

On the tense and aspectual value of the IA converb. Lessons from early NIA

Converbs (for theoretical details regarding the definition of the converb see e.g. Haspelmath 1995) occupy a central place in the Indo-Aryan scholarship since they are one of the most prominent features taken into consideration when defining the South Asian linguistic area and, moreover, they are one of the most important subordinating devices in Indo-Aryan. The category of converbs has already been analysed from various angles: synchronic, diachronic and typological and at various stages of the historical development of the IA languages (cf. Dwarikesh 1971; Davison 1981; Kachru 1981; Tikkanen 1987; Subbarao 2012 among many others).

It has been noticed that IA converb suggests temporal reference by means of perfective aspect (Davison 1981; Tikkanen 1987). It is then the consequence of such reading that converbs show local scope of the tense operator in the sentences with the main verb in non-past tenses:

1. Hindi (Davison 1981: 123, fn.7)

*ham* *ṣṭāks* *āj* *kharīd-kar* *do* *sāl* *kebād* *bec* *dēge*  
we stocks today buy-CVB two year after sell give.AUX.FUT.1PL  
'We have bought stocks today and we will sell them in two years'.

The aim of the present paper is to demonstrate whether similar phenomena have been observed in the early stages of NIA. Our preliminary survey has shown that, for example, in early Awadhi out of 236 converbal constructions selected from the corpus only 12 occurring with non-past tenses show local scope of the tense operator, e.g.

2. early Awadhi

*kharaga* *dekhi* *kai* *nāvahiṃ* *gīvāṃ*  
sword see.CVB CVB bow.3PL.PRS neck F.OBL.SG  
'...(they) bow their necks having seen a sword.' (JayP240.3)

The preliminary results of the survey on early Awadhi have also typological support from other branches of IE, namely Slavonic (cf. Bojačkowska 2010). In Polish, the frequency of anterior converbs co-occurring with the main verbs operates along the following hierarchy:

past tense > present tense > future tense > imperative, subjunctive.

It is then another aim of the present survey to demonstrate whether similar hierarchy can be posed for IA on the basis of a diachronic analysis of four branches of early NIA, namely early Awadhi, Braj, Rajasthani and Dakkhini. The data consists of four tagged corpora (10000 words each), annotated by means IATagger (Jaworski 2013) and consisting texts from 14-17<sup>th</sup> centuries both prose and verse.

The assumed incongruence of the converb with non-past tenses constitute quite a strong evidence for its perfectivity. The diachronic analysis of its distribution with the main verb with regard to tenses can contribute to our better understanding of IA historical morphosyntax.

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