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ON THE TYPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CONVERBS

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1. NON-COMBINED AND COMBINED CONVERBS

A *non-combined* or prototypical converb (= adverbial participle; Russian *деепричастие*) may be defined (a) positively - as a verb form related to another verb form, and (b) negatively - as a verb form which does not occur in the position (I) of the predicate of a simple sentence, (II) of the attribute to a noun, (III) of the predicate actant, (IV) of the subjective actant. In the above mentioned four positions the following prototypical verb forms occur: position (I) - a finite form, position (II) - a participle, position (III) - an infinitive, position (IV) - a gerund.

For prototypical cases the infinitive can be distinguished from the gerund by the following features: the gerund alone (i) can have an attribute, (ii) can be declined or can combine with prepositions and/or postpositions, and (iii) it cannot govern - in the case of transitivity - a direct object, i.e. retain the governing properties of the corresponding finite verb form. Here we do not take into consideration the peculiarities of terminology in grammars of different languages, and also intermediate cases connected, for instance, with the historical development of one form into another or with the acquisition of additional functions.

Above we gave the definition of the non-combined converb. In addition, a prototypical converb can combine with a verb form in the position (II) and/or (III) and/or (IV), thus appearing as a *combined converb*. Functions performed by non-combined converbs in one group of languages may in other languages be performed by forms having also other functions (most frequently the functions of the participle, the infinitive and the gerund). In the typology of converb constructions it is advisable to term all such combined forms converbs, even though their converb function may not be the basic one. On the basis of the feature "the number of functions" the converbs are subdivided into four groups, and on the basis of the feature "set of functions" they are subdivided into eight groups.

A. Non-combined, or monofunctional converbs. To this group, for instance, belong Russian forms in =а, =я, =е, =ему, Estonian forms in =des, Lithuanian forms in =dam (the so-called 'semi-participles'): Estonian (1) *Ületa=des₁ jõe₂ pöördus₃ ratsanik₄ paremale₅* 'Crossing₁ the.river₂ the.horseman₄ turned₃ to.the.right₅'.

B. Combined bifunctional converbs (the prototypical converb function is combined with one other function). In this case there are three types of combinations: (i) converb and participle: Estonian (2a) *Ületa=nud₁ jõe₂, pöördus₃ ratsanik₄ paremale₅* 'Having.crossed₁ the.river₂ the.horseman₄ turned₃ to.the.right₅'; cf. (2b) *Jõe₁ ületa=nud₂ ratsanik₃ pöördus₄ paremale₅* 'The.horseman₃ who.had.crossed₂ the.river₁ turned₄ to.the.right₅'; (ii) converb and infinitive: Chukchi (3a) *Ḳoraḅ₁ təm=ək₂ ḡnan₃ rəvennīn₄* 'Having.killed₂ the.deer₁ he₃ cut.it₄'; cf. (3b) *ḡnan₁ rəpaavnenat₂ təm=ək₃ Ḳorat₄* 'He₁ stopped₂ to.kill₃ deer₄'; (iii) converb and gerund.

C. Combined tri-functional converbs. In this case there are also three types of combinations: (i) converb, participle and infinitive; (ii) converb, participle and gerund: Manchu (4a) *I₁ ala=ra₂ ongolo₃ teki₄* 'Sit.down₄ before₃ he₁ began.to.speak₂'; cf. (4b) *Ala=ra₁ hehe₂ tehe₃* 'The.speaking₁ woman₂ sat.down₃'; cf. (4c) *Hehe₁ ala=ra-be₂ donāšimbi₃* 'I.hear₃ the.woman's₁ speaking-ACCUSATIVE₂'; (iii) converb, infinitive and gerund.

D. Combined four-functional converbs. This form combines the functions of the converb, the participle, the infinitive and the gerund: English (5a) *Smok=ing a cigarette, the girl entered the room*; (5b) *A smok=ing girl entered the room*; (5c) *The girl started smok=ing*

(= to smoke) a cigarette; (5d) *The girl's smok-ing irritates me.*

We did not mention above such associated functions of converbs as: 1) the formation of analytical verb forms; 2) the formation of complex verbs; 3) possibilities of its occurrence as the predicate of a simple sentence (e.g. in newspaper headlines).

2. THE MAIN FOUR SEMANTIC TYPES OF CONVERBS

Below we define the types as ideal cases but in reality the converbs exhibit a greater or lesser proximity to these ideal cases. According to the feature "clear-cut meaning" converbs are first of all divided into *specialized* and *non-specialized* ones. Specialized converbs display one, more rarely two or three, clear-cut meanings, whereas non-specialized converbs do not have this feature.

2.1. Specialized converbs

It is expedient to distinguish two groups here: (a) *temporal converbs* denoting simultaneity, priority or succession, and (b) *adverbial converbs*. The latter term is tentative, because temporal meanings are usually regarded as adverbial too, e.g. when classifying adverbs, adverbial modifiers and adverbial clauses.

2.1.1. Temporal specialized converbs. The temporal meanings of converbs may be illustrated by the following examples: (i) simultaneity; Udmurt (6) *Uša=ku-m₁ kuas'₂ soris₃* 'Working-I₁ (= when I was working) it.was.raining₂₊₃'; (ii) priority; Mari (7) *Tol=meke-m₁ avam₂ oyla₃* 'Having.come-I₁ (= when I came) my.mother₂ said₃'; (iii) succession: Evenki (8) *Nuñan₁ ukunniva₂ amevren₃, telinne₄ suru=mnen₅* 'He₁ brought₃ milk₂, then₄ leaving₅ (= he left)'.

2.1.2. Adverbial specialized converbs. Here belong converbs with the meanings of (i) manner, (ii) cause, (iii) purpose, (iv) condition, (v) concession, (vi) comparison, (vii) intention, (viii) result, (ix) contraposition, (x) unreal condition: Evenki (9) *Nuñan₁ birala₂ surunen₃ dyavyavi₄ ol=da=i₅* 'He₁ crossed₃ the.river₂ for.the.purpose.of.making₅ (=da= - a suffix of the converb of purpose) a.boat.for.himself₄'.

2.2. Non-specialized converbs

These converbs are polysemous and/or semantically vague, their meanings depending upon a definite set of intralingual conditions or only upon the context. Semantically non-specialized converbs may be divided into two groups using the following terms: *narrative* and *contextual*.

2.2.1. Narrative converbs. We use this term to refer to converbs denoting three or more completed actions following one another and promoting the narration. Thus the English sentence (10a) *He came₁ up to the door, knocked₂, peeped₃ through the keyhole, stood₄ for a while, and then left₅ empty-handed* may be translated into Turkmenian with four p-converbs and a finite verb form (the use of five finite forms in this case would produce an impression of artificiality): (10b) *Ol gapa jakinlađ=ip₁ gapani tirkildat=ip₂, gupun deđeginden seredi=p₃, bir-iki minut tur=up₄, xađ satsis git=di₅* (see Дмитриев 1962: 401). Narrative converbs exist, for instance, in Turkic, Mongolian, Japanese, Nivkh and Manchu, and are lacking, for instance, in Slavic and Finno-Ugric languages.

2.2.2. Contextual converbs. The Estonian and Russian converbs are of this type: Estonian (11) *Närveeri=des₁ kõnni=b₂ harilikult ta mööda tuba* 'Being.agitated₁ (= when he is agitated) he usually walks₂ to and fro in the room' (the meaning of simultaneity); Estonian (12) *Ta kõnni=b₁ närveeri=des₂ mööda tuba* 'He is.walking₁ to and fro in the room being.agitated₂ (= in agitation)' (the meaning of manner).

Contextual converbs may express such meanings as simultaneity, priority, cause, manner, condition, concession, consequence, purpose, etc.

Converbs can combine narrative and contextual functions. Thus, the Turkic narrative

converbs in *-p* may also express the meanings of cause, condition, manner, etc.: Bashkir (13) *Arginbay, kaušabirak yaua=p, birse* 'Arginbay answered a bit taken.aback' (the meaning of manner).

3. CORRELATION BETWEEN THE COMBINED AND NON-COMBINED TYPES OF CONVERBS AND THE TEMPORAL MEANINGS

The contextual converbs with the basic meaning of simultaneity tend, it seems, to be formally isolated from other verb forms to a greater degree than the converbs with the basic meaning of priority (on condition that the latter are not morphologically derived from the former). In other words, simultaneity is more often expressed by non-combined converbs than priority. In the latter case combined forms with the function of the past participle are widespread. This is the case not only in Estonian, cf. (1), (2a), (2b). A more or less analogous state of things can be observed in Lithuanian (the so-called semi-participles in *=dam=* and adverbial participles; cf. Амбразас 1985: 298, 312 - 313), French (gérondif and participe passé; cf. Гак 1986: 262 - 265), Chechen (converbs in *=š* and past participles in *=na*; cf. Дешериев 1967: 204).

4. A SHORT AREAL SURVEY OF CONVERB USAGE IN THE LANGUAGES OF EURASIA

This section is mainly based on the data from the book of C. Masica (Masica 1976: 108 - 140). According to him in the direction from East to West the role of converbs in grammatical structures decreases in the investigated languages (the Eastern area is larger and includes more languages); also the frequency of usage of converbs decreases (in the Eastern languages converbs are twice as frequent as in the Western languages; see Table 1 to which we have added Estonian data).

Table 1

The number of converbs
(in the first nine chapters of the Gospel of Mark;
the extract contains 7500 - 8000 words)

0-50	0 - German	2 - Estonian	5 - Modern Greek	36 - Rumanian
50-100	58 - English	99 - French		
100-200	133 - Russian	150 - Italian	162 - Spanish	181 - Turkish
200-300	205 - Persian	217 - Hindi	226 - Ancient Greek	250 - Bengali
More than 300	446 - Malayalam	459 - Telugu		

The basic temporal character of converbs also changes from East to West. With the decrease of converb use from East to West the role of converbs of simultaneity (in terms of C.Masica, the "present" participle) increases relative to the converbs of priority (in his terms the "past" participle). The ratio of converbs of simultaneity and converbs of priority is shown by the following respective figures for each language based upon the same extract from Gospel: German: 0 - 0, Estonian: 2 (100%) - 0, Modern Greek: 5 (100%) - 0, Rumanian: 36 (100%) - 0, English: 58 (100%) - 0, Spanish: 152 (94%) - 10, French: 57 (58%) - 42, Italian: 87 (58%) - 63, Ancient Greek: 84 (37%) - 142, Russian: 35 (26%) - 98, Turkish: 28 (15%) - 153, Hindi: 31 (14%) - 186, Telugu: 30 (7%) - 429, Bengali: 4 (2%) - 246, Persian: 3 (1%) - 202, Malayalam: 0 (0%) - 446.

Perhaps one of the main reasons of the divergence in the ratio of converbs of simultaneity and priority is the fact that in the East narrative converbs prevail (i.e. converbs which naturally function as converbs of priority), whereas in the West there are only contextual converbs. In the Western languages the converbs of simultaneity perform also some of the functions characteristic of the converbs of priority, i.e. converbs of simultaneity may be used instead of converbs of priority with some classes of verbs:

(1) when the action expressed by a converb immediately precedes the action expressed by the finite form. This is observed, for instance, in English (Gordon, Crilova 1973: 148) and

Estonian (see Уустыльд 1967: 10): Estonian (14) *Korterisse tul=les, ma lülitasin raadio sisse* 'Entering, the flat I switched on the radio';

(11) when the result of the action denoted by a converb is retained at the moment of another action expressed by the finite form. Thus, for instance, in the following sentence (from Mark's Gospel; 1,7) of the Ancient Greek original there is a converb of priority (participium aoristi); (15) ... *hoũ ouk eimĩ hikandẽ kũpsas, lũsai tũn himanta tũn hypodẽmatũn aytoũ* "... the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy having.stooped.down, (= to stoop down) and (to) uncloze." The Russian translation is similar to the original (it contains a converb *наклонившись* derived from a perfective verb), whereas e.g. in the Estonian and Latin translations of the Gospel converbs of simultaneity are used: Estonian *kumarda=des* (the past participle **kumarda=nud* is impossible), Latin *procumb=ens* (participium praesentis activi).

5. CONVERBS IN FINNO-UGRIC LANGUAGES

The western Finno-Ugric languages (Balto-Finnic and Lapp) and the eastern (Ugric) languages have 1 to 3 converbs: one non-combined converb of simultaneity, while one of the others (if there are any) is a combined converb of priority. The Hungarian data are, it seems, rather significant with regard to the tendency pointed out in the previous section: in this language the converb of priority in *-van/-ven*, rather common at the beginning of the 20th century, has almost gone out of use at present (Майтгинская 1955: 258). In these languages converbs combine the meanings of simultaneity with other meanings, most frequently with the meaning of manner. The languages in the centre of the Finno-Ugric geographic area (Permian and Volgaic) have 3 to 5 converbs, but only the Mari language seems to possess the converb of priority (in-*make*), cf. (7).

Most Finno-Ugric converbs (with the exception of Hungarian converbs; cf. Балашиха 1951: 362) can form constructions with subjects non-coreferential with the subjects of the finite forms (similar to English and French, but different from the Slavic languages). The Estonian converbal constructions with non-coreferent subjects, it seems, are specific in that:

1) in most such constructions with the *-des* converbs and in all constructions with the *-nud* converbs the verb is intransitive (Уустыльд 1967: 11), and

2) the converbal constructions with a subject cannot have an object and the converbal constructions with an object cannot have a subject (Уустыльд 1967: 12).

6. SOME FEATURES OF THE CONVERB IN ESTONIAN

The conditions of the realization of meanings of contextual converbs (expressing simultaneity, priority, cause, purpose, manner, concession, etc.) may be alike in different languages, e.g. in Estonian and Russian. Here two types of similar conditions are mentioned (cf. Апресян 1983: 332 - 338).

1) The pre-position of a converb tends to opt for a temporal meaning (simultaneity), cf. (11), the post-position of a converb tends to opt for an adverbial meaning (of manner), cf. (12). To compare, the Russian translation of (11) is (16a) *Волнуясь₁ (= когда волнуется) он ходит₂ по комнате* (simultaneity); the Russian translation of (12) is (16b) *Он ходит₁ по комнате волнуясь₂ (= в волнении)* (manner).

2) Verbs of the type "to be afraid" in a converb form without negation in the finite verb form produce the meaning of cause, and with negation the meaning of concession: Estonian (17) *Meelitusi armasta=des₁ umbritses_{2a} (ei umbritsenud_{2b} siiski) ta end pugejatega* and Russian (18) *Люб=я₁ лeсть, он окружил_{2a} (вce жe не окружил_{2b}) себя поджалми* 'Loving₁ flattery he surrounded_{2a} (nevertheless did not surround_{2b}) himself with toadies'.

In conclusion we should like to point out that the Estonian converbal constructions are most frequently used in bookish language, but in the spoken language they seldom occur (Уустыльд 1967: 4). Russian is similar to Estonian in this respect: spoken Russian as well as

some other spoken Slavic languages practically does not show converbs. As for the frequency of converbs in the bookish language, Estonian is closer to Russian than Russian is to such Slavic languages as, for instance, Bulgarian and Slovak.

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