping and hiding him, manifested their respect toward him.'

(40) *ĩgo-q̄-u* *sor-ō* *k̄'wet-u* *w-ī̄da* *gere* *qedo*
TDM window-OR_3-ABL slip-CVB.M run-INF M-go.IPF_2 Gere after
l̄'wãh-ada *gula* ***b-eq'-ō*** *hu* *miša-ī̄-i* *l̄'war-u-wudi.*
fire-IPF_2 bullet N-come-M[ADV] DIST place-N_o-LOC kill-M-PF_3
'A bullet fired on Gere who was going to escape through the window reached him (lit. came) and killed him on the spot.'

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. Such a hypothesis is difficult to prove, but it is at least consistent with Indira Abdulaeva's judgement about external agreement in configurations where the potential controller of external argument is also the A argument of the converb and is expressed at the beginning of the sentence. As illustrated by (41), in such configurations, external agreement requires that this participant is expressed as an argument of the main verb, which implies that its position at the beginning of the sentence is due to topicalization.

(41) a. *aǩ'a waša* ***w-oʟ-ē*** *q̄'eĪ-a j-eq'-i-wudi.*
ELIC woman boy M-lead-F-ADV at.home-all F-come-F-PF_3
lit. 'The woman, having taken the boy, came home.'

ELIC b. **aǩ'o-de waša* ***w-oʟ-ē*** *q̄'eĪ-a j-eq'-i-wudi.*
woman$_o$-ERG boy M-lead-F-ADV at.home-all F-come-F-PF_3

7.4. External agreement in the converbal construction as a particular instance of adverbial agreement

Returning to purely 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 of another cross-linguistically rare type of agreement in Northern Akhvakh: agreement of adverbs with the S/P argument of the verb they modify. 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 adjunct phrases agreeing with the nominative argument of the clause. This is the case of *hagē* 'where? (allative)', for instance, and of manner adverbs such as *ĩhahimē* 'slowly', *hуštē* 'thus', *čʷigē* 'how?', etc. Agreement with the nominative argument of the clause also characterizes nouns in the essive and mediative cases (see Footnote 4). Like converbs, the adjunct phrases that can agree with the nominative argument of the clause do not always express agreement, and the F/N form may be used as a default form, but in texts, forms unambiguously expressing agreement are frequent. Moreover, the agreement markers are identical to those described in Section 3 for the general converb, and they may be followed by the same optional formative *-he*. Example (42) illustrates the agreement of *hуštē* 'thus' with the nominative argument *dene* 'I'. In this example, the verb is in an analytic form *converb + 'be'*, which makes clearly apparent the fact that the nominative argument *dene* triggers agreement of both the verb *wołōhe wuk'ari* and the adjunct *huštōhe*.

(42) ***hušt-ō-he*** *dene-la šamila-ɬ̄i-de geĪ-i* ***w-oɬ̄-ō-he***
SOV thus-M-ADV 1SG-ADD Shamila-F_o-ERG inside-LOC M-let-M-ADV
w-uk'-ari.
M-be-PF_1
'Thus (M) Shamila let me into the room too.'

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 the agreement of adjuncts with the nominative argument of the same verb. The parallelism is apparent in a sentence such as (43), in which the S argument of *wī̃do* (*dene* 'I') controls at the same time the agreement of the manner adverb *huštō* 'thus (M)' and the external agreement of the converb *beχō*.

(43) *če žo-ɬ̄-i dene-la* ***hušt-ō-****da χ̄ăža-la*
TDM one day-N-LOC 1SG-ADD thus-M[ADV]-INT dagger-ADD
b-eχ-ō *du waša-s̄u-l̄ir-a w-ī̃d-o.*
N-take-M[ADV] $2SG_o$[GEN] son-M_o-OR_2-ALL M-go.IPF_2-M
'One day I too will take a dagger, and in exactly the same way 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 also found 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 more similarity with another cross-linguistically rare agreement phenomenon also found in Northern Akhvakh: the agreement of adjuncts with the S/P argument of the verb they modify.

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Abbreviations

…o	oblique stem	INF	infinitive
ABL	ablative	INT	intensifier
ADD	additive particle	IPF	imperfective
ADV	second formative of the complex suffix expressing adverbial agreement	LL	lower level (spatial deixis)
		LOC	locative
		M	human singular masculine
AGR	gender-number agreement marker	N	non-human
		NEG	negative
ALL	allative	NPL	non-human plural
CAUS	causative	OBLG	obligative
COND	conditional converb	OR	orientation marker
COP	copula	PF	perfective
CVB	converb	PL	plural
DAT	dative	PROG	progressive converb
DIST	distal	PROH	prohibitive
ERG	ergative	PROX	proximal
ESS	essive	Q	interrogative
F	human singular feminine	SG	singular
GEN	genitive	SL	same level (spatial deixis)
HPL	human plural	UL	upper level (spatial deixis)
INCL	inclusive	VBZ	verbalizer

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