Locative clauses and existential constructions in Khowar

Hilda Appelgren
Acknowledgments

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Abstract

The current study investigates how locative clauses and existential constructions are realized and differentiated in the language of Khowar [ISO 693–3: khw] (Hindu Kush Indo-Aryan, HKIA). Khowar is one of several under-researched languages in the Hindu Kush, and as of yet there is no comprehensive description of its linguistic structure. The data for this study was provided by Afsar Ali Khan (local linguist and native speaker of Khowar), in the form of a collection of transcribed traditional Khowar stories, told by speakers in the community. Samples of locative clauses and existential constructions were collected from the corpus, mainly by use of the concordance tool of Toolbox, after which an analysis was carried out. The results show that word order is the main strategy for differentiating locational-existential constructions and locative clauses in Khowar, that semantically bleached posture verbs are not a present strategy for creating locative clauses nor existential constructions, and that there are certain story-opening sequences with existential constructions that are typical of the genre represented by the data. Future research is suggested to focus on negative existentials in Khowar, the full distributional pattern of the actual and inferential copula in other types of non-verbal predication, and the extended use of the 3rd person singular past tense form of the actual copula, ɔʃɔj, which is no longer sensitive to the animacy distinction otherwise present in the Khowar verbal system.

Keywords: Khowar, locative clauses, existential clauses, non-verbal predication, Hindu Kush
Lokativa satser och existentiella konstruktioner i khowar

Hilda Appelgren

Sammanfattning


Nyckelord: Khowar, lokativa satser, existentiella satser, ickeverbala predikat, Hindu Kush
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABL</td>
<td>ablative</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
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<td>ART</td>
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<td>BLC</td>
<td>basic locative clause</td>
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<td>CA</td>
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<td>COMP</td>
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<td>Definite</td>
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Introduction

Khowar [ISO 639-3: khw] is an under-described language spoken in northwestern Pakistan in one part of the Hindu Kush, a mountainous area spanning parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Around half of the languages spoken in the Hindu Kush are Indo-Aryan (IA), but many of them deviate from other IA languages in several characteristic features and are often spoken of as ‘Dardic’ languages. Since the classification of these languages is disputed, the areal term Hindu Kush Indo-Aryan (HKIA) is preferred in this thesis. As is the case for the majority of the HKIA languages, there are few works describing the linguistic system of Khowar (the notable contributions being from Elena Bashir, e.g. 1988, 2000, 2003) and no complete grammar has been published.

In this thesis, one previously unexplored domain of Khowar will be investigated, namely the differentiation between three types of clauses: those that place already known referents in a certain location (a), those that introduce discourse-new referents by placing them in a location (b), and those that also arguably introduce a new referent to the discourse, but without any overt locational elements (c).

a) The book is on the table.
b) There is a book on the table.
c) Once upon a time, there was a book.

Clauses of type (a) and (b) both involve a referent (locatum) which is said to be in a location (locus), but there is a functional difference between them: information structure. Furthermore, a clause like (c) has a function similar to (b), but lacks a locational element. How these types of clauses ought to be defined and how they are constructed and contrasted in different languages has attracted considerable attention and generated discussions among linguists for decades (e.g. Jespersen, 1924; Lyons, 1967; Clark, 1978; Hengeveld, 1992; Stassen, 1997; Dryer, 2007). In this thesis, I will refer to clauses such as (a) as locative
Within an ongoing research project on the neighboring language Gawarbati, clauses such as (a) and (b) above have been observed as being mainly differentiated by word order: locative clauses have word order LOCATUM–LOCUS, while the order LOCUS–LOCATUM is used in locational-existential constructions (Henrik Liljegren, pers. comm. 2022). Contrasting the known with the unknown through word order is cross-linguistically common (Koch, 2012; Clark, 1978), as the main functional difference between these types of locational clauses is information structure (Koch, 2012; Hengeveld, 1992). However, the cross-linguistic variation displays many other possibilities, both lexical and constructional. For example, in Nuristani (Morgenstierne, 1929: 233) and some HKIA languages, e.g. Gawarbati, Palula and Kalam Kohistani (Baart, 1999: 126), semantically bleached posture verbs, e.g. ‘sit’, occur frequently in locational-existential clauses but not in locative clauses.

During an earlier course in field linguistics at Stockholm University, I was introduced to the Khowar language and its intricate system of expressing spatial relations, and after the end of the course, our language consultant Afsar Ali Khan generously extended an offering of his own Khowar data, collected in Chitral between 2005 and 2010. This corpus, which mainly contains longer narratives and traditional stories, presents a unique opportunity to investigate how presentative constructions such as (b) and (c) are expressed, as discourse-new referents regularly need to be introduced as a narrative progresses. Essentially, several things combined motivate this thesis: the need for more descriptive work on Khowar, the ongoing research on locative and locational-existential clauses in other HKIA languages, the intriguing relationship between location and existence cross-linguistically, and the fact that a corpus of narratives is a near perfect fit for the endeavor of mapping how locatives, locational-existential and general-existential constructions are realized in a language.

### 2 Background

The background to the present topic is structured as follows: the theoretical background of the clauses and constructions relevant to the thesis is introduced first in chapter 2.1 with
subheadings, including an introduction to non-verbal predication (2.1), a more detailed overview of the literature on the relationship between location, existence and possession (2.1.1), negative existentials (2.1.1), and some notions concerning the copula (2.1.2) and posture verbs (2.1.3). In chapter 2.2 an introduction to Khowar in its areal context in the Hindu Kush is presented (2.2), including syntactic features characteristic of the HKIA languages (2.2.1), followed by a final section with an overview of the previous research done on Khowar specifically (2.3).

### 2.1 Non-verbal predication

The non-verbal predicate stands out from other types of predicates because the predicate itself is not a lexical verb. Dryer (2007) and Hengeveld (1992) both follow this definition, with the argument that even if there is a verbal element present in the clause, i.e. a copula, the main predicate which carries the primary semantic content in e.g. the sentence “My dog is black” is \textit{black}, rather than \textit{is}. This can be seen both in the many instances of languages where a copula is not obligatory, or even allowed, in these types of sentences, and in the restrictions on the arguments of the predicate. Hengeveld (1992: 29) exemplifies with (1) shown below, where the adjectives (i.e., the proper predicates of the clause) determine the number of arguments, even though both (1a) and (1b) include a verbal copula.

1) a. This book is fascinating.
   b. This book is identical to that one.
   c. *This book is identical.
   (Hengeveld, 1992: 29)

Often the non-verbal predicate includes some version of a copula, which can express the functions and categories typical of verbal elements in the clause while enabling a non-verbal element to act as predicate. Typically, a noun phrase is linked to an adjectival element, another nominal, or a locative, creating an adjectival predicate, a nominal predicate\(^1\), or a locative predicate, respectively (Dryer, 2007: 224–5). How these types of non-verbal predicates are realized differs greatly among the world’s languages, but it is cross-

\(^1\)Nominal and adjectival predicates are only peripherally related to the topic of this thesis, and will therefore not be discussed in any closer detail here.
linguistically common that they are in some way treated differently. For example, one type may require a copula while it is optional for another, or different copulas or word orders may be used in different types of predicates (e.g. Stassen, 1997; Hengeveld, 1992).

2.1.1 Location, existence and possession

There is a conceptual domain, or semantic space, in non-verbal predication that is highly relevant to the topic of this thesis, namely the domain of location – existence – possession. Languages often show some structural overlap between locative clauses, existential constructions and some forms of possession, because crucially, they all share the conceptual notion of a placement of an entity in space (Clark, 1978; Lyons, 1967; Hengeveld, 1992). The close relationship between location and existence will be further developed below, but for the moment, only consider that when stating the existence of something, one also places it somewhere in the world. As far as possession is concerned, the placement of something in a location might seem as a mere philosophical truth in languages such as English, which uses a Have-possessive structure. However, it is no less common for languages to employ an oblique possessive instead, in which the possessed noun phrase acts as the subject to an ‘exist’-predicate, e.g. a copula (Stassen, 2013a). For such languages, there is a cross-linguistic pattern wherein the existential and the possessive predicates are syntactically identical, including the same copula, in all aspects apart from the location being +human for possessives (2b), and –human for existentials (2a) (Freeze, 2001) – if you would translate (2) literally, it would read “A pencil is at the table” (2a), and similarly, “A man is at Lisa” (2b).

2) Finnish (Freeze, 2001: 943)
   a. pöydä-llä on kynä
       table-AD cop pencil
      “There is a pencil on the table.”

   b. Liisa-lla on mies
       Lisa-AD cop man
      “Lisa has a husband.”

Possession will not be further elaborated on here, as it is only relevant to the present thesis as far as possessive predicates in Khowar may show the same formal expression as locational-existential constructions.
Despite the overlaps in structure and semantics between locative, possessive, and existential predicates, there are typically structural differences that separate one from the other (Dryer, 2007: 240). Consider sentences (3a–d).

3)  
   a. The woman is in the village.
   b. There is a beautiful woman in the village.
   c. There are many lions in Africa.
   d. There are many unhappy people.

(3a) is an example of a locative clause, i.e. a clause that specifies a location in space (ground) of a subject (figure). Haspelmath (2022: 5) defines them more specifically as constructions which predicate a locative phrase (“in the village”) to a definite subject argument, also called _locatum_ (“The woman”). From a discursive point of view, the subject in (3a) is presupposed, known information which is stated to be in a certain location, while (3b) introduces a new theme, i.e. the woman, with an expletive – sometimes called _dummy_ – pronoun and a locative phrase (Dryer, 2007; Koch, 2012). Jespersen (1924) was the first to identify clauses such as (3b) as a distinct construction type, which he labeled _existential sentences_: “Sentences (…) in which the existence of something is asserted or denied (…)” (Jespersen, 1924: 155). Even though this initial definition has been criticized since, Jespersen (1924) is credited for being the first linguist to make note of these types of predicates. Jespersen primarily made observations of this construction type in English, but he also identified that similar constructions in other languages “present some striking peculiarities” (Jespersen, 1924: 155).

Koch (2012) reasons that the principal difference between (3a) and (3b) is information structure, and labels them rhematic (R) and thematic (T) location. T-locationals (3a) put an already known participant in a location, while R-locationals (3b) introduce something new. Koch (2012: 538) further specifies the differences between rhematic locational predications (3b), and predications of bounded (3c) and generic (3d) _existence_, and argues that statements like (3b) not only introduces a new participant, but crucially, places her in a location. As for (3c), it is – in English – syntactically identical to (3b), but the location “only specifies the local area of validity of the statement of EXISTENCE” (Koch, 2012: 538). While the _locus_ is central to the former (3b), it is optional in these latter two examples as the statement itself
concerns existence. Some languages systematically distinguish rhematic locationals from existential constructions, by e.g. having a dedicated ‘exist’-verb for existentials (Koch, 2012: 540), which is a nontrivial fact and an argument in favor of separating the two in the terminology. One such language is Somali, which employs one verb for rhematic location (4a), and another for bounded (4b) and generic (4c) existence.

4) Somali (Koch, 2012: 540)
   a) miis-ka buug baa dul yaalla
      table-DEF book foc upon be.3SG.M.PRS
      “There is a book on the table.”
   b) libaax-yo badan baa jira’aafrika
      lion-PL many foc exist.PRS.HAB Africa
      “There are many lions in Africa.”
   c) dad badan oo madluumiin-a’ baa jira’a
      people many REL unhappy.PL-LOC foc exist.PRS.HAB
      “There are many unhappy people.”

According to Koch (2012), only (3c-d) would qualify as existential predications, while (3a-b) are T-locational and R-locational predicates, respectively. In line with these different pragmatic purposes, Clark (1978) could identify a slight tendency among the world’s languages of marking the nominal of the thematic locational (LOCATUM) as definite, and the nominal of the rhematic locational and the existential (LOCATUM/EXISTENT) as indefinite. In the absence of definite articles, word order is essential to making the same distinction, by structuring the clause with the known element before the unknown.

A similar view argues that it is perspective structure rather than information structure that separates locatives and existentials; “An ‘existence/location situation’ may be structured either from the perspective of the thing or from the perspective of the loc(ation).” (Partee & Borschev, 2007: 156) With this interpretation, it is the perspectival center that differs between locatives and existentials, meaning that the thing is the center of the locative clause, while the

3 And, importantly, the introduction of discourse-new participants – Koch (2012: 595–6) notes that these existentials are also rhematic, and that thematic existentials, e.g. “God exists”, are quite marginal to the topic at hand.
loc(ation) is the center of the existential clause. It follows that the perspectival center must be presupposed knowledge in the context; the existence of the thing is thus presupposed knowledge in the locative clause, and the loc – although sometimes implicit – is presupposed context in the existential clause.

In the literature, authors tend to either only focus on clauses such as (3b) and claim a term other than existential since it in those cases is a misnomer (e.g. Creissels, 2019), or group (3b–c) together to emphasize that regardless of locativity, the discursive function of introducing new participants is their defining feature. Dryer (2007) is one of the latter group of authors, and while he did argue that existential is a misnomer of these constructions, he maintains it as a term for all presentative, “there is”-clauses, regardless of whether or not they contain a locational element.

For the purposes of this thesis, the former stance is too narrow, and the latter is too broad (or at least, potentially confusing). In order to avoid narrowing the analysis and scope of what can be found in the Khowar data, Koch’s (2012) definitions of thematic and rhematic locationals (3a-b) will be followed, as well as his definitions of bound and generic existential predications (3c-d). In order to avoid term confusion, henceforth locative clauses will refer to thematic locationals, locational-existential will refer to constructions where new participants are introduced by framing of a previously known location, and general-existential will refer to constructions expressing the existence of discourse-new participants without (necessarily) placing them in a location. It should be noted, however, that this thesis follows the understanding that while the term existential is used because of a long-standing tradition of labeling the constructions as such, the main function of both types is to introduce new participants to the discourse.

4 Creissels (2019) follows the same line of argument, contrasting plain-locational predication (“The book is on the table.”) to inverse-locational predication (“There is a book on the table.”). Instead of talking about the perspectives of THING vs LOC, he talks of figure > ground vs ground > figure as the perspectival difference between the two constructions (Creissels, 2019: 41).
5 Occasionally, both locational- and general-existential constructions will be referred to as “existentials” in instances where it is more practical to do so, e.g. in the Method chapter where it is explained that relevant examples were located in the corpus by search of the English “there is/was etc.” structure. This should be understood as a reference to both locational- and general-existential constructions.
2.1.1.1 Negative existentials

While negation is not a central part of the present study, something ought to be said about the nature of existentials when negated, e.g. “There is no book on the table”. Negative existentials constitute a cross-linguistic phenomenon on its own, as they are highly frequent and widespread among the world’s languages (Veselinova, 2013; Veselinova & Hamari, 2022).

Generally, they are lexical expressions used when negating an existential predicate, and are often separated from standard negation by special encodings. In other languages, the negative existential and standard negation share a negative morpheme, but while it is bound in standard negation, it is free-standing in negative existentials, or the negative existential requires a distinct syntactic construction. Negative existentials are often fully formally different from the affirmative, such as in the Turkish examples below.

5) Turkish (Veselinova, 2013:113)
   a. Su var-d₁
      water exist-pst
      “There was water.”
   b. Su yok-tu
      water NEG.EX-PST
      “There was no water.”

Hengeveld (1992: 36) treats the same Turkish construction and labels yok a negative semi-copula (see chapter 2.1.2.), on the grounds that it holds the verbal elements (inflects for tense and person) and functions as a copula by enabling a nominal element to be the main predicate, but cannot have status as a true copula because there is added meaning to it (i.e., the negation). Veselinova (2013) argues that the very nature of a negative existential, as opposed to standard negation, is to predicate absolute absence, rather than negate existence itself. One reason for this is the fact that negative existentials typically replace the affirmative of the clause they negate (Veselinova & Hamari, 2022: 35).

2.1.2 The copula

Dryer (2007: 225) describes the copula ‘be’ in English to be “more of a function verb than a predicate” (Dryer 2007: 225), meaning that it is semantically rather empty compared to a lexical verb, and that its primary function is to link one element of the clause to another.
Hengeveld (1992) follows this definition, but also points out that the true copula must be of such a nature that it itself does not contribute any meaning to the sentence; it is merely supportive and allows other elements to act as main predicate, when the language otherwise requires a verbal element for that function. In non-verbal predicates, the copula may therefore carry the typical verbal properties, such as tense, mood, or aspect (Hengeveld, 1992: 33). Any such element that does bring additional meaning and function to the non-verbal clause is what Hengeveld (1992: 35) labels a semi-copula. Typically, the added meaning of semi-copulas is aspectual in nature, like the English ‘become’ or ‘remain’.

A copula is most often a verb, such as ‘be’, but far from always. The copula may also be a grammaticalized form of another verb that holds a more specific meaning in its basic sense, e.g. posture verbs like ‘sit’ (6), a derivation from personal pronouns, or some other form of bound suffix or clitic (Dryer, 2007).


ini gi-n galyurringi mirra
this 3sg-prog water sit

“This is water”

The copula is not always a grammatically mandatory element of a non-verbal predication – in some languages, it is ungrammatical to include it for some types of predicates. This phenomenon is what is most commonly referred to as zero copula constructions (Stassen, 2013b). The term is not meant to imply that there is an element missing per se, or that there is an invisible coding of a copula element present on a semantic level. Certain predicates in such languages is simply not marked by an overt item, and the presence of a copula would be ungrammatical. Stassen (2013b) explains that the distribution of the zero copula is along a continuum, meaning that some languages always require a copula for nonverbal nominal predicates, while others require there to be no copula ever, and yet others require a copula only in certain conditions (e.g. in past tense, or only for third person subjects). The constraints

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6 Hengeveld (1992: 36) also mentions positive–negative polarity as another possible property of the semi-copula, especially common for existential copulas. This is touched upon in section 2.1.1.1 Negative existentials above.
on the copula may also vary with different types of predicates, so that the presence or absence of the copula is what distinguishes one type from another (Dryer, 2007).

2.1.3 Posture verbs

It is quite common for languages to make use of a particular copula reserved for locative clauses, with added spatial information (Dryer, 2007: 239–40). These locative copulas are commonly grammaticalized from a posture verb, such as “sit”, “stand” or “lie”, or they are related to shape and position of the referent (Ameka & Levinson, 2007: 850; Hengeveld, 1992: 239). Ameka & Levinson (2007: 852) point out that while many languages, e.g. English, can use a posture verb in a sentence like “The cathedral stands in the heart of the old city,” this type of stylistic alternation should not be the basis for classification. Rather, they define a Basic Locative Construction (BLC) as something that would be a colloquial reply to the question “Where is X?”, and present a typology of four basic types of unmarked locative predication, i.e. the BLC (Table 1).

Table 1: Typology of main strategies for unmarked locative predication (Ameka & Levinson, 2007: 863–4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 0</td>
<td>No verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 1</td>
<td>Single locative verb, either in the form of copula (Ia) or a locative or existential verb (Ib)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Small contrastive set of locative verbs, either postural (IIa) or ground-space related (IIb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Large set of positional verbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This spatial information may, as mentioned, be expressed through posture verbs acting as locative copula – as in e.g. the South-Caucasian language Laz (7) which is classified as a type III (Kutscher & Genç, 2007) – but may also be encoded or by other means, such as adpositional phrases and case affixes – as in e.g. Khowar7 (8) (Bashir, 2000).

7 The locative suffix glossed as LOC1 in (8) encodes a neutral positioning, while LOC2 marks a horizontal positioning, see chapter 2.2.3, table 4.
7) Laz (Kutscher & Genç, 2007: 1034-5)
   a. toçi kfä gool-zun
     rope stone on-lie.3sg.prs
     “The rope is (lit.: is lying) on the stone.”

   b. şişe masa ce-dgun
     bottle table on-stand.3sg.prs
     “The bottle is (lit.: is standing) on the table.”

8) Khowar (Bashir, 2000: 19)
   a. giláas kulër-o prust-i šeér
     glass cooler-oblique front-loc2 be.3sg.inanimate
     “The glass is (lying) in front of the cooler.”

   b. giláas kulër-o prust-a šeér
     glass cooler-oblique front-loc1 be.3sg.inanimate
     “The glass is (standing) in front of the cooler.”

2.2 Khowar

Khowar is one of the Indo-Aryan languages spoken in the Hindu Kush, a mountainous area overlapping parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Khowar is mainly spoken in Chitral, situated in northwestern Pakistan within the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. The total number of speakers is estimated to be somewhere between 350 000 (Bashir, 2000) and 550 000 (Ethnologue, 2022), and it is the functioning lingua franca of Chitral town and the surrounding area, with many speakers being multilingual in Urdu, English or Pashto. While the majority of speakers reside in the Chitral district, Khowar has a wider presence stretching up along the Chitral river, and in the Gilgit district further into the country (Figure 1).
Figure 1: Map of Khowar presence in the Hindu Kush

The polygon in orange on the map outline the areas where Khowar is primarily spoken (data from Global Mapping International (GMI), 2016). Chitral is, as mentioned, the place most often referred to regarding Khowar, and Chitral town is therefore marked by a black dot on the map. The full dynamic version of the above map is available at: https://arcg.is/0Pu0ny0.

Georg Morgenstierne was one of the first linguists to conduct research on the Khowar language. His preliminary work, describing parts of the morphology (Morgenstierne, 1947) and some connections to Iranian (Morgenstierne, 1936) was followed by a couple of glossaries, phonological sketches, and translated stories (Endresen & Kristiansen, 1981; Buddruss, 1995), but it wasn’t until late 20th century that any notable typological work was continued, by Elena Bashir. Among other things, Bashir has contributed to the research on Khowar with descriptions of spatial representation (2000), contact-induced changes (2007), areal classification (1996), and an overview of the grammatical and phonological system (2003). Her (1988) dissertation was a work on Kalasha syntax, and also contains valuable analyses of Khowar. As of yet, no comprehensive grammar of Khowar has been published, and several parts of the language system remain undescribed.
2.2.1 Genealogical and areal context

In the Hindu Kush, a diverse amount of approximately 50 languages is spoken (Map 2). Four different widespread language genera converge in this very area: Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Sino-Tibetan and Turkic (Liljegren, 2020: 190). Around 30 of the languages spoken in the area belong to the Indo-Aryan language family, but several of these deviate from other Indo-Aryan languages in a number of characteristic features and have historically been grouped together under the term ‘Dardic’ (e.g. Bashir, 2003). A more neutral term, that stresses a geographical rather than genealogical grouping of these languages, *Hindu Kush Indo-Aryan* (HKIA), is the preferred term in the present thesis.

![Map of languages in the Hindu Kush](image)

*Figure 2: Map of languages in the Hindu Kush. (Map created with QGIS 2.18.4. Map design: Henrik Liljegren, 2017)*

While there are a number of different classifications made of the HKIA languages, with varying degrees of granularity, an adapted and condensed overview from Bashir (2003: 824–5) is presented here (Table 2). There is no single, accepted classification of these languages, and what is shown in this chapter is merely a general presentation of some of the languages spoken in the Hindu Kush area. Each grouping below is taken from Bashir (2003), along with a few examples of languages from each group.
Table 2: Classification of HKIA languages (Bashir, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pashai</td>
<td>e.g. Northwest Pashai, Southwest Pashai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunar group</td>
<td>e.g. Gawarbati, Dameli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitral group</td>
<td>Khowar, Kalasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohistan group</td>
<td>e.g. Kalam Kohistani (Gawri), Torwali, Indus Kohistani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shina</td>
<td>e.g. Kohistani Shina, Ushojo, Gilgiti (Shina), Palula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmiri</td>
<td>Kashmiri (regional dialects)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liljegren (2020) notes that the Hindu Kush is not, according to the classic measures of definition, a linguistic area. Rather, it can be described as “a convergence zone with a core that shares certain linguistic features as the result of many local contact situations that have existed for a prolonged time period” (Liljegren, 2020: 192). There are linguistic features within and outside the area that are shared or dispersed along a north–south and an east–west comparative axis, as well as within micro- and macro-areas. Not until very recently have any detailed efforts been made to provide a full picture of the relatedness and convergences between the languages of the Hindu Kush. From a macro-perspective, two large linguistic areas – South Asian (SA) and Central Asian (CA) – seem to meet here, evident in the distribution of a number of morphosyntactic features, which appear in clusters corresponding to these macro-areas (Liljegren, 2020: 222–3). With respect to Khowar, it has been proposed to be situated in a transit zone between SA and CA because of its apparent mix of SA and CA characteristic features (Bashir, 1996), forming its own North Hindu Kush micro-area together with Kalasha and Prasun (Liljegren, 2020: 224).

2.2.2 Characteristic features of HKIA languages

All HKIA languages employ a SOV basic word order (Kashmiri being a possible exception), favor postpositions in adpositional phrases, and display a general pattern of converb constructions, wherein events in complex sentences are linked by a series of infinite converbs (Liljegren, 2017). This type of clause chaining strategy, as well as SOV word order and postpositional phrases, are known to be common in Indo-Aryan languages, and in the SA

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8 Presence of prepositions, zero copula in nominal predicates, word order Object-Oblique argument, unique P case, unique A case, ergative alignment, sex-based gender, and verbal gender agreement.
Alignment systems among HKIA languages are varied, but most display ergative-absolutive, tripartite or split alignment, present in verbal agreement, case-markings on full nouns and/or pronouns (Liljegren, 2017: 132–37). Khowar and Kalasha stand out with nominative-accusative systems, and Shina with a fully ergative system (Bashir, 2003: 822). Zero copula is possible in a couple individual HKIA languages of the Chitral, Shina and Kohistani groups, seemingly only in the present tense (Liljegren, 2017: 140, 2020: 205).

Left-branching and right-branching structures both occur in the HKIA group, and while the distribution of this feature has not been exhaustively investigated, Rönnqvist (2014) could show a greater tendency for left-branching structure in languages spoken further away from dominant, right-branching languages (Persian and Urdu-Hindi). In line with the areal tendency of combining left- and right-branching structures, Khowar retains some indigenous left-branching structures, but an increase of right-branching structures influenced by Persian and Urdu has also been noted (Bashir, 2003: 849).

Lastly, Indo-Aryan languages and HKIA in particular, show a relatively large inventory of contrasting demonstratives, related to distance, visibility, and emphasis or accessibility (Liljegren, 2017: 145). Khowar displays a three-term deictic system in demonstrative pronouns: proximal, distal, and remote (not visible) (Bashir, 2003: 845).

### 2.2.3 Relevant features of Khowar

Khowar is noted as archaic in many respects compared to other HKIA languages, as both phonological and morphological features found in Old Indo-Aryan that have disappeared in others, are preserved in Khowar (Morgenstierne, 1936; Bashir, 2003). Grammatical gender, however, which is present in other HKIA languages, is lost in Khowar and its closest relative Kalasha. Instead, there is a grammaticalized distinction between animate and inanimate entities in the copula (Bashir, 2003: 844). There is one copula verb for animate subjects (9), and another for inanimates (10), and they both occur in past and non-past tense forms, and inflect by person and number. The copulas also function as auxiliaries to create various aspectual forms (e.g 11).
The Khowar verbal system, as described by Bashir (1988; 1996; 2003; 2007a), includes temporal (past and non-past), aspectual (durative and non-durative), evidential (actual and inferential) and specifical (specific and non-specific) distinctions. The copula is involved as an auxiliary to create several of these distinctions, e.g. (11). All of the above examples (9–11) are actual, meaning that they convey knowledge directly experienced by the speaker, and are thus constructed with the actual copula. The evidentiality distinction within the verb system is achieved by contrasting the actual copula and the inferential copula, which is used for expressing newly-acquired knowledge or relaying hearsay (Bashir, 1996: 176). The two different past perfect verb forms in (12) display this contrast clearly: the past perfect actual contains the actual copula, while the past perfect inferential contains the inferential.

12) **Past perfect, actual**  
   kardú  ošoi  
   do.PST  be.PST.ACT.INAN.3SG
   “S/he did, had done.”  
   (Bashir, 2007a: 4, my glossing)

**Past perfect, inferential**  
   kardú  birái  
   do.PST  be.PST.INFER.3SG
   “S/he did, had done.” (reportedly, mirative)

The paradigm for the actual copula – *as*- (animate) and *š*- (inanimate) – and the inferential copula is shown in table 3. The inferential copula has no animacy distinction, and its present

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9 The durative–non-durative and the specific–non-specific distinctions will not be further discussed within this thesis.
tense is based on the same root as the inanimate actual š- while the past tense is based on the semi-copula ‘become’, bik-.

Table 3: Actual and inferential Khowar copula, present and past tense. (Bashir, 2003: 846)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sg</td>
<td>Pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual animate</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>asúm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>asús</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>asuúr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual inanimate</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ošótam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ošóu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>šeér</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inferential</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>birétam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>biráu (birétau)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>širái</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Khowar also has a number of suffixes on inanimate nouns to express case: oblique case, four locative cases, one instrumental, and one ablative (Bashir, 2003: 844). The locative case endings are distinctive based on verticality and horizontality, and can encode direction and location (table 4).
Table 4: Khowar locative case suffixes. (Bashir, 2000: 15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOC</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOC1</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>Unmarked, –vertical, –horizontal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC2</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>+horizontal (same level as agent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC3</td>
<td>-tu</td>
<td>+vertical (upward)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC4</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>+vertical (downward)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shape and orientation, i.e. position, of the referents also determine which locative case is preferred – for example, in (13) LOC3 has to be used because a stick is a long object which hits the head from a vertical position. Similarly, the position of the glass in (14a-b) determines the choice of locative case – in a horizontal position LOC2 is used, while in a vertical (neutral) position LOC1 is preferred.

13) baán ma khák-tu prai
    stick my head-loc3 hit
    “The stick hit me on the head.”
    *baán ma khák-a prai
    (Bashir, 2000: 18)

14) a. giláas kulér-o prust-i šeér
    glass cooler-obl front-loc2 be.prs.act.inan.3sg
    “The glass is (lying) in front of the cooler.”

b. giláas kulér-o prust-a šeér
    glass cooler-obl front-loc1 be.prs.act.inan.3sg
    “The glass is (standing) in front of the cooler.”
    (Bashir, 2000: 19)
3 Aims and research questions

Judging from (9) and (10) above, there is indication that Khowar at least to an extent uses word order to separate locative and locational-existential clauses. However, this topic has not been previously investigated and several questions have up until this point not been answered. The aim of the present research is to investigate locative clauses and locational-existential and general-existential constructions in Khowar, including how (if) they are differentiated, if there are instances of semantically empty posture verbs, and if the animacy distinction present in the Khowar copula in any way is at play in these differentiations. Based on these aims, the research questions are the following:

1. How are locative clauses, locational-existential constructions and general-existential constructions morpho-syntactically and lexically encoded in Khowar?
2. Do posture verbs with bleached or weak semantic content appear in the Khowar data? If so, in what type of construction?
3. Are there any animacy effects on locative clauses or existential constructions in Khowar?

4 Method

4.1 Khowar corpus

The main data for the study is a collection of narratives, collected and recorded by local linguist Afsar Ali Khan between 2005 and 2010 – with four exceptions collected in 2020 – mostly in Chitral, Pakistan, and a few in the Gilgit region, around 350 kilometers further east. All speakers who contributed to the data are native speakers of Khowar, a majority being monolingual, but a few with Urdu and Pashto in their repertoire. The speakers are of varying ages, ranging from teenage students to elderly men and women. Further details on the contributors, apart from occupations, names and origin, are not available but are also not considered relevant to the present analysis.
I received the corpus as a Toolbox project, which is the format in which the data had been previously processed by Afsar Ali. The project contains various texts, labeled more or less according to their content, source, or place of origin, e.g. “Story 10 from Laspur Valley” or “Tape 5 Story 1 Love story from Parwakchikay”. The texts are structured as such that passages of the text are sectioned into pages of varying length. Each string of speech, roughly corresponding to an intonation unit, is represented by Khowar units in IPA on one line, one line of lexical glossing in English and another lexical glossing in Urdu underneath. At the very end of each page, there is a translation of the entire passage in English. An example of how a page in the corpus generally looks in its original version, is shown in Figure 3 below.

The texts are 93 in total, varying in length: the shortest texts are around 5 pages long, and the longest contain more than 100 pages of text. Each page contains everything between 10 and

---

Figure 3: Screenshot of a page in the corpus (Story 8 from Afsar Lal 016)

The texts are 93 in total, varying in length: the shortest texts are around 5 pages long, and the longest contain more than 100 pages of text. Each page contains everything between 10 and
100 words in the English translation, and while there is no accessible way to get an exact word count of the corpus in total, an estimation based on 50 words/page, times 800 pages\textsuperscript{10}, lands at around 40,000 words. The majority of the texts are longer narratives, based on traditional storytelling of tales that are passed on through generations, but others are personal stories from the contributors’ lives. There are also a couple of texts which are translated to English from Khowar storybooks and magazines, and a few which consist of old poems and songs. Despite possible genre differences, these are all included in the data. The only criterion for a piece of text from the corpus to be included in the analysis is that it must be intelligible, i.e. that the translations must be transparent and coherent enough.

The purpose of collecting the data and creating the Toolbox project was, according to Afsar Ali (personal conversation), for him personally to build a better understanding of the linguistic structure of his language, and to enable future linguistic work. As such, it ought to be described as a work in progress – some of the earlier transcriptions are not consistently written in IPA, some texts have not been fully translated, the Khowar lines are not glossed according to academic standard, and the translations are not corresponding line-for-line to the Khowar text\textsuperscript{11}. Despite these flaws, the corpus provides unique insight to Khowar. In this particular case, where the main point of inquiry concerns information structure, it has the advantage of showing locational-existential and general-existential constructions in contexts, i.e. within stories and longer narratives, where the contrast between new and old information is of great importance.

\textbf{4.2 Obtaining the sample}

Because of the page structure (Figure 3), and its lack of English translations for each speech segment, the only available option for finding clauses relevant to this study was initially to read each translation, and try to find instances in the passage that could reasonably be interpreted as locative clauses or existential constructions. For example, if a part of the

\textsuperscript{10} This number was reached by a manual checking of all texts, and compensating for the texts containing very short pages. E.g., a text containing 10 pages with only approximately 10 words per page was counted as 2 pages long. It should be understood as an approximation, and not an exact measurement.

\textsuperscript{11} This latter fact is of obvious concern for the aims of this thesis, and a discussion of how this problem has been handled follows in section 4.2.
translation read “My wife was in the house,” one could suspect that a locative clause involving the words for “wife” and “house” could be found somewhere in the passage above.

After coming across a number of relevant examples, it was clear that English phrases starting with “there was/is/were/are” did appear to correspond to existential constructions in Khowar. For this reason, a more efficient method was applied: instead of going through each text, all instances of “there was/is/were/are” in the English translations were accessed through the concordance tool of Toolbox. The concordance tool allows for searches of (English) strings of words, and shows a list of occurrences of the search term in the corpus with context, i.e. which words or sentences occur before and/or after the search term. From the result list, the existential constructions were easily located in full. Based on the relatively large number of relevant examples that arose following this method, it seems that it is quite sufficient for finding existential constructions in the data. However, it is lacking in that it is very possible that some instances are missed, if they for some reason were not translated to the typical English presentative construction. Similarly, not all of the constructions translated to “there was/is/were/are” actually correspond to existential constructions in Khowar. The example below was located through the concordance tool, but even though the translation contains “there were”, the sentence does not contain an existential construction – an alternative translation could be “Two girls were playing outside.”

15) bikɔ dʒʊ komɔr-an ʃək ʃɔr do.ɪ pɛt았astani
   then two girl-pl play be.pst.act.an.3pl
   duderi dor-ar
   away house-obl
   “There were two girls playing outside.”

Story 03 Story of bear 001

The same method was applied to locate the locative clauses, albeit with other search terms and different outcomes. Instead of searching for “there was/is/were/are”, I searched for various prepositions known to have close equivalents in Khowar – ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘at’, ‘inside’ and ‘behind’ – and a very large amount of hits in the corpus were generated. Far from all of these, however, corresponded to locative clauses: a vast majority were phrases connected to dynamic motions and transitive verbs. Whether this is a characteristic of the type of texts in the corpus, or if more locative clauses would need to be found by using some other method,
remains unknown. It was not possible to use locative case suffixes as a search seed, as they were not glossed as such in the corpus. Some of the locative clauses presented in the results were obtained through the concordance search, while others were found during the initial stage of going through the texts manually. Time constraints did not allow for more thorough combing of the corpus in search for more locative clauses than those presented in 5.2 below. As for negative existentials, some were found during the process of finding affirmative existentials – since the search term was e.g. “there was”, instances of “there was not/no X” were inevitably included. At a later stage, an additional search for “no” and “nothing” with the concordance tool was made, which generated a couple more examples.

4.3 Processing the sample

When a relevant construction was located in the Khowar text, it was extracted and manually copied and glossed in a separate document, with the original translation and its place of origin in the corpus. Initially, any example that could potentially be relevant to the analysis was extracted and saved without any close analysis. At a later stage, the collection was cleared of irrelevant extractions and the remaining examples were sorted into different categories. These categories ended up being locative clauses, clauses with posture verbs, locational-existential constructions, and general-existential constructions. Sentences that did not end up in the final sample were excluded based on analytical uncertainties (e.g. clauses that could possibly be interpreted as locative or existential, but contained deviating or ambivalent elements that made such an analysis too uncertain) and lacking transparency in the translation (i.e., sentences that either fully lacked a translation, or had a translation that did not match the lexical glossing).

It should be reiterated that the main criteria for a text passage to be included in the data analysis was that it must be comprehensible. There were times during the data processing when there seemed to be some form of existential construction in the text, based on the English translation, but the Khowar text was so convoluted or contained too many words glossed as “??” that any extraction of a relevant line was impossible. A possible explanation for why passages like these were translated to English as containing existential constructions is that perhaps these parts were not fully coherent even in Khowar, and that Afsar Ali in his efforts to translate large amounts of narrative texts tried to extract relevant information, and
rephrased it in the translation in order to make the main storyline somewhat comprehensible. Needless to say, these instances are excluded from the analysis.

The glossings of Khowar shown in the remainder of this thesis are largely based on the lexical glossings provided by Afsar Ali, but are also modified by me in an effort to provide as much clarity and grammatical detail as possible. In some cases, I have consulted Afsar Ali by personal communication to make sure that my glossings are correct. The English translations are also based on Afsar’s own translations, and minor corrections in terms of grammar or spelling are left unmarked. However, some examples are somewhat reinterpreted by me, in which case the original translation is unmarked, and my own alternative or additional translations are put in [brackets].

5 Results and discussion

Because of the analyses and discussions needed in order to present nuanced results, the following chapter is a combined content of both results and discussion of the results. The chapter begins with an introductory summary of the most relevant results in 5.1, and the sections following the summary treat the topics related to the research questions with more detailed explanations and analyses: 5.2 presents the realization and differentiation of locative clauses and locational-existential constructions, 5.3 presents the realization of general-existential constructions, 5.4 contains a discussion of the posture verbs in the data, 5.5 gives a tentative suggestion for future research of negative existentials in Khowar, and 5.6 discusses the lack of animacy distinction for the copula ɔʃɔj. Lastly, a brief discussion of the method and data is presented in 5.7.

The analysis is based on a sample of 74 extractions in total: 7 locative clauses, 12 clauses with static posture verbs, 17 locational-existentials, 20 general-existentials (out of which 9 are with the actual copula, and 11 with the inferential), and 8 negative existentials. Every example displayed in the following chapter is presented with a reference to its original source material as it is labeled in the corpus, along with a corresponding page number.
5.1 Summary of the results

The general observation concerning the differentiation of locational-existential constructions and locative clauses is that word order is the defining strategy in Khowar. The previously known, i.e. the locatum in locative clauses and the locus in the locational-existential, occupy the initial position of the clause. The previously unknown, i.e. the locus in the locative clauses and the locatum in the locational-existential, is introduced later – in second position for all locative clauses and most locational-existential constructions, but in third for some locational-existentials. Interestingly, all locational-existentials found in the data contain the actual copula, and the inferential copula shows up only as an auxiliary in other verb constructions, and in general-existential constructions. The general-existentials appear with both the actual and the inferential copula, but with different distribution: the actual and the inferential have two different and specific story-initiating constructions, and all present tense general-existentials have the actual copula. There are general-existential constructions found in the data with and without a locus, and there are those that contain a locative phrase with a temporal meaning, e.g. “at that time…”, where the word for e.g. “time” is marked with the locative case suffix -a.

As for posture verbs with weak semantic content, functioning as locative or existential copula, the analysis will show that there is no such use of posture verbs found in the data. There are, however, a collection of sentences where the location of human referents is framed with posture verbs – as will be argued, these occurrences are not at present representative of the BLC in Khowar, but are likely common in the data because of the story-telling nature of the texts in the corpus. The only effect of animacy found was the observation that these posture verb predicates only occurred with animate subjects. This is, however, likely part of the lexicalization of the posture verbs and not an animacy effect in the sense that the animacy distinctions affect the structure of the locative or the existential constructions – animate and inanimate referents are treated the same, with the established lexical differentiation in the copula.

Table 5 gives an overview of the structure of the four types of clauses presented in this chapter: which constituents they minimally consist of, and in which order the constituents appear. In the table, actual and inferential copulas are abbreviated as A-copula and I-copula, respectively. As for the term existent, seen in the structure of the general-existential
constructions, it should be understood as the same constituent as the locatum — it is simply given a different term because the general-existential does not always include a locational element. Representations of each clause type are shown below the table, where (16) is a locative clause, (17) a locational-existental construction, (18) a general-existental construction, and (19) a clause with a posture verb predicate.

Table 5: Overview of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause type</th>
<th>Constituent order</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>LOCATUM — LOCUS — A-copula</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locational-existental</td>
<td>LOCUS — LOCATUM — A-copula</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOCUS — A-copula — LOCATUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General-existental</td>
<td>(LOCUS) — EXISTENT — A/I-copula</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posture verb predicate</td>
<td>animate LOCATUM — LOCUS — posture verb</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16) naxaʃi istan-a ʃer
    big.knife roof-loc1 be.prs.act.inan.3sg
    “The knife is on the roof.”
    Text 33 from file 003

17) dʊr-i pəndʒ ʃon jənį
    house-loc2 five pillar be.prs.act.inan.3pl
    “There are five pillars in the house.”
    Story 02 Salgherek 002

18) donij-a haronį ambəx zaban ōʃe var jənį
    world-loc1 much lots languages and speech be.prs.act.inan.3pl
    “There are many languages in the world.”
    Sweet khowar 1.2 0003
5.2 Locative clauses and locational-existential constructions

Although Khowar locative clauses are well described by Bashir (2000), locative clauses are here exemplified and analyzed from the present dataset, in order for a reasonable comparison to be made with the locational-existentials.

In general, locative clauses in the corpus are structured with the locatum initiating the clause, followed by the locative phrase and the (actual) copula, as in (20). A locatum expressed pronominally can also be left out completely, as it is often inferred from previous mentions and from agreement marking on the copula (21).

As expected, the word order of locational-existential constructions is different from the locative clauses: instead of the locatum being in initial position, the locus takes this position, followed by the locatum, and the copula at the very end of the clause. The locus may consist of a noun in locative case (22) or an adverb (23), and the copula agrees with the locatum in animacy, person and number.
22) jaman-ɔ ḟahr-a i batʃʰa astaj
Yaman-obl city-loc1 one king be.pst.act.an.3sg
“There was a king in Yaman city.”
Story 9 from Laspur valley 002

23) hatera i gɔr pari asɔr
there one witch fairy be.prs.act.an.3sg
“There is a fairy witch there.”
Tape 2 long story from Afsar jan 0107

A few locational-existential constructions found in the corpus have an atypical word order: the copula and the locatum are interchanged, so the locatum occupies the final position (24–26). This is rather unexpected, considering that Khowar otherwise displays a very robust SOV word order in all types of clauses. There is not enough data available to make any strong claims about this variation – possibly it is some form of stylistic alternation or a focalization strategy of the locus or the locatum. Without any prosodic information, though, it is difficult to tell. Notably, however, the locus keeps the initial position, which is what makes the locational-existential distinct from the locative.

24) hatera astaj i batmaʃ batʃʰ-ɔ ʒaʋ
there be.pst.act.an.3sg one immoral king-obl son
“There was a gangster son of the king there.”
Story 9 from Laspur valley 008

25) hɛ mola xatan-i astani miraxɔr
dem under room-loc2 be.pst.act.an.3pl groom
“There was a room in that building right below the girl’s room. Moreover, there were some grooms living in that room.” [“In a room below hers, there were some grooms.”]
Story 9 from Laspur valley 020

26) hɛ noɣɔr-i asɔr i pari
dem fort-loc2 be.prs.act.an.3sg one fairy
“There is a fairy in that fort.”
Tape 6 one long story title The king’s brave sons 035
Based on these data, it appears that Khowar employs word order – more specifically, a relocation of the locative phrase depending on the identifiability of the locatum – to differentiate between locative clauses and locational-existential constructions. Locative clauses are structured with the locatum first, followed by the locative phrase (16). In the locational-existential constructions, where the locatum is to be introduced to the narrative, the locative phrase takes first position before the locatum (17). Typically, the copula takes last position in both types of clauses, but as shown there is some variation to this in the locational-existential clauses (24–26).

These are hardly controversial results, as they neatly follow the information structure that we expect, i.e. the known before the unknown. While the word order variation seen in (24–26) does deserve further inquiry, it holds the same crucial distinction from the locatives, as the new referent is introduced after what is already known.

5.3 General-existential constructions

As mentioned in 2.1.1, some languages employ different structures to locational-existential and general-existential constructions. Based on the present data, Khowar is not one of these languages. There is no one structural or formal difference between locational-existential and general-existential constructions found in the data, besides the definitional fact that a general-existential does not always contain a locus. There is one distributional difference, however, which is that both the actual and the inferential copula are used in general-existentials, whereas only actual forms of the copula were found among the locational-existentials. Although further research with more data is required to make a full distributional analysis of the Khowar copula in these predications, some patterns that have been observed will be presented here.

There are only a few examples of general-existentials in the present tense – because of the character of the texts in the corpus, a majority is in the past tense – and they all contain the actual copula (27–28). These constructions are also, interestingly, the only occurrences of existentials with the actual copula which do not have a locative phrase in initial position.
27) bɔɣdad nam-en mɔlk ʃɛr
Baghdad name-inst country be.prs.act.inan.3sg
“There is a country named Baghdad.”
Story 9 from Arif Khan 001

28) hatɔ bara bafɔno di ʃɛr
of.that about song also be.prs.act.inan.3sg
“There is also a song about this story.”
Story 8 a king’s daughter & blind monster 013

Besides the examples above (27–28), the actual copula in general-existent constructions is found in combination with a “once upon a time” locative phrase: \textit{vaxtamajivaxta} (29–30). This phrase specifically occurs in the very beginning of stories of a more fictional character, and is apparently a fixed expression which requires the actual copula, and is not combined with the inferential. The phrase \textit{vaxtamajivaxta} consists of the word for ‘time’, \textit{vaxt}, with a locative case marking -\textit{a}, and \textit{maji}. \textit{Maji} has no known independent meaning, but in personal conversation with Afsar Ali I was told that it is possible that the original saying was \textit{vaxta ma i vaxta}, meaning “At a time, at my (one) time”, and that the saying at some point has become a fixed phrase in which the word boundaries are lost. In any case, the saying certainly contains a temporal locative phrase in \textit{vaxta} and it is always followed by an actual copula, and not an inferential.

29) vaxtamajivaxta i ɣarib ṭfàn məʃ ɔʃɔj
once.upon.a.time one poor naked man be.pst.act.inan.3sg
“Once upon a time, there was a poor man.”
Tape 7 8 a madium story from hafiz khalifa 001

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\textsuperscript{12} The sentence in (27) has several equivalents in the data, all of which have not been included because of its repetitiveness – countries, villages and other places are regularly introduced by the exact same phrasing, i.e. “There is a country/village/city called [X].” with the same structure as in (27).
Once upon a time, there were two kings.

As for the inferential copula, there are some occurrences of it in general-existentials with a locative phrase (31–32), but the loci in these cases are in the shape of a temporal frame, instead of a physical location.

At that time, there were many fairies [in the village]

At that time there was a big bird as I said [with the name] Simurgh.

A more prevalent presence of the inferential copula in general-existentials is in constructions with another “once upon a time” phrase, different to the one presented above. This “once upon a time” phrase consists of the inferential copula in 3rd person singular past, once affirmed and once negated, and the actual copula in 3rd person singular past, also once affirmed and once negated: biraj(a) nɔ biraj, astaj(a) nɔ astaj. This phrase is sometimes translated to “Once upon a time”, and sometimes more literally to “Maybe it was, maybe it wasn’t” or “Maybe this is true, maybe not”. The general-existential following this phrase consists only of one or more existents which are in the initial position with an indefinite article (i = “one”), followed by the inferential copula at the end of the clause. As in (34) below, these constructions are often followed by a possessive predicate with an actual copula.
Once upon a time, there was an old man and an old woman.

Maybe this is true, maybe not. There was an old man and he had three sons.

One possible interpretation of these sentences is that since the inferential copula, as said by Bashir (1996: 176) functions as a signal of new information, it may suffice for introducing new participants or themes into the narrative. However, the fact that this type of construction appears regularly after the “once upon a time” phrase opens up for a different analysis, namely that it is a formulaic expression, dedicated to story-initiating sequences. The inferential copula may be used to mark evidentiality right at the start of a long story when introducing the main participants, i.e. the speaker is communicating that the existence of e.g. a king, a goat, and old woman etc., is hearsay and that it might not be true. When that caveat has been presented, the following facts may be relayed as unmarked, i.e. with the actual copula. The juxtaposition of the two copulas in the ‘once upon a time’ phrase is somehow reflective of how the story continues – in combination, they signal the uncertainty, the “maybe”, of everything that will follow.
There are a few exceptions, e.g. times when the same general-existential construction with the inferential copula as in (33–34) is used without the “once upon a time” preface (35), and one instance where the same structure even occurs in the middle of a story (36). Notably, however, the example in (36) is embedded speech (“[He] said that…”) which could indicate that the quoted speaker employs this structure because in the quoted discourse, he is initiating a story. One analysis that could explain both (35) and (36) is that the story-opening structure seen in passages such as (33–34) is formulaic and common enough that the biraj(a)nɔbiraj, astaj(a)nɔastaj phrase may not be strictly necessary in order to communicate the beginning of a narrative. Alternatively, it is the mirative function of the inferential copula that makes this type of introduction of new referents sufficient, compared to the apparent need for vaxtamajivaxta for any general-existentials (in the past tense) with the actual copula.

35) i paj biraj hatɔ dʒʊ aʒɛli astani
one goat be.pst.infer.3sg of.that two child be.pst.act.an.3pl
“There was a goat, who had two children.”
Tape 1 story 4 goat from Sultana bibi 001

36) radʊ ki traŋ dʒʊvanan birani
said that three youths be.pst.infer.3pl
radʊ ki i nazʊk şapik ʒibak bijaj
said that one tender meal eat-ag be.pst.infer.3sg
i nazʊk zap andʒ-ak bistara pɔr-ak biraj
one tender clothes wear-ag bedding sleep-ag be.pst.infer.3sg
bikɔ i nazʊk komɔʁʊ bɔlɔ-ak biraj
then one tender girl look-ag be.pst.infer.3sg
“He said that there were three young men. One was famous for eating good food, the second was famous for dealing with beautiful girls, and the third was famous because of his dress and sleeping place.”
Story 11 from Benazir’s mother 012

5.4 Posture verbs

There are not many instances in the data of such locative clauses presented in 5.2, i.e. clauses that could arguably be analyzed as Basic Locative Clauses. There are, however, a number of
sentences in the data describing the location of various participants, exclusively animate, with a posture verb, normally ‘sit’ (*niʃik*) but sometimes also ‘stand’ (*ropʰik*), even though the posture itself is not of any great importance in the context. Based on the verb system analysis of Bashir (2006: 5) the verb forms in (37–39) are perfective, i.e. completed actions – both *niʃi astaj* and *niʃiro biraj* are actual and inferential versions of past perfect forms (“X had sat down”), and other instances of the verb for ‘sit’ (40) indicates that it is an action verb, rather than a static. It follows, then, that the posture verbs are restricted to animate subjects – inanimate objects cannot perform the action of sitting, and can therefore not be seated.

37) lɔqmaniḥakim tera dɔkani *niʃi* astaj

Loqman.e.Hakeem there shop-LOC2 sit.PFV be.PST.ACT.AN.3SG

“Loqman e Hakeem was sitting there in the shop.”

Tape 6 story one long story title The king’s brave sons 045

38) hatɛ bay-a *niʃiɾo* birani,

dem garden-LOC1 sit.PST be.PST.INFER.3PL

*niʃiɾo* hatera es giti asur

of.sit there ? come.PFV be.PRS.ACT.AN.3SG

bojik hatera *niʃi* asor

bird there sit.PFV be.PRS.ACT.AN.3SG

“They were sitting in the garden. When they are sitting there, one bird comes and sits on the tree.”

Tape 4 story 2 from Parwakchi kay 004

39) njɔf dʒɔanan ma klup-i *niʃi* asori

nine youth.PL 1SG.OBL around.fireplace-LOC2 sit.PFV be.PST.ACT.AN.3PL

“Nine youths were sitting around my fireplace.”

Story 7 from Afsar Lal 006

40) frɔski ʋɛltʃi kʰɔɾsi-a *niʃaj*

right from chair-LOC1 sit.PST.3SG

“She sat on the chair to the right.”

Story 9 from Laspur valley 034
Nišik (‘sit’) is definitely more common in the data, and ropʰik (‘stand’) also does not occur with an auxiliary copula as in (37–39). It is found in a finite form without an auxiliary, as in (41), or in a perfective form functioning as a conjunctive participle (Bashir, 1988: 119) which connects the clause to the following, as in (42).

41) kʰɔŋɡɛɾ-o gani dovah-t-o ropʰiɾʊ
    sword-oobl take.pfv door-oobl back-loc3 stand.pst
    “The boy stood behind the door [with his sword].”
    Tape 4 story 1 from Parwakchikay

42) aʋa hɛ tʰʊnan mʊʒ-a ropʰi
    1sg that pillars center-loc1 stand.pfv
    ma jirin nan klʊp-o niʃirʊ biraj
    1sg.oobl sweet mother around.fireplace-oobl sit.pst be.pst.infer.3sg
    “I was standing between the two pillars of my house. My dear mother sat by the fireplace.”
    Story 7 from Afsar Lal 007

That these occurrences would in fact display some form of a developing grammaticalized locative copula is doubtful. The construction is common, but posture verbs are clearly not an obligatory element of the locative clause structure, not even for animate referents (see e.g. (21) in 5.2). Furthermore, the posture dimension is always included in the English translations, which implies that it is an added element of relevant information, rather than a grammaticalized structure.

Sentences that could reasonably be replies to the question “Where is X?”, i.e. Ameka & Levinson’s (2007) Basic Locative Construction, are phrased without any posture verb, as shown in 5.2 above. On the other hand, sentences that paint a picture, so to speak, include posture verbs to further illustrate the position of the (animate) locatum. In texts such as those included in the corpus used for this study, it is possible that descriptions of animate referents in various locations are commonly framed with additional posture information, and that BLC’s are more accessible via elicitation and/or conversations between several speakers. Although these posture verb constructions require further investigation, they are not interpreted within this analysis as locative copulas, based on 1. their restriction to animate
referents, which implies that the basic meaning of the verb is maintained and 2. the fact that
the posture verbs are clearly optional.13

5.5 Negative existentials

The following analysis is a hesitant one. Negation in Khowar could constitute a full thesis on
its own, but as it is related to the present topic, i.e. how existential constructions present
themselves in the data, the observations made during the work on this thesis will nonetheless
be presented here.

Standard negation in Khowar is achieved by a morpheme: nɔ. It can negate a verbal predicate
(43), or take the place of the copula in a negated nominal or adjectival predicate (44).

43) hasɛ haʂ ki ɬʊ nɔ da-j-an
   3sg like:that comp talk neg give-prs.3sg
   “She does not talk to anyone.”
   Story 11 from Benazir’s mother 005

44) aʋa heɣɛn xaj-an nɔ
   1sg for:that happy neg
   “I was not happy about that.”
   Story 7 from Afsar Lal 003

The most relevant observation here is not where the standard negation morpheme shows up,
but rather where it does not. There is another morpheme, niki, which occurs rather regularly in
negated existential constructions (and by extension, in possessive predicates). This morpheme
is never used to negate another predicate, is always used in combination with nominals, and
translates to a lack of some thing or another14. In (46), it is clear that niki in the second clause

13 Among the many example clauses from Bashir (2000), there are a few that contain posture
verbs with human subjects in the same way as in the sentences presented here, but they are
used only to exemplify how the locative case markings vary with the position of the
referent(s). The fact that the location of these referents is framed with posture verbs does not
receive any additional commentary.
14 In personal conversation, Afsar said that niki also could be translated to “be missing”,
which, in essence, is what a negative existential communicates.
(“there is no one coming out from below”) is used in place of the affirmative copula that can be seen in the first clause (“there are people going down inside”).

45) ε ʒaʋ dor-i şapik niki
O son house-loc2 meal NEG.EX?
“Oh my dear son, we have no food in our house.” [There is no food in the house.]
Tape 4 story 3 from Sultana Bibi 001

46) hajara haja ʃahrɔ mʊʒ-ɔ af bɔɣ-ak asoni
here this city-obl center-loc4 down go-ag be.prs.act.an.3pl
af-ar gij-ak ka niki
down-abl come-ag any NEG.EX?
“People enter the village but no one exits from that village.”
[“Here in this city, there are people going down inside, but no one coming (out) from below.”]
Tape 6 one long story title The king’s brave sons 040

47) rɛʂʊ-o koʃik-o batʃen mʊla diti
ox-obl slaughter-obl for under put.pfv
loliro ki naxatʃi niki
see.pst comp big.knife NEG.EX?
“[After putting the ox up for slaughter] they saw that there was no knife for slaughtering [it].”
Text 33 from file 002

48) ma isprar niki
1sg.obl sister NEG.EX?
“I have no sister.”
2005 july tape 2 0341

It would require a much more thorough analysis, with more data, to give a proper overview of the system of negation in Khowar, including negative existentials. The examples listed above indicate, however, that there is possibly a negative existential morpheme in Khowar – a future study could be dedicated to further investigating this feature.
5.6 Loss of animacy distinction in ɔʃɔj

The animacy distinction in Khowar and any role it might have in the structure of locative clauses or existential constructions have so far been left unmentioned. This is because no such role has been found in the data, apart from the observation of posture verbs occurring only with animate subjects. However, one aspect of the animacy system that has already been noted by Bashir (2003: 846) can be confirmed by the present data, namely that the 3rd person singular past of the inanimate copula – ɔʃɔj – no longer is restricted to inanimate subjects. In the corpus, it occurs several times in existential constructions with animate existents, where you would expect (and indeed, where you in other instances get) the animate copula (49–50). Yet, this form of the copula has not become synonymous with its animate counterpart – astaj – as inanimate subjects exclusively take the inanimate copula (51). The variation displayed here only gives a small insight to a potentially ongoing loss of animacy distinction in the 3rd person singular past. For future research, the variation in use of ɔʃɔj would be a highly valuable and interesting topic, as the present inquiries lead to no explanation of its distribution.

49) vaxtamajiważta i batʃʰa ɔʃɔj
    once.upon.a.time one king be.pst.act.inan.3sg
    “Once upon a time, there was a king.”
    Tape 6 one long story title The king’s brave sons 001

50) jaman-ə jahr-a i batʃʰa astaj
    Yaman-oobl city-loc1 one king be.pst.act.an.3sg
    “There was a king in Yaman city.”
    Story 9 from Laspur valley 002

51) hate nɔɣɔr-a batʃʰ-ə nɔɣɔr-a hate bijabana
    dem fort-loc1 king-oobl fort-loc1 dem in.ground
    i nɔɣɔr ɔʃɔj
    one fort be.pst.act.inan.3sg
    “There was another fort near the king’s fort.”
    Tape 6 one long story title The king’s brave sons 035
5.7 Discussion of method

The above results have been obtained from data gathered mainly from traditional stories. The fact that the source material primarily contains fictional and/or stories of past events has in all likelihood affected the outcome. First, the story-opening phrases are characteristic of (semi-)fictional stories and would likely not have affected the results had the data been of a different genre – although, this might also be considered an advantage of the data, as the story-opening constructions are arguably a presentative strategy that could have been overlooked if that genre were not included. Second, events in the present tense are underrepresented in the sample, which might explain the lack of inferential copulas in the present tense. Last but not least, the data consists exclusively of monologues, i.e. there are no conversations between two or more speakers. This could be affecting the results in a number of ways that cannot be fully predicted, as dialogue can contain a myriad of features such as question-reply pairs, discourse markers, stance taking, context-dependent deixis, etc. Dialogue is dynamic and cooperative, and builds on what is shared knowledge and context, which obviously affects how interlocutors phrase themselves in their communication, compared to when they are building a narrative without any input from other speakers. While the data for this study gives opportunity for a more functionalist approach than, say, elicitation, it is less informative in what speakers do when using their language than speech data based on dialogue would have been.

It should also be emphasized that the sample on which the analysis is based is not exhaustive. There is no way of ensuring that all instances of locative clauses or existential constructions have even been located in the corpus, as the method is fully dependent on the English translations, and it is very possible that some alternative constructions of existentials or locatives are present in the data but have not been successfully identified and extracted by me. The method was quite time-consuming and demanded large amounts of manual work, despite the facilitation of the concordance tool. The results are therefore restricted by the time available for this project, and the analysis is only based on the examples that could be collected during this time.

The method also relies on that the correct, and full, corresponding lines of Khowar have been found in the passage – there is room for error there, as the Khowar passages are not clearly divided into sentences and it is possible that parts that ought to be included in one sentence
are left out. Ideally, each line of Khowar would be accompanied by a close English translation for optimal transparency, but as this is not the case, the present method has hopefully managed to extract as many relevant and representative examples as possible. One potential project for further studies would be to develop the corpus from its current state and structure to enable more fine-tuned searches.

6 Conclusion

The results of this corpus-based study on Khowar locative and existential constructions have been shown to be the following:

1. The main formal distinction between locative and existential (both locational and general) constructions in Khowar is achieved by changing the word order – the known is presented before the unknown, i.e. the locatum comes first in locative clauses, while the locus (when there is one) comes first in the existential constructions.

2. There are two different story-opening constructions, each of which is typically combined with either the actual or the inferential copula, respectively. I.e., one is combined with the actual copula and the other with the inferential, in the existential following the story-opening phrase.

3. There are different distributional tendencies for the inferential and the actual copula. The inferential does not appear in locational-existential constructions at all, does not occur in the present tense, but can present new referents in general-existential constructions without a locative phrase. The actual copula, on the other hand, only occurs in locational-existentials, present tense general-existentials and past tense general-existentials with a locative phrase.

4. Posture verbs, while common in the data, do not appear to function as a locative nor an existential copula in Khowar. They mainly function as meaningful additions to descriptions of animate referents’ locations within a narrative, and are at this point in time not grammaticalized.

5. Animacy effects are not present in locative clauses nor in existential constructions. The lexicalized animacy distinction in the copula is maintained, apart from an
apparent extended use of the 3rd person inanimate actual, əʃɔj, which occurs with inanimate as well as with animate subjects.

This thesis suggests future research on the distribution of əʃɔj and astaj with animate subjects, negation in Khowar – including, if not especially, the function of the negative morpheme niki – and further investigations of the copula, e.g. in nominal and adjectival predicates which this thesis does not touch upon.
References


