THE INCEPTIVE CONSTRUCTION AND ASSOCIATED TOPICS IN AMHARIC AND RELATED LANGUAGES

Desalegn Asfawwesen
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the syntactic features, functions, and diachrony of a complex predicate called ‘the inceptive construction’, which is based on a grammaticalized use of the converbs ‘get up’, ‘pick up’, ‘grasp’, and ‘take’. The languages under investigation are Amharic, Argobba, Harari, Zay, and Selt’i. The data collection that was analyzed consists of elicitations, audio recordings, and written texts. The analysis shows that the converbs identify the initial phase of the event encoded by a following verb. The converbs are further associated with nuances like volition, surprise, and emphasis. The rise of such interpretations as surprise and emphasis appears to depend mainly on context, while volition is inherent to the construction. The languages generally do not show much variation. However, there is a notable difference in some co-occurrence restrictions. Moreover, there is a difference in the presence/absence of certain converbs mainly in Harari and Zay, which is clearly a matter of preference between individual consultants. Regarding the origin of the inceptive construction, collocation, frequency, and speakers’ conception of the action of the converbs are possible factors that have led the verbs to grammaticalize into markers of the inception phase. Only some traces of the construction are found in an old Amharic text from the 15th century.

The converb is the principal form of the verb used in the inceptive construction, although other verb forms are allowed that may take a coordinating conjunction (in the cases of Amharic and Argobba) and an iterative marker (‘while’). The Amharic conjunction =$nna$ ‘and’ links the light verb with the reference verb in the inceptive construction, but is also used in causal(purposive) and conditional coordination. The criteria of tense iconicity and variable positions indicate that =$nna$ is a coordinating conjunction in the former, but a subordinator in the latter. Lastly, the converb in Amharic is shown to become insubordinated, i.e. the main verb or auxiliary it depends on gets ellipsed over time and it comes to function as a main verb. An insubordinated converb is used in the expression of surprise/exclamation, interrogation, rhetorical questioning, wishing, and the resultative/perfective. The point is it is still possible to use the notion of ‘converb’ in the inceptive construction, as this is a separate historical process.
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I. Introduction

The main topic of this work is ‘the inceptive construction’ in Amharic and four other Transversal South Ethio-Semitic (TSE) languages: Argobba, Harari, Zay, and Sel’ti. The construction is based on a grammaticalized use of verb forms known as converbs. The objective is to study the function and syntactic behavior of the inceptive construction and the diachronic processes that give rise to it. Other topics to be treated are an alternative inceptive construction involving coordination and insubordination of converbs.

This chapter presents details on the construction (Section 1.1), the languages and their speakers (Section 1.2), some features of the languages (Section 1.3), the methods used to collect data (Section 1.4), and the problems that were encountered in the process of conducting the research (Section 1.5).

Chapter two provides a background of the verb forms called ‘converbs’ in general and their features in TSE languages. It also discusses the inceptive construction under the broad category to which it belongs, i.e. ‘complex predicates’. The main analysis is dealt with in chapter three. Here the functions, syntactic features, and diachrony of the construction in TSE languages, as encoded by the converb, will be addressed in detail. Chapter four compares and contrasts the inceptive construction with other uses/constructions of the converb. Chapters five and six are almost exclusively concerned with Amharic and account for the various functions of the conjunction =nna ‘and’ (which is also used in the inceptive construction) and a puzzling aspect of converbs in other contexts, i.e. the main verb use of converbs or ‘insubordination’, respectively. The final chapter presents a summary of the main points of the dissertation.

1.1. The inceptive construction

The study is concerned with a construction that contains certain converbs with a special grammaticalized function, while maintaining their original meaning in other contexts. These include converbs of ‘take’, ‘grasp’, ‘get up’, and ‘pick up’. Examples from Amharic and Zay are provided below in 1:1a and 1:1b, respectively.
Amharic

(1:1a) muz-u-n *ansit-a* bäll-acc-iw
banana-DEF-ACC pick.up:CVB-3FSG.GEN eat:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She ate the banana.’
*‘Having picked up the banana, she ate it.’ (Leslau 1995:359)

(a’) muz-u-n bäll-acc-iw
banana-DEF-ACC eat:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She ate the banana.’ (elic.)

Zay

(b) gipii adirru-j *inz-ä-m* näkäs-e-j
dog cat-DEF grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVBI bite:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘A dog bit the cat.’
*‘Having grasped (the cat), a dog bit the cat.’ (elic.)

(b’) gipii adirru-j näkäs-e-j
dog cat-DEF bite:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘A dog bit the cat.’ (elic.)

The converbs, indicated with bold, have lost their original meaning, i.e. that of encoding a distinct action/event. Leslau (1995:359) notes that the Amharic verb *ansita* ‘she having picked up’ in 1:1a cannot be translated into English. Example 1:1b is also uttered when no action of grasping by the dog is involved. The converbs, rather, seem to give nuances to the main verb that follows. When asked about the role of such verbs, some informants say that the verbs provide stress (i.e. give more expressive power), express suddenness, show mental readiness to do something, are mere sayings, are redundant expressions, etc. Here they are considered to form a complex predicate, i.e. the ‘inceptive construction’ (see Wiklund 2009), along with the main verb they precede, as they seem to show the initial or inceptive sub-stage/act of an event. In studying the construction across these languages, it helps to have an understanding of the level of its historical development in a single family.

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1 Throughout this thesis, interlinear glossing indicating grammatical relations is only given for the object (e.g. 3MSG.OBJ). The subject is left unmentioned (e.g. 3FSG).
2 The representation of most of the speech sounds is based on the IPA system in consideration of readers not familiar with traditional Semitic transcription. Thus, for instance, [c], [ j], [ɲ], and [ɟ] correspond to the traditional [ć], [y], [ŋ], and [ž], respectively. As its phonetic value is not clearly understood, the symbol [ä] remains unchanged (see Meyer 2011a:1185 for a discussion of the representation of [ä] as [a] or [e] in the Amharic literature, whereas he thinks it is most probably best represented as [ɐ]. Additionally, [i] can be an allophone of [ə].
Note that the term ‘inceptive’ is used differently from its usual sense in which it is an aspect that marks the beginning of an action. In Amharic, the auxiliary jämmär ‘begin’/‘start’ is used for this purpose, as shown in the following example (1:2).

Amharic

(1:2)  kasa  inc‘ät  ji-fält’  jämmär
      kasa  wood  3MSG-chop:IPFV  INCEPT

‘Kassa starts to chop/chopping wood.’ (Baye 2006:199)

We address this issue in some detail in chapter three (Section 3.1).

1.2. The languages and their speakers

The term Ethio-Semitic (or Ethiopic) refers to the Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia (and Eritrea). Leslau (1951; 1966) and Hetzon (1972) classify the languages into two groups: North Ethio-Semitic and South Ethio-Semitic (for another view, see Voigt [2009] and Bulakh & Kogan [2014:604]). The North Ethio-Semitic group includes Tigrinya, Tigre, and the extinct language Ge‘ez, which is preserved as a liturgic language. South Ethio-Semitic is further divided into Outer South Ethio-Semitic and Transversal South Ethio-Semitic. The languages Amharic and Argobba (termed the AA group), as well as and Harari, and the East Gurage languages, i.e. Selt‘i, Wolane, and Zay (termed EGH group), all belong to the Transversal South Ethio-Semitic. Diagram 1, taken from Hetzron (1972:119) with some modification, shows the family tree of the languages. See also Map 1.
Girma (2001:80) takes Zay out of East Gurage and gives it a separate branch parallel to Harari, claiming that the speakers are not Gurage people and that the term Gurage does not signify any linguistic affinity. Hetzron (1972:6) used it to refer to “a Semitic speaking group of tribes in Cushitic territory, South-south-west of Addis Ababa”. Hetzron’s (1972) classification is maintained here as Girma’s (2001) suggestion changes the relation between Zay and the other East-Gurage languages. Perhaps changing the name ‘East Gurage’ is the best alternative. (NB. Selt’i speakers do not consider themselves to be ‘Gurage’.)
Map 1.
1.2.1. Amharic

Amharic is the working language of the government of Ethiopia and some of the federal states and serves as the major lingua franca in Ethiopia, with 14.8 million people speaking it as a mother tongue and 4 million as a second language (2007 census). The regions of Gojjam, Gondar, Western Wällo, and Shäwa (i.e. northwest and central Ethiopia) are the homeland of rural monolingual Amharic speakers. Many monolingual Amharic speakers are also found in towns throughout the country. It is also interesting to note that there exists no clearly identifiable ethnic group called Amhara (which, until the 19th century, was used as a name of a region in the central Ethiopian highlands). Until the reign of Haile Sellassie I, Amharic speakers used to identify themselves on a more local level, for example, as Gojjame ‘a person from Gojjam’ (Meyer 2011a; 2011b; Lewis, Simons, & Fennig 2015) (see also Girma 2009:27 on the ethnicity of the Amhara).

The Amharic used from the mid-19th century to the present day is referred to as modern Amharic, whereas the Amharic before the middle of the 19th century (which goes back to the time the ’royal songs’ were composed in the 14th century or later) is old Amharic (Meyer 2011a; Appleyard 2003:111, fn 5). Modern Amharic comprises the varieties spoken in Addis Abäba (the standard variety), Wällo, Mänz, Gojjam, and Gondar (Habte-Mariam 1973; Abraham 1955; Meyer 2011a). Meyer (2011a:1180) further claims that the Amharic spoken by people in multilingual areas and occupational groups is so different as to be treated as distinct varieties. Examples include the Amharic used among Selt’i mother-tongue speakers and the Amharic variety spoken in Harar.

1.2.2. Argobba

The name Argobba refers to both the people and their language (Leslau 1957; 1978). The language is more closely related to Amharic than to other languages, and it even resembles a conservative variety of Amharic. The people are followers of the Muslim faith. Girma (2009) argues that religion was the cause of the separation of Argobba from Amharic around the 10th or 11th century. Recent works (Ahmed & Girma n.d.; Wetter 2007) mention two varieties of Argobba: the Aliyu Amba and the Shonke-T’ollaha varieties spoken in and around Aliyu Amba and Shonke and T’ollaha (in Wällo), re-

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4 As of July 2014, the total population of Ethiopia is 87,952,000 (Central Statistical Agency).
5 Getatchew (1970:66) mentions that the traditional meaning of the word Amhara is ‘noble nation’.
spectively.\(^6\) However, the (ethnic) Argobba people can be found in Bale, Harar, Afar, Tigray, and even in Eritrea. They numbered 43,700 in the 2007 census. There are 100 monolinguals and 3,240 L2 users of the language (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig 2015).

Leslau (1997:131) classifies Argobba into North and South Argobba and argues that North Argobba, i.e. the variety that corresponds to the Aliyu Amba variety, is a dialect of Amharic. This argument relies on the many common grammatical features shared by the two languages. In Leslau’s analysis of the vocabulary, 1300 (87%) out of 1500 lexemes had cognates in Amharic. The remaining 13% were lexemes that are specific to Argobba, cognates of other Ethio-Semitic languages, or can be traced back to Oromo, Afar, and Somali (Cushitic languages), thus indicating the presence of 'language contact’. Girma (2001; 2006), however, maintains that Argobba and Amharic are not dialects of the same language, since they are not mutually intelligible. The Shonke-T’ollaha variety has a more archaic character that makes it distinct from, not only Amharic, but also from the Aliyu Amba variety (Meyer 2011a). Wetter (2007:104) claims these two varieties are not mutually intelligible.

The Argobba are usually bi/multilingual speakers of Amharic, Afar, and/or Oromo (Meyer 2011a). It was reported in Leslau (1997) that the (South) Argobba that was spoken in Arawe (or Arawage), about six km south of Harar, had already been replaced by Oromo. Leslau conjectured on the likelihood that North Argobba, i.e. the Aliyu Amba variety, might soon disappear in favor of Amharic, given that, even then, it was mostly spoken by the oldest generation, while the youngest generation used Amharic. Argobba is thus, obviously, an endangered language. However, currently there is some effort to revive the language as evidenced, for instance, by the orthography developed relatively recently for Argobba (a modification of the Amharic orthography) and from the textbooks developed to teach the young generation (see Girma 2006; Ahmed & Girma n.d.).

1.2.3. Harari

Harari is spoken in the Muslim-majority city of Harar, about 350 miles to the east of Addis Ababa. The speakers call it Gee sinaan ‘the tongue of the city’. It is further called Adariñña or Harariñña by Amharic speakers and Adare by the Oromo (Leslau 1965; 1959).\(^7\) The 2007 census reports 25,800 speak-

\(^6\) Girma (2015) believes there to be four varieties of Argobba, which he groups under North Argobba and South Argobba.

\(^7\) My consultants differ in their preference as to whether I should use the name Harari or Adare. Harari is used here, as most scholars working on the language are familiar with it.
ers in the city and 20,000 in Addis Ababa. The number of monolinguals is 2,350, and L2 speakers 7,770. (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig 2015). As pointed out in Mantel-Niećko (1961) and Leslau (1959), Arabic has exerted an influence on Harari vocabulary because of the religious background of the speakers and their commercial contacts with Arabs and Muslims. Harari is also a language that is known for having contact with Oromo, as well as with Sidamo and Somali (Leslau 1959; 1963a; Wagner 1997). This is no surprise considering that Harar is not only surrounded by Oromo speakers, but is also inhabited by an ethnically and linguistically mixed population, i.e. Harari, Amhara, Oromo, and Somali (Wagner 2011).

There exist old Harari texts written in Arabic letters. This makes it the only South Ethio-Semitic language, apart from Amharic, whose diachronic development can be studied. Consequently, scholars distinguish between ancient and modern Harari. Ancient Harari goes back at least to the 18th century. This is the time in which the oldest text that can be dated, Mus’t’aafa (a collection of prayers and praises of the prophet), was composed. The composer Haashim b. ’Abdal’aziz died around 1756. Ancient Harari was a written language up to the end of the 19th century. At this time, modern Harari could already be heard in speech (Wagner 1988; 2011).

1.2.4. Zay

Zay is spoken in the islands of Lake Zway, which is found 160 km from Addis Ababa. The islands include Därbäch’on, Aysut, and Famat (the islands Däbrä Sina and Gälila are uninhabited). It is also spoken on the shores of the lake, such as in Bochessa (south of the lake) and Meki (north of the lake). The Zay people, who maintain a strong Christian belief, are weavers, tillers, and fishermen. That is why they (and their language) are known by the name Lak’i ‘paddler’ by the Oromo. Reports on the size of the population are inconsistent, cf. 13-15,000 (Tesfaye 2008) and 35,000 (Meyer 2002). The people are bilingual-multilingual in Zay and Oromo and/or Amharic. These languages also have a strong influence on the lexicon of Zay. Leslau (1999) observes language shift and expresses his fear that Zay may be dying.

1.2.5. Wolane /Hazo

Wolane is the name of only one of the four localities in which a ‘Wolane’ speech community resides, with the other localities being Gedebano, Gut-
zer, and Agemjay. Mehamed (2009) suggests ‘Hazo’ as a more unifying name for all the localities (and for the many tribes). Mehal Amba is the capital and is situated 119 km from Addis Ababa. Their number is shown to be 70,000 in Meyer (2006), but 94,366 (plus 60,000 outside the area, including those who are abroad) in Abdulfetah (2012). The Wolane plant false banana (or ensete edulis), which is their staple food, and Catha edulis (or khat). They also breed cattle. The majority are Muslims, while the remaining few are followers of the Ethiopian-Orthodox faith. The community is adjacent to other speakers of Gurage and Cushitic-speaking peoples. Almost all speakers below the age of 30 are said to be multilingual. Most often, they know Amharic (a working language in the administration and a medium of instruction in primary schools). People in the border areas also know the Cushitic languages Oromo and K’abeena, as well as the Gurage languages Muher (tt-group), Ezha (Central Western Gurage), and Kistane/Soddo (n-group). Monolingual speakers (who are very old and often with passive knowledge of Amharic) can also be found (Meyer 2006).

1.2.6. Selt’i

The Selt’i people, like the Wolane, are Muslims, although a small number of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians can also be found in the population. Their economy is based on the cultivation of false bananas (and certain cash crops like red pepper) and trade. They are the majority in the areas (Woredas) of Selt’i, K’ibbet, Dalocha, and T’ora. Their number was estimated at 935,000 in the 2007 census (Gutt 1983; Lewis, Simons, & Fennig 2015). It appears that Inneqor (or Azanat) and (W)urbarag (or Ulbareg), which are usually mentioned under ‘East Gurage languages’, are only varieties of Selt’i (Meyer 2006; Leslau 1951). Gutt (1980), in particular, performed a test whose results show that it is not only Inneqor but also Wolane that is mutually intelligible with Selt’i (which is further strengthened by Abdulfetah [2012]). This is strong linguistic evidence countering the notion that Wolane is a language distinct from Selt’i. However, as stated in Baye (1999), other non-linguistic criteria (such as political and historical) need to be employed before labeling any variety a language or a dialect. In connection to this, Girma (2001:80) points out that the dialect status of the above-mentioned varieties of Selt’i is accepted by speakers of both Wolane and Selt’i.

1.3. Some structural properties of the languages

The TSE languages share some features with members of the Ethio-Semitic language family and languages belonging to the Ethiopian linguistic area, but there are also features that set them apart from other languages and, even, among themselves. Section 1.3.1 lists some major linguistic studies of
the languages. Section 1.3.2 provides a very brief description of general features of the languages by focusing on verbal patterns and categories, whereas Section 1.3.3 highlights a few areal features.

1.3.1. Major works on the languages

Amharic is the most studied language in Ethiopia. The most comprehensive grammars include those of Baye (2008, in Amharic), Cohen (1936), Leslau (1995) Ludolf (1698), and Praetorius (1879). Girma (2014) also deals with the Amharic grammar from a diachronc perspective. There are also grammars for the other TSE languages. Leslau (1997) is a grammar and dictionary of Argobba. Girma (2015) is a comparison of the various speech varieties of Argobba. Leslau (1999) is a grammar and dictionary of Zay (see also Meyer [2005] for a grammar of the language in German). Meyer (2006) is a comprehensive grammar of Wolane. Gutt (1997) contains a brief, but adequate, grammatical description of Selt’i with a Selt’i-Amharic-English dictionary. Wagner and Leslau have worked on various aspects of Harari, including grammatical description, analysis of texts, and dictionary (e.g. Leslau 1963b; Wagner 1983b, in German). Other works on general description and classification of the languages include Hetzron (1972) and Leslau (1966; 1970c), as well as collected articles in Weninger (ed.) (2011b).

1.3.2. General features

In establishing the TSE Languages as a group, as well as their internal classification, Hetzron (1972) employs a number of criteria. To mention some, TSE languages have lost the gender distinction in the plural, and their main indicative imperfect forms are marked by a ‘locative’ auxiliary.10 Argobba and Amharic in particular show complete conservation of gemination, preserve the ‘Ethiopic’ converb form, and have distinct possessive forms for 3.m/f.s (-u -wa) (cf. Harari: -zol-ze, Selt’i and Wolane: -käl-fä, Zay: -nil -naj). Harari and the East Gurage languages, on the other hand, use the compound imperfect for a relative function, i.e. in relative clauses (e.g. Zay √sbr ‘break’: main form= jisäbr-äl, relative form= jisäbr-al), they are characterized by loss of gemination except in certain instances (e.g. Harari: sirri ‘secret’. There is no morphologically relevant gemination in verbs at all (see Wagner 2011:1260).

Meyer (2011c) gives a general description of the Gurage languages, including the Eastern Gurage languages Zay, Selt’i, and Wolane. Some features

10 See, however, Bulakh and Kogan (2014:605-606), who consider “the emergence of ‘compound imperfect’ as a regular form of the main affirmative clause” as an areal feature.
will be discussed below, with a greater focus on the Eastern Gurage languages. It is worth mentioning that the common word order of these languages is subject-object-verb; adjectives and relative clauses precede their heads; and subordinate clauses precede main clauses.

Additionally, Eastern Gurage languages have two genders: masculine and feminine, which are marked by agreement on a verb or a modifier or definite article (cf. to on the verb māt’aa in 1:3). Note that Zay marks main clauses (affirmative and negative in the indicative mood, affirmative in the jussive mood) by the clause final morpheme -u or its allomorphs. In addition, it marks a finite indicative main clause with an assertive or contrastive focus marker, cf. -n-.

**Zay**

(1:3) ʔalmaaz māt’aa-tǎ-n-u

Amalaz:F come:PFV-3SG-FOC-DCM

‘Almaz came.’ (Meyer 2011c:1242)

The definite article is -j (*-t(a)j for fem), attached to a modifier like jë-gādāraa ‘big’ in Wolane, in example 1:4. Others use -wa or a possessive suffix.

**Wolane**

(1:4) jëgādāraa-j gaar

big-DEF house

‘the big house’ (Meyer 2011c:1243)

The Gurage languages are nominative-accusative languages, and Eastern Gurage is known to mark the accusative overtly with -n(ā), which is basically attached to proper nouns and most pronouns, whereas -ā is used with all other nouns. In the following example (1:5) from Wolane, nā- attaches to the proper noun faamil.

**Wolane**

(1:5) faamil-nā wādāt-ej

Shamil-ACC love:PFV-3SG-3SG.OBJ

‘She loved Shamil.’ (Meyer 2011c:1243)

The verbal noun is formed by the affix -oot in Selt’i and Wolane, but wā- in Zay. Here is an example (1:6) from Selt’i.
Selt’i
(1:6) nikät > nikät-oot
‘beat (MSG)’ ‘to beat’
(Meyer 2011c:1244)

These markers are found in other Gurage varieties, as well – more specifically, in what are called Gunnän Gurage varieties. Gunnän Gurage is a typological unit of the Gurage languages of the Outer South Ethio-Semitic branch.

Note that -oot was the infinitive marker used in Old in Harari, while Modern Harari uses ma- (e.g. masbar ‘to break’). The plural in Harari is marked by -aac. The accusative suffix is -(u)w (and is etymologically related to the Amharic definite article -u/-w). For definiteness, the article -zo is used. The negative marker is al-, which always contains the element -m in negative main clauses (e.g. al-sabara-m) (Wagner 2011).

Meyer (2011c:1245) also includes a discussion of what he calls ‘phrasal verbs’ in Gurage languages. These verbs are formed by the combination of an invariable meaning-bearing element (often an ideophone) and an auxiliary verb ‘to say’ (when the subject is affected by the verbal event) or ‘to make’ (in contexts in which the subject is an agent), which indicates aspect, mood, agreement, etc. This is demonstrated below in Wolane.

Wolane
(1:7a) jәgg balә
silent:IDEO say:PFV:3MSG
‘Keep quiet.’

(b) jәgg appее
silent:IDEO make:PFV:3MSG
‘Cause to keep quiet.’ (Meyer 2011c:1246)

Subject agreement markers on verbs are mostly obligatory, whereas object markers are usually optional. The perfective takes suffixes, whereas the imperfective or the jussive/imperative take a combination of prefixes and suffixes, cf. jә- ‘3MSG’ in 1:8.

Wolane
(1:8) jә-sbәr
3MSG-break:JUS
‘He may break!’ (Meyer 2011c:1236)

Adjuncts or non-prototypical arguments of a verb can be introduced by two applicative suffixes *-b and *-n (followed by object markers), but only one
object marker or applicative suffix can occur with a single verb, cf. -n- in 1:9.

Zay
(1:9) fārātānax
fārā-dā-n-hā
judge:PFV-3MSG-APLB-2MSG
‘He judged [in] your (SGM) favor.’ (Meyer 2011c:1239)

Most verbs are formed through non-concatenative morphology where words or base forms of words are formed by combining a root morpheme, which usually consists of consonants, with a template, i.e. a pattern [that] contains information on vocalization and gemination of a (consonantal) root in a specific word form. (Meyer 2011c:1234).

Any triconsonantal root (C1C2C3) is said to belong to one of the following three basic verb types: A, B, C.

C= a between C1 and C2 (e.g. Muher (tt-group) zārrāą-m ‘go’)
B= e~i between C1 and C2 or palatalization of C1 (e.g. Selt’i beek’ārā ‘decorate’)
A= The absence of these morphemes (e.g. Muher sābbārā-m ‘break’)

Also o~u between C1 and C2 in Eastern Gurage (e.g. Selt’i goorā ‘slaughter’)

A verb stem may have different templates (or base forms) for the formation of the perfective and imperfective aspect or the jussive/imperative mood. This is demonstrated below using the root dls ‘wait’ in Zay.

Zay: Type A ‘wait’ (3SGM)
(1:10) dāls-ānu (Perfective Affirmative)
ʔal-dāls-o (Perfective Negative)
ji-dāls-ānaa (Imperfective Affirmative)
jā-dāls (Jussive Affirmative) (Meyer 2011c:1245)

The case with the other languages is not so different. Consider the examples in 1:11 from Harari for the tripartite verbal system (Wagner 2011:1259-1260).
Meyer (2014) argues that Ethio-Semitic languages are mixed aspect/tense languages in which aspect is the primary and tense the secondary/new category. In Amharic, for example, aspect and mood are marked obligatorily on the lexical root (which means they are primary). Consider Table 1 from Meyer (2014:3) (see also Mengistu [2002:3] [root-and-pattern morphology] and Saba and Girma [2006:305] [non-concatenative operations] for the wordformation strategy).

Table 1: Templates of the simplex stem for tri-consonantal type A verbs in Amharic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Example in 3PL</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>√s1b2r3</td>
<td>c1äcc2äc3</td>
<td>c1äcc2äc3-SUF.1</td>
<td>Perfective</td>
<td>‘They broke’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*säbbär</td>
<td>säbbär-u</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c1äc2c3</td>
<td>PRE-c1äc2c3-SUF.2</td>
<td>Imperfective</td>
<td>‘They break, will break, are breaking, usually break, etc.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*säbr</td>
<td>*ji-säbr-u</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c1äc2c3ä</td>
<td>c1äc2c3ä-SUF.3</td>
<td>Neutral aspect (converb)</td>
<td>‘(They) having broken, breaking’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*säbrä</td>
<td>säbrä-w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c1C2äc3</td>
<td>PRE-c1C2äc3-SUF.2</td>
<td>Jussive</td>
<td>‘They may break’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*sbär</td>
<td>ji-sbär-u</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c1C2äc3</td>
<td>c1C2äc3-SUF.2</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>‘Break(2PL)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sbär-u</td>
<td>sbär-u</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mä- c1C2äc3</td>
<td>mä-sbär</td>
<td>Infinitive (Verbal noun)</td>
<td>‘(to) break’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| (f)  |       |             |          |       |

SUF.1 = person, number, gender marker for perfective; 
SUF.2 = number, gender markers for imperfective and jussive/imperative; 
SUF.3 = person, number, gender for neutral aspect (developed diachronically from possessive suffixes); 
PRE = person marker for imperfective and jussive (with morphosyntactic allomorphs for 1st person)
Tense, on the other hand, is a periphrastic category encoded by three irregular verbs, i.e. the existential verb *allä*, the copula *näw*, and the past-tense auxiliary *näbbär* (see also Girma [2014:129, 131] for -*all* & *näbbär*), hence, a secondary category. Consider the imperfective marked on the lexical root and the past-tense auxiliary *näbbär* in example 1:12.

Amharic

(1:12)  ji-säbr-u  näbbär  
3-break:IPFV-PL  PST  
‘(i) They were breaking (ii) They used to break, etc.’ (Meyer 2014:4)

Meyer states that all Ethio-Semitic languages distinguish between perfective and imperfective aspect (using specific templates and subject markers). Although all can use the imperfective in past and present contexts, only TSE languages obligatorily mark it for tense in affirmative main clauses, as shown in 1:12 and also in 1:13 below for Harari.

Harari

(1:13)  Imperfect > Compound imperfect  
ji-sabri  ji-sabr-aal  
3MSG-break:IPFV  3MSG-break:IPFV-NPST  (Wagner 2011:1261)

The tense markers can also be used with the neutral (or converb) to form a ‘perfect’ in Amharic, cf. *därs*-Ø-*all* in 1:14 below.

Amharic

(1:14)  wändim-e  addis abäba  därs*-Ø-all  
brother-1SG.POSS  Addis Ababa  reach:CVB-3MSG GEN-NPST  
‘My brother has reached Addis Ababa (i.e. he is still there).’ (Meyer 2014:8)

The neutral is said to only keep its lexical aspect (stative or dynamic), i.e. not marked for grammatical aspect (which explains the use of the term ‘neutral aspect’). The perfect shows that the event still holds relevance for the current moment of speech (cf. “a resultative reading relevant to the present moment” [Girma 2014:129]).\footnote{DeLancey (1982:173) explains the presence of such an interpretation of the perfect in comparison to the perfective in terms of the category he calls ‘viewpoint’ (the orientation of the speaker toward a scene/event and which captures the parallelism between aspectual/temporal structure and voice distinction): “perfective views an event from its terminal point, while perfect takes now, the temporal location of the speech act, as viewpoint – hence its ‘present relevance’ reading.”} Note, however, that Baye (2012:12, fn4) treats the completive (i.e. the neutral) as “a type of perfective that signals the
termination of an event and the ensuing of another”. More on this later in chapter two (Section 2.2.2).

1.3.3. Areal features

On a general level, Hayward (1999:623-624), after Ferguson (1970; 1976), regards Ethiopia (including Eritrea) as constituting a linguistic area. Among the typical features he uses to support this view are consonant gemination, SOV word order, existence of converbs, and compound verbs based on the verb ‘say’. He also mentions the form of the imperfect in dependent clauses being shorter than its main clause counterpart in these languages, although individual languages differ in the degree to which they show these features. Weninger (2011a:1118-1119) mentions other areal features such as the absence of pharyngeal fricatives and points to a debate regarding the size of the area (with proposals that include the ‘Horn of Africa’ and ‘Chad-Ethiopia’).

Girma and Meyer (2010), in particular, consider that the word order change in the Ethio-Semitic languages from the common Semitic VSO to SOV was due to language contact with Cushitic languages. This is illustrated below using examples from Genesis (39:4) in Ge’ez (a classical language with VSO), Amharic, and Oromo, respectively. Notice that Oromo and Amharic have the same word order (see Meyer [2011d:1267] for the influence of Ethio-Semitic on Cushitic, such as the presence of ejectives in Agaw, cf. Weninger [2011a:1119]).

Ge’ez
(1:15a) räkäb-ä [verb] josef [subject] mogäs-ä [object]… find:PFV-3MSG Josef grace-ACC

Amharic
(b) josef [subject] mogäs [object] … agäññ-ä [verb]find:PFV-3MSG
Josef grace

Oromo
(c) joseef-i-s [subject] ajjaana [object] … argit-e [verb]find-3MSG.PFV
Josef-NOM-EMP grace ‘Josef found grace...’ (Genesis 39:4; Girma and Meyer 2010:1)

Hayward (1999) further identifies similar lexicalization patterns in the three languages that represent the language families of Amharic (Semitic), Oromo (Cushitic), and Gamo (Omotic). For instance, the verbs with the basic mean-
ing ‘hold, catch’ and ‘get up, stand up’ have a secondary meaning of ‘start, begin’ and ‘recur’ (with respect to sickness), respectively.

Crass and Meyer (2008) propose additional areal features of the Ethiopian linguistic area (Wolane, Zay, and Amharic are included in the sample). These include the expression of prospect and intent by a copula construction, existence of different copula constructions for main and subordinate clauses, grammaticalization of the ablative case marker as a marker of the standard in comparative constructions (not attested in Wolane), and the use of a past marker in the apodosis of an irrealis conditional clause.

Language contact is responsible for some variation among TSE languages as well. Girma and Meyer (2010) indicate that language contact with Oromo is responsible for making vowel length phonemic in Zay (also in Selt’i; see Meyer 2011c:1229; Gutt 1983).

1.4. Methodology

1.4.1. Tools of data collection

The primary data sources are recordings of free conversation and narratives, analyses of written materials, and elicitation of relevant linguistic examples. In addition, earlier descriptions of the languages have been used as sources of information.

A. Free conversation and narrative recording

Free conversation, including casual interaction, discussion, debate, and interviewing, is spontaneous speech and, as such, contains various speech styles and registers. Narratives – in which consultants report their personal reminiscences and the histories of their people, tell jokes, describe cultural practices, and recall stories/tales from their childhoods – are planned. Both types of data were collected in fieldwork that lasted from the middle of September 2013 to the middle of February 2014. Additional details of this work are provided in Table 2.
Table 2: Free conversation and narrative recording

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Recording hrs.</th>
<th>No. of consultants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amharic Gondar variety</td>
<td>Gondar (&amp; Kosoye)</td>
<td>Sept. 28-30, Oct. 2-10</td>
<td>21 hrs</td>
<td>20 (including family members and friends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gojjam variety</td>
<td>Debre Markos</td>
<td>Oct. 12-18</td>
<td>12 hrs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zay</td>
<td>Meki &amp; Därbach’on</td>
<td>Nov. 12-13, 15</td>
<td>2hrs &amp; 10 min</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harari</td>
<td>Addis Ababa</td>
<td>Nov. 17-20</td>
<td>3 hrs &amp; 15 min</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolane</td>
<td>Mehal Amba</td>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
<td>9 min</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argobba Aliyu Amba variety</td>
<td>Gachine</td>
<td>Dec. 10-11</td>
<td>2 hrs &amp; 25 min</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selt’i</td>
<td>Merkato &amp; Dalocha</td>
<td>Dec. 14, Dec. 24-26</td>
<td>3 hrs &amp; 8 min</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consultants were varied in terms of sex, age (from schoolchildren to the elderly), occupation (teacher, farmer, merchant, religious leader, guard, restaurant/café owner, housewife, etc.), and place of birth (from the respective areas mentioned above to nearby/distant districts). Most of the Amharic speakers were monolingual, but there were some who spoke other languages, such as Ge’ez, Tigrigna, and ‘Agaw’. However, all speakers of the other languages were bilingual, and most of them multilingual. They all spoke Amharic. Additional languages included Oromo, Afar, Arabic, Somali, Mesqan (Western Gurage), Maraq, Hadiya, Alaba, and English. Native speakers of the languages were used as mediators in most of the recordings by directly involving themselves in the conversation and by asking questions during narration.

Some data from the online archives of the community radios stations Fana /http://www.fanabroadcasting.com/ (9 audio files, about 10 hours) and Sheger /http://www.shegerfm.com/ (10 audio files, about 5 hours) were used, as was data from other online sources such as YouTube for the standard Addis Ababa variety of Amharic, although it was difficult to obtain basic information about these speakers (age, linguistic background, etc.). Some of the Argobba interview recordings (2hrs & 28min) were also obtained from a
local community radio station in Gachine. In addition, two short, transcribed Selt’i narratives were received from a colleague at Addis Ababa University.

As a native speaker of Amharic, I analyzed the Amharic recordings and extracted instances of the inceptive construction. The recordings of Selt’i, Zay, Harari, and Argobba were transcribed (using Amharic orthography) and translated by native speakers who did not participate in the conversation or narration. These were non-linguists who live in Addis Ababa (two women for Harari, one man for Selt’i, and two men for Zay [two distinct bodies of translated materials]) and Gachine (one man for Argobba). Then I carefully analyzed the materials in search of the construction.

B. Analysis of written materials
I also looked for this particular construction in Amharic written sources that included newspapers, magazines, and books (such as novels, children stories, memoirs). A search for Amharic verbs and verb combinations was also conducted on Google. For data on the diachronic development of the construction, some old manuscripts (such as official documents, letters, and songs in praise of kings) were consulted.

C. Elicitation of relevant linguistic examples
Addis Ababa is a metropolitan city where speakers of many Ethiopian languages live or stay for some time for various reasons (as students at various universities and colleges, as merchants, etc.). As such, most of the consultants for the elicitation work came from the city, except in the case of Argobba (conducted in Showa Robit) and one of the two consultants of Zay (i.e. in Meki). Overall, two consultants were chosen for Zay, Harari, and Selt’i, one for Argobba, and none for Wolane.

The procedure that was adopted used instances of the Amharic inceptive construction extracted from the written materials and recordings of free conversation and narratives. Consultants, mainly from the other languages (although some Amharic speakers in Addis Ababa and Stockholm/Västerås were occasionally consulted), were provided with the example sentences and the specific contexts in which they occurred. When they reported that such cases existed in their language, they were asked individually to translate (if they were deemed acceptable), provide their equivalents, and think of any other related sentences. This was followed by questions about certain features of the construction (e.g. tense, aspect, voice, negation, agreement, co-occurrence).14 As the construction is rarely found in texts (see below), elicitation was deemed a worthy complement to the above methods. Later, a

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14 One consultant of Zay and another of Selt’i also participated in recording and translation, respectively.
Selt’i speaker and two translators from Harari and Zay were consulted for the examination and comparison of the features of converbs in other uses. Amharic was used in all elicitation sessions.

As mentioned above, the inceptive construction is rare, and, as such, not many instances were found in the written and recorded materials in Amharic. They were proportionally found in both text types, but mainly in informal contexts. The range of consultants in terms of age, sex, place of origin, and occupation did not appear to influence the results. However, the Gojjam data contains only a few instances, only a few instances of the construction were found in Zay and Selt’i, and none were located in the Harari data (the material in Argobba was not used). As a result, the analysis of the various features of the construction in languages other than Amharic is based almost entirely on elicitation.

Table 3: The number of distinct example sentences from each source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>Argobba</th>
<th>Harari</th>
<th>Zay</th>
<th>Selt’i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spoken texts</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5. Problems/Delimitation

There were some problems encountered in the process.
- I was forced to quit collecting Wolane data in Mehal Amba because of political unrest in the region.
- After the recordings were made, finding translators was challenging. Finally, after they were found, a few of them didn’t properly translate the materials.
- The fact that most of the instances of the inceptive construction in languages other than Amharic were obtained through elicitation might have impacted their naturalness.
II. Background

This chapter attempts to establish the scene for the next chapter, which addresses the objectives of the thesis, i.e. the function, syntactic features, and diachrony of the inceptive construction, which is mainly expressed by converbs of ‘take’, ‘grasp’, ‘get up’, and ‘pick up’ in TSE languages, as used in certain contexts. Section 2.1 deals with converbs. Section 2.2 discusses the encoding of complex events that subsume the inceptive construction.

2.1. Converbs

2.1.1. Defining converbs

A verb is defined in Haspelmath (1995:3-8) as “a non-finite verb form whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination”. Converbs generally modify verbs, clauses, or sentences, and crosslinguistically, they tend to lack specification for most verbal grammatical features, such as tense, aspect, mood, and agreement. Here is an example (2:1) from Chukchi (Palaeosiberian language) in which ga-tajk-әma ‘making the net’ modifies the succeeding main clause.

Chukchi (Palaeosiberian)

(2:1) ajwe, ga-tajk-әma kupren, jaʔrat ta-peŋ?iweŋ-g?ek
    yesterday, CVB-make-CVB net very 1SG-become.tired-1SG.PST.INTR
    ‘Yesterday, making the net, I became very tired.’ (Haspelmath 1995:2)

However, the definition above is not a strict one, and a number of scholars have provided exceptions in different verb types in various languages. Ebert (2008), for instance, points out that the term ‘adverbial’ fails to include verb forms used in a ‘chaining’ function of the type shown below from Oriya (Indo-Aryan). The converbs marked by -i depict a chain of events concluded by the final verb.

---

15 See Bickel (1998:97) for a review on this that instead underscores an alternative definition: ‘a dependent verb form that is used neither as an actant nor as an attribute’
Oriya (Indo-Aryan)

(2:2) ame-sabu bojarɔ ja-i jinisɔ kiŋ-i aiskrim kha-i
we-all market go-CVB thing buy-CVB icecream eat-CVB

ghɔɾɔ-ku pher-il-u
house-DAT return-PST-1PL:INCL

‘We went to the market, bought things, had ice cream and returned home.’
(Neukom & Patnaik 2003:244 in Ebert 2008:8)

Haspelmath (1995:26-27) favors the distinction between ‘clause-chaining’ (or medial clauses or cosubordinate clauses) and ‘converbal construction’ (i.e. successive adverbial subordination), although he acknowledges that converbs may be used in both clause types in some languages, such as Japanese. He claims that clause-chaining does not involve subordination, whereas converbal construction does. He establishes some criteria for determining subordination, i.e. clause-internal word order, variable position, possibility of backward pronominal anaphora and control, semantic restrictiveness (and hence focusability), and possibility of extraction. A subordinate clause may fulfill a subset of the criteria, while a non-subordinate one fulfills none of them.

Ebert further argues that some converb-like forms are partly finite-marked. In the following example from Evenki (Tungusic), the converb girku’d’aksə is marked for imperfective aspect in 2:3a, and birekin is marked for person in 2:3b (see also Treis [2012:85, 88], who states that Kambaata (Cushitic) converbs are dependent forms, but are not entirely non-finite).

Evenki (Tungusic)

(2:3a) …dunne-li girku-d’a-ksa garpani-tki ice-t-cere-n
land-PROL go-IPFV-CVB ANT/SS G.-DIR see-PROC-PRS-3SG
‘…Having walked across the land, he looked at Garpani (I. Nedjalkov 447 in Ebert 2008:18)

(b) sun-mi-da bi-reki-n bi upkacin ulap-ca-v
coat-1SG.POSS-even be-CVB ANT/DS-3SG.POSS I entire get.wet-PST-1SG
‘Although I had my coat, I got soaked.’ (although my coat was there…) (I. Nedjalkov 1995:457 in Ebert 2008:19)

Ebert (2008:23) states that ‘fully finite-marked verbs plus a linker’ should not be categorized under ‘converb’. Forms like mende’runille below should be considered functional equivalents.
Limbu (Kiranti)
(2:4)  kheŋ  kr-daʔr-u-ba  mënchumaʔn  naʔpми-re
      that   2-bring-3PL-NMLZ  girl:DEF  person-ERG

mën-deʔr-u-n-ille  gɔ  me-da-nen  jaŋ
3PLA-NEG-take-3PL-NEG-COND  TOP  NEG-come-NEG  money

‘If no one takes the girl you brought, you may not get any money.’ (Ebert 2008:23)

Haspelmath (1995) indeed acknowledges this and points out that finiteness is not a strong criterion for determining converbs because if verbs are finite, but are used ‘only’ in adverbial subordinate clauses, they will be considered converbs.

Shisha-Halevy (2009) discusses the problems with various characterizations of converbs. For example, he states that converbs can be ‘actantial’ (function as an argument), as in the English walking in start walking. Similarly, in the Cushitic language Beja, Vanhove (2013:5-6) reports that the manner converb can function as a complement. Example 2:5 shows the converb jʔaab functioning as a complement of the verb hiisiinajt.

Beja (Cushitic)
(2:5)  i=faww=aa  han  harroo=b  haaj
      DEF.M=neighbor=POS3PL.NOM  also  sorghum=INDF.M.ACC  COM

jʔ-aa=b  hiis-iin=ajt
come-CVB.MNR=COMP  think-AOR.3PL=CSL

‘Since his neighbors were thinking he was bringing back sorghum…’

Convers can be classified into various groups based on their type and function. Ebert (2008) discusses general and special converbs. A general converb is a versatile form that can be used for subordination and clause-chaining. In the following examples from Hindi (Indo-Aryan), the same converb form is used for simultaneous and causal function in 2:6a and 2:6b, respectively.
Hindi (Indo-Aryan) (kar=ke)

(2:6a) vah **dhaul-kar** aa-jaa
       he  run-CVB      come-PFV
‘He came running.’ (Sandhal 2000:114 in Ebert 2008:9)

(b) vah raat din kaam **kar-ke** biimar paɿ ga-jaa
       he  night day  work do-CVB  ill  fall  go-PFV
‘He fell ill [due to] working day and night.’ (Kachru 1981:39 in Ebert 2008:9)

Others have more specialized functions such as encoding causal, conditional, purposive, and temporal interpretations. Consider the specialized conditional converb in Khalkha (Mongolic) in example 2:7.

Khalkha (Mongolic)

(2:7) **exel-bel** duusg-aax xeregtej
       start-CVBCOND    finish-NMLZ    necessary
‘If one starts, one must finish.’ (Ebert 2008:14)

Vanhove (2013:2) notes that there are four specialized converbs marked with suffixes in Beja (Cushitic), i.e. simultaneity, anteriority, causality, and manner (note that none of the converbs exhibit number and TAM markers). Kambaata has perfective, imperfective, and negative converbs (Treis 2012:86).

Converbs can also have a ‘secondary use’ in the formation of ‘compound verbs’, where they are combined with a limited set of desemanticized verbs that indicate telicity and durativity/progressivity. Consider the postural verb **ʒat-at** in example 2:8 from Kirghiz (Turkic) with its progressive function.

Kirghiz (Turkic)

(2:8) ojn-op  ʒat-at
       play-CVB   V2:lie-PRS-3SG
‘He is playing.’ (Ebert 2008:13)

In Awngi (Cushitic), there are two sets of converbs, referred to as ‘short’ and ‘long’ (Ebert 2008:29). The long converb is mainly used in ‘chaining’, whereas the short converb, which lacks a converbal suffix, is for simultaneous events (cf. the short **fajâ** with the long **fajámâ**).
Awngi (Cushitic)

(2:9) **faj-ā** **faj-ā-má** deret-ani… aq-o
search-3MSG(CVBI) search-3MSG-CVBt tire.3MSG-CVBTEM man-ACC

kásfi-y”ā
ask.3-PST

‘He searched and searched, and when he got tired…he asked people.’
(Hetzron 1969:T1.2 in Ebert 2008:29)

Another interesting distinction concerns subject reference (or switch-reference system). Converbs may be marked with ‘same subject’ (SS) or ‘different subject’ (DS) markers depending on whether they have the same subject as the reference verb (the verb that the converb is in relation with) or not.16 Kambaata is one of the languages that have converbs of such distinction. Consider the DS marker -jan in 2:10a. ‘Same subject’ is unmarked (cf. 2:10b).

Kambaata (Cushitic)

(2:10a) **urr-úta** **qocc-eenáni-jan** maccoocc-éemm
door-F.ACC knock-3HON.ICO-DS hear-1SG.PVE

‘I heard him (hon) knocking at the door.’ (Lit. ‘He knocked at the door, I heard (it).’)

(b) **lám-it** am-á óos-ut ill-ít
two-F.NOM mother-F.GEN children-FNOM reach-2SG/3FPCO

sunk’-ak’k’-an-tá a-ba’a
kiss-MID-PASS-3F.IPV-NEG
‘Two siblings do not meet and do not kiss each other’ (riddle) (Treis 2012:88, 91)

Finally, there are cases in which converbs come to be used as a main verb. Treis (2012:85 fn4) mentions that the Kambaata converb can be used as a final verb in questions. Vanhove (2013:10) provides an instance of such a kind in Beja, cf. kitimaabi in 2:11a, with a copula. Ebert (2008:30), citing Kogan (1997), discusses a similar case in Tigrinya in which converbs alone, such as ḥamimā in 2:11b, give a resultative reading in their finite use. This is an interesting phenomenon called ‘insubordination’, which will be discussed at length in chapter six, with respect to its use in Amharic.

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16 The verb that the converb is in relation with is called ‘reference verb’ in Meyer (2012:169), ‘principal verb’ in Leslau (1995:358), and ‘final verb’ in Hetzron (1972:99).
Beja (Cushitic)
(2:11a) ottʔa mar mhiin-aan kitim-aa=b=i
now such place-ADVZR arrive-CVB.MNR=INDF.M.ACC=COP.3SG
‘Now he has arrived at a certain place.’ (Vanhove 2013:10)

Tigrinya (Ethio-Semitic)
(b) ḥamim-ka-do ḥamim-ä
ill:CVB-2SGM.POSS-Q ill:CVB-1SG.POSS
‘Are you ill?’ ‘Yes’ (Kogan 1997:439 in Ebert 2008:30)

Section 2.1.2 provides a detailed description of the converb in TSE languages, i.e. their morphological, syntactic, and functional features.

2.1.2. Converbs in TSE languages
In addition to the term “converb” used by Hetzron (1972) and Meyer (2012), we find a number of terms used for converbs in the literature on Transversal South Ethio-Semitic languages such as gerunds (Leslau 1995; 1999; Girma 2014), completive (Baye 2006; 2012), and neutral aspect (Meyer 2014) (see also Goldenberg [1977:489-491] for a historical account of the naming tradition).

In the examples in 2:12a and b, converbs are indicated in bold.

Amharic
(2:12a) rut’-o hed-ä
run:CVB-3MSG GEN go:PFV-3MSG
‘He went running.’ (i.e. he went while running.) (Leslau 1995:358)

Wolane
(b) k’alläb bluwä hidu!
meal eat:JUS-2PL-CVBI go:JUS-2PL
k’alläb bl(aa)-u-ä hid-u
‘Go after you have eaten (the) meal!’ (Meyer 2006:133)

Rut’o ‘having run’ in 2:12a expresses how the person left. K’alläb bluwä ‘after you have eaten (the) meal’ in 2:12b likewise tells what is to be done before going. The features of converbs in each language will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.1.2.1.
2.1.2.1. Converbs in Amharic and Argobba

2.1.2.1.1. Converbs in Amharic

As mentioned in Section 2.1.1, a converb has the following features: verb form, adverbial, non-finite, and subordinate (Haspelmath 1995:3-8), although with a number of exceptions. The following description shows how the Amharic converb behaves with regard to these features.

A. Form

Amharic converbs take distinct base forms, and there are three basic ones. We have seen an example of the type A verbs in Table 1, i.e. c₁āc₂c₃ā-SUF.3... säbrä-w. There also converbs that are type B= c₁āc₂c₃ā- (e.g. fälligā- ‘search’) and type C= c₁a₂c₃ā- (e.g. markā- ‘take captive’). Verbs that have lost their third radical (such as sämma ‘he heard’ [Semitic root *smʕ]) replace it with -t in their converbal form (as in sämt-o), whereas those that have lost an initial or medial radical occur in a modified converb template. For instance, s’afā ‘he wrote’ (*s’hf) becomes s’if-o, rot’-ā ‘he ran’ (*rwt’) becomes rut’-o or rot’-o.17 If the subject is first person singular, the third radical is palatalized and geminated as in -cc in käft₁c₁ā+pal > käficc-e ‘I opening’ (Leslau 1995; Hetzron 1972; Meyer 2012).

B. Functions

Hetzron (1972) identifies three functions of the converb in Ethio-Semitic: serial, consecutive, and coextensive. Serial is when converbs express a chain of actions that constitute one activity that is concluded by the final verb (2:13a); consecutive is when the converb expresses an action that takes place earlier than the following verb (2:13b); and coextensive is when the action of the converb (stative) is simultaneous with the following verb (2:13c) or when the content of the converb and the following verb make up one verbal meaning or “the use of the converb is governed by the lexical nature of the subsequent verb” (2:13c’).

17 The Semitic roots are reconstructed as *rwṯ’ and *š’h p (Ambjörn Sjörs, p.c.).
It is said that Amharic makes distinctions between these three functions: the last syllable of the converb has high pitch stress in the consecutive, rising stress in the serial, and no special stress in the coextensive function (Hetzron 1972:100). Note, however, that Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:413) report that such prosodic distinction is not made by all native speakers (see also Goldenberg [1977:492], which criticizes Hetzron’s [1972] three-way functional distinction). Meyer (2011d:1271; 2012:173) groups Amharic among languages that do not make a morphological distinction between narrative (i.e. serial-consecutive) and adverbial (i.e. co-extensive) uses of the converb. According to him, such functions are instead distinguished by discourse context. Narrative clause-chaining, however, can be marked syntactically by the conjunction =innna/mna ‘and’ as connector of two clauses headed by finite verbs.\(^{18}\) In 2:14a, for example, =mna ‘and’ connects the finite verbs ajjä ‘see’ and färra ‘fear’.

\(^{18}\) For Meyer (2012:164), 2:13a and 2:13b are examples of the clause-chaining function of converbs. Note that Amharic converbs can be preceded by the main verb (= variable position) (see example 4:35a). This seems to provide support to the label ‘converbal construction’ rather than ‘clause-chaining’ (recall Haspelmath’s [1995] criteria for distinguishing between ‘clause-chaining’ and ‘converbal construction’). However, the lack of a clear adverbial func-
Amharic

(2:14a) ajj-ä=nnä nàgàr-u-n fàrra-∅

see:PFV-3MSG=and matter-DEF-ACC fear:PFV-3MSG

‘He saw the matter and was afraid.’

(b) ajkär-u faj amät’t’a-∅-ll-accāw=innä t’ätt’-u

servant-DEF tea bring:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3PL.OBJ=and drink:PFV-3PL

‘The servant brought them tea and they drank (it).’


Meyer (2012:164) further adds that converbs modify other verbs or sentences, but never occur in argument position or as attribute to a noun. However, in a construction like the following it seems the converb t’ät’t’ito ‘drink’ is used as a complement for c’ärräsä ‘finish’. One could also take the final verb as aspectually modifying the converb, i.e. showing that the action of drinking is completed.

Amharic

(2:15) t’ät’t’it-o c’ärräs-ä

drink:CVB-3MSG.GEN finish:PFV-3MSG

‘He finished drinking.’ (Hetzron 1972:99)

Hetzron (1972) views it as “the use of the converb is governed by the lexical nature of the subsequent verb” and identifies it as the ‘coextensive function’ of converbs. Leslau (1995:362) treats the converb in a construction like 2:15, with verbs like c’ärräsä ‘finish, terminate’, fās’s’āmä ‘complete’, abäk’k’a ‘cease’, ak’omä ‘cause to stop, finish’, and alläk’ä ‘come to an end’, as being rendered in English by the present particle (e.g. drinking).

C. Finiteness

As mentioned earlier, converbs cross-linguistically tend to lack specification for most verbal grammatical features, such as tense, aspect, mood, and agreement (Haspelmath 1995). Meyer (2012) states that finiteness for Amharic is considered to involve person-reference and marking of tense and aspect, or a combination of these. He regards the converb as non-finite because it lacks tense and aspect. Regarding person-reference, converbs in Amharic obligatorily inflect for subject agreement. Notice also that the agreement markers derive from genitive suffixes referring back to a genitive subject, although the origin is not evident in all persons (Hetzron 1972; Leslau 1995; Baye 2006; 2008). To the form, say säbr- ‘break’, Amharic

tion of the converbs in constructions like 2:13a above urges us to consider otherwise. Here, this is reconciled by allowing the converb to have both functions, i.e. being used in a ‘clause-chaining-type’ and in adverbial constructions.
adds what Hetzron (1972) calls “(adverbial) accusative ending”, i.e. -ā- which was used for the ancient converb, and possessive endings like -u ‘3MSG.POSS’ to form sābr-ā-u, which then becomes sābr-o. Attaching genitive (possessive) suffixes to converbs is, of course, a widely spread phenomenon (Haspelmath 1995:9).

The subject of the converb and the reference verb may be the same or different. In 2:16, the subject of the converb ‘he’ becomes the object of the reference verb.

Amharic
(2:16) wāmbār laj tāk’āmmīt’-o wuha afāssās-ācci-bb-āt
chair on sit.down:CVB-3MSG.GEN water pour:PFV-3FSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ
‘She poured water on him while he was sitting in a chair’.

(Leslau 1995:359 in Meyer 2012:170)

Converbs also take optional object agreement, in a more restricted way. That is, when there is a single object argument for the converb and reference verb, object marking goes on the finite verb. Consider the ungrammaticality of the object marker -t ‘3MSG.OBJ’ on the converb in 2:17.

Amharic
(2:17) sost wār asr-āw (*-t) läkk’āk’-u-t
three month tie:CVB-3PL GEN (*-3MSG.OBJ) release:PFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ
‘They released him after imprisoning him for three months’.


Converbs in Amharic and Argobba are unmarked for aspect, tense, and mood (Meyer 2012) (see also Hetzron [1972: 99] and Leslau [1995:359] on the lack of tense and mood in Amharic converbs). They are interpreted as if they had the same tense, aspect, and mood as the reference verb. In the following example, the form of the converb remains the same, while the main verb takes the form of the perfective, imperfective, and jussive in 2:18a, b, and c, respectively.

Amharic
(2:18a) dabbo gāzt-o mātt’a-∅
bread buy:CVB-3MSG.GEN come:PFV-3MSG
‘He bought bread and came.’

(b) dabbo gāzt-o ji-māt’-all
bread buy:CVB-3MSG.GEN 3MSG-come:IPFV-NPST
‘He buys bread and comes.’
However, Baye (2006; 2008; 2012) is inclined to treating converbs as verbs having completive aspect (a type of perfective). He argues that Amharic has two canonical aspects – perfective and imperfective – and four sub-aspectual types, i.e. prospective, inceptive, progressive, and completive. Completive aspect denotes that the action is completed or “signals the termination of an event and the ensuing of another” (Baye 2012:12, fn4). Leslau (1995:358) also states that Amharic gerunds (i.e. converbs) express an action or event preceding the action or event of the following main verb. This is in contradiction to Hetzron’s (1972:99) assertion that converbs can also express simultaneous actions like 2:13c (repeated below as 2:19).

Amharic

(2:19)  

\[
\text{k'om-o tänaggär-ä} \\
\text{stand:CVB-3MSG GEN talk:PFV-3MSG} \\
\text{‘He talked standing.’}
\]

The action of talking is assumed to take place in the state of standing. On the other hand, Motomichi (2002) argues against such an account by claiming that when the converb is used, the interpretation is that there is a change of state encoded by the converb. Following his argument, the above sentence would be paraphrased as “having completed a change of state from being seated to remaining standing, he spoke”. Motomichi (2002) instead attributes the encoding of simultaneous action/event to the prefix \( ijjā- \) ‘while’. Example 2:20a looks somewhat odd because it actually means that the person is reading a book as he sits. Example 2:20b, with the converb \( k’āss \ bilo \) ‘after having become slow’, is grammatical, but 2:20b’ with the \( ijjā- \) form \( k’āss ijjalā \) ‘while being slow’, is ungrammatical because “a train cannot accelerate while keeping slow”. 
Amharic converbs can co-occur with negative reference verbs like *ajmät’amm* in 2:21a. However, they cannot be negated, except in the Gojjam variety (Meyer 2012:171). For that, they must change into a negated imperfective verb marked by the subordinating conjunction *s-,* as in *sajjagäññ* in 2:21b.

**D. Subordination**

Regarding the converb in Ethio-Semitic, Hetzron (1972) states that the relationship it has with the reference verb is co-ordination (as no conjunction is used). It is not subordinate to the main verb.

Opposing this view, Meyer (2012) observes that converbs do not take subordinating conjunctions, but they cannot combine with a finite verb by the coordinating conjunction, either, cf. 2:22.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{19}\) Ethiopian currency is referred to as ‘birr’.

\(^{20}\) However, they take the coordinating conjunction in order to combine with other converbs. According to Meyer (2012), this happens when the converbs are used to perform a clause-chaining function.
Instead, Meyer considers converbs to be ‘inherently subordinate’ because they cannot function as main-clause verbs, except when occurring with an auxiliary verb.\(^{21}\) They are syntactically dependent on a reference verb, be it a finite main-clause or subordinate verb or a verbal noun (see also Baye 2008:140-144). In 2:23a, the converb occurs with the auxiliary -all. In 2:23b and 2:23c, it occurs with the subordinate verb sajjagānjn and the verbal noun/infinitive mäblat.

### Amharic

**Amharic (2:23a)**

\[
\text{INE} \ \text{anbāssa} \ \text{gādįjj-Ø-all-āhu} \ \\
\text{I} \ \text{lion} \ \text{kill}:\text{CVB-1SG.GEN-NPST-1SG} \\
\text{‘I have killed a lion.’} \ (\text{Baye 2008:143})
\]

**Amharic (2:23b)**

\[
\text{agār-u-n} \ \text{zur-o} \ \text{s-ij-abāk’a} \ \\
\text{country-DEF-ACC} \ \text{go.around:CVB-3MSG.GEN} \ \text{SUB-3MSG-finish:IPFV} \\
\text{Gondar} \ \text{tāk’āmmāt’-ā} \ \text{sit:PFV-3MSG} \\
\text{‘After he finishing traveling about the country, he settled in Gondar.’} \ (\text{Leslau 1995:362 in Meyer 2012:171})
\]

**Amharic (2:23c)**

\[
\text{sārk’-o} \ \text{mā-blat} \ \text{nāw} \ \text{nāwr} \ \text{nāw} \ \\
\text{steal:CVB-3MSG.GEN} \ \text{NMLZ-eat} \ \text{taboo} \ \text{COP:NPST-3MSG} \\
\text{‘It is taboo to eat stolen (food).’} \ (\text{lit. to eat having stolen}). \ (\text{Meyer 2012:171})
\]

In particular a construction such as 2:23a above is called a ‘compound gerund’ in Leslau (1995). Similarly, Meyer (2012) treats the combination of a converb and a tense auxiliary as a periphrastic construction that is grammaticalized into a compound verb to form present/past perfect.\(^{22}\) He argues that the converb is still dependent on the auxiliary, just as main verbs are. He further suggests that instead of giving a present/past interpretation for the perfect, the auxiliaries might be used to encode epistemic modality: “actual

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\(^{21}\) This is not always the case, as will be shown later.

\(^{22}\) The converb can also combine with modal auxiliaries. As indicated in Meyer (2012:181, fn13), it combines with jiħonāl ‘will be(come)’ to “denote that the speaker is not fully convinced whether an event took place in the past”.

42
(relevant at the moment of utterance) and non-actual (not relevant at the moment of utterance)”.

Furthermore, Kapeliuk (1997:496) observes that the compound verb with -all is often used by speakers on the radio as the real present in announcing the opening of the broadcast. That is, the compound imperfect (2:24b) is replaced by the compound converb (2:24a) as it might always be conceived of as the future tense.

Amharic

(2:24a) ahun zena-w-n jāmmir-ān-all  
now news-DEF-ACC begin:CVB-1PL.GEN-NPST  
‘Now we begin broadcasting the news.’

(2:24b) ahun zena-w-n inni-djāmmir-all-ān  
now news-DEF-ACC 3PL-begin:IPFV-NPST-3PL  
‘Now we will begin broadcasting the news.’ (Kapeliuk 1997:496)

Such combination of a converb with an auxiliary verb is not unique to Amharic. Similar constructions are attested in other languages, such as Tamil. According to Bisang (1995:158), in Tamil (Dravidian) a (stative) converb followed by iru ‘be’ is used to form the progressive aspect (cf. 2:25a). In Palula (Indo-Aryan), a combination of a converb and a present tense auxiliary encodes a resultative (Liljegren 2008:222-224) (cf. 2:25b). (Recall also the Kirghiz [Turkic] zatat ‘lie’ in example [2:8]).

Tamil (Dravidian)

(2:25a) kumaar eŋkala viṭṭ-t-il taṅk-i iru-kkiŋ-aaŋ  
now we(OBL) house-LOC stay-CVB be-PRS-3MSG  
‘Kumar is staying in our house.’ (Bisang 1995:158)

Palula (Indo-Aryan)

(b) mar-i hín-u tas xudaáí ubax-íi  
die-CVB be.PRS-MSG 3SG.ACC God forgive-3SG  
‘He has died, may God forgive him.’ (Liljegren 2008:222)

As already mentioned in 2.1.1, sometimes converbs alone (accompanied by a rising-falling tone in their last syllable) can function as finite verbs, i.e. they function as main verbs. Consider heda in 2:26a and tärtoɲɲ in 2:26b’ (Leslau 1995:363-364; also Habte-Mariam 1973:115).
Amharic

(2:26a) nägr-a-ɲ hed-a
tell:CVB-3FSG.GEN-1SG.OBJ go:CVB-3FSG.GEN

‘Having told me she went.’ (Habte-Mariam 1973:115)

(b) lämɨn al-mät-t’a-h-m

why NEG-come:PFV-2MSG-NCM

‘Why didn’t you come?’

(b’) man t’ärt-o-ɲɲ

who call:CVB-3MSG.GEN-1SG.OBJ

‘Who invited me?’ (i.e. ‘No one invited me.’) (Leslau 1995:364)

Habte-Mariam (1973) simply states that such constructions are interchangeable with the perfective (e.g. hedäcc in 2:26a). Leslau (1995) gives a more elaborate explanation of the phenomenon. He asserts that such constructions occur when the verb is associated with a thought expressed in a previous statement, when it is used as an answer to a question, when it is used in an expression of a wish, or when it is used as an interrogation (with/without an interrogative particle) or jussive. Meyer (2012:169-170, fn9) states that this construction is not well understood yet. Chapter six is an attempt to account for this phenomenon.

2.1.2.1.2. Converbs in Argobba

Hetzron (1972) and Leslau (1997) state that Argobba and Amharic are similar in that they have a special verb template for the converb.23 Argobba, however, adds the element -d- to the stem, followed by the accusative ending and the possessive marker to form säbr-d-ä-u, which becomes säbrido.24 The element -d- is assumed to diachronically arise from an older -t-. Hetzron (1972), citing Leslau (1959), explains that -d- is the element *-tä- that appears in Amharic converses for verbs that have lost their third radical. In the following example, t is used in place of j in 2:27a and instead of ? in 2:27b.25

23 Other languages with a special verb template for the converb include Tigrinya and Ge’ez (Leslau 1966:611; 1970b:12). Azeb (2006:410), citing Hetzron (1975:113), states that Central and Western Gurage languages and Gafat have it, too, although with limited applications.

24 ɨ is probably an epenthetic vowel.

25 .t is not only restricted to converses. It crops up in the infinitive and intensive forms as well. (Hetzron 1972:136-137, n76; Baye 2006:194):
Amharic

(2:27a) k’ärr-ä > k’ärt-o
remain:PFV-3MSG remain:CVB-3MSG GEN
‘He remained.’ ‘He having remained…’
- Semitic root *k’rj

(b) sämma-Ø > sämt-o
hear:PFV-3MSG hear:CVB-3MSG GEN
‘He heard.’ ‘He having heard…’
- Semitic root *smʔ

Argobba is said to extend the use of -d- to all the verbal classes. Augmentation by -d-, however, seems to be a feature observed in the sub-dialect L described by Leslau, but cannot account for the formation of converbs in all the Argoba varieties. The converb form of il’a ‘eat’ (going back to bälla) in the sub-dialect A is not formed with -d-. Note that this is the only verb with a converb form quoted in SURVEY, as pointed out by Leslau (1997).26 A few illustrations for both dialects are given in Table 4.27

Table 4: Argobba (Aliyu Amba)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dialect L</th>
<th>Dialect A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3MSG</td>
<td>bäldo</td>
<td>bäj’o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>bäldihum</td>
<td>bäj’äxum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>bälíc</td>
<td>bäj’e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(bäldä-ce &gt; bälíc)28</td>
<td>(Leslau 1997:135)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Shonke/T’ollaha variety, tri-consonantal and quadri-consonantal verbs form their converbs by geminating their last root consonant.29 Biconsonantal verbs add a dummy consonant c in the position of the third root consonant, which is also geminated (Wetter 2007:100). This is illustrated in Table 5.

Regarding Amharic, Baye (2006), citing Beyene (1972) and Haylu and Bender (1978), takes this as a regular phonological process in stem derivation. Vaux (2002), citing Broselov (1984), considers it to be ‘a default epenthetic consonant’.


27 The remaining sub-dialect is designated as dialect B.

28 c may be the result of the combination of d plus j (säbrîc) (Hetzron 1972:101).

29 Recall that lengthening of the last consonant is only restricted to the first person in Amharic.
The converb in Aliyu Amba Argobba has no negative form (Leslau 1997:53). The negative meaning of the converb (cf. *hed-d-o-mm* in 2:28) is expressed by the negative perfect (e.g. *alhedaw*) or imperfect.

The converb expresses a subordinate action/circumstance that precedes that of the main verb. Additionally, the tense of the converb is conditioned by the tense of the main verb (Leslau 1966:611; 1997:53). Wetter (2007:104-105) also states that the temporal and aspectual interpretation of the converb in the Shonke-T’ollaha variety is determined by the tense and aspect of the subsequent verb. Consider the following examples from Aliyu Amba where the reference verb has past and non-past tense in 2:29a and b, respectively. Examples 2:29c and 2:29d are from Shonke/T’ollaha varieties, where they exhibit a past and non-past tense, respectively.

---

30 Expressing a preceding action/circumstance is also the case in Tigrinya and Ge’ez converbs (Leslau 1966:611).
The above examples further show that convert verbs can adjoin to both main (2:29a, c) and subordinate (2:29b, d) verbs.

The combination of a verb and the suffix -āl (from the verb of existence (h)alla ‘he is’) is termed a ‘compound gerund/gerundive’ by Leslau (1970b:12; 1997:55) (look at 2:30a, for instance). -āl takes agreement suffixes only in the 3F and 1SG, as well as 1PL (2:30b). It may also change its form because of phonological processes (2:30c). This construction has a resultative meaning: “an action that started in the past but whose outcome continues into the present”. The negative of the resultative is expressed by the perfect (2:30d).

Argobba (Aliyu Amba)

(2:30a) sädbid-ām-āl
    insult:CVB-3PL.GEN-AUX:PRS
    ‘They have insulted (some one)’

(b) sädbid-a-ll-ād
    insult:CVB-3FSG.GEN-AUX:PRS-3FSG
    ‘She has insulted (some one).’
(c) säkîrd-Ø-ul
   drink:CVB-3MSG.GEN-NPST
   ‘He has been drunk’, or ‘He is drunk.’

(d) al-säkkâr-a-w
    NEG-drink:PFV-3MSG-NCM
    ‘He is not drunk.’ (Leslau 1997:54-55)

(cf. Amharic sädb"-all ‘he has insulted [someone]’)

The pluperfect is expressed by the converb plus the auxiliary imbər ‘past’

Argobba

(2:31) anki bâ-hud su fâras lef argizd-ah imbər
       you on-this man horse on ride:CVB-2MSG.GEN AUX:PST
       ‘You! Had you been riding on the horse of this man?’

The same is true for the Shonke/T’ollaḥa variety of Argobba, except that both the converb and the auxiliary take subject agreement suffixes in what Wetter (2007) calls the ‘perfect’ (2:32a-c) and ‘past perfect’ (2:32d)

Argobba (Shonke/T’ollaḥa)

(2:32a) säbirr-o-hall-Ø
       break:CVB-3MSG.GEN-AUX:PRS
       ‘He has broken (it).’

(b) säbirr-äna-ll-ina
    break:CVB-1PL.GEN-AUX:PRS-1PL
    ‘We have broken (it).’

(c) säbirr-a-ll-äcc
    break:CVB-3FSG.GEN-AUX:PRS-3FSG
    ‘She has broken (it).’

(d) säbirr-ix      imbər-ex
    break:CVB-2MSG.GEN     AUX:PST-2MSG
    ‘You(s.m) had broken (it).’ (Wetter 2007:106-107)

2.1.2.2. Converbs in Harari and East Gurage languages
Harari and the East Gurage languages employ a different kind of converb that is called the ‘m-converb’. These languages take the perfective, imperfective, or jussive/imperative verb forms and suffix the elements shown in Table 6, which results in the classification of short and long converses, except

Table 6: Converb markers in Harari and East Gurage languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Short converb</th>
<th>Long converb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zay</td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>-n-im(^{32})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selt’i</td>
<td>-ä or/and -a</td>
<td>-ane or/and -aane(^{33})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolane</td>
<td>-ä(^{34})</td>
<td>-ani or/and -aani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harari</td>
<td>-ma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the above elements in the languages can form a converb with any of the verb forms mentioned above (i.e. perfective, imperfective, and jussive/imperative). A possible exception to this would be -ä in Selt’i, which, according to Hetzron (1972:94), is restricted to the perfective form (overt when the verb ends with a consonant). In the following example, -ä is attached to (the consonant) -t ‘3FSG’ in 2:33b.

Selt’i

(2:33a) sābār-ä

  break:PFV-3MSG

  break:PFV-3MSG-CVB1

(b) sābār-t

  break:PFV-3FSG

  break:PFV-3FSG-CVB1

  (Hetzron 1972:94)

There is a slight variation in Zay between the ‘normal’ perfective and the perfect(ive) the converb is formed out of. Note the difference in agreement markers indicated by bold lettering in example 2:34.

Zay

(2:34) k’ābār-āt-im

  bury:PFV-3FSG-CVB1

  hadān-īt

  cover:PFV-3FSG

  ‘Having buried the corpse, she covered it.’ (Leslau 1999:81)

Note also the following examples, which show short (2:35a) and long (cf. 2:35b) converbs in Zay.

---

\(^{31}\) According to Hetzron (1972:105), the other Gurage languages add suffixes to the infinitive, but this is not attested in the languages discussed in this section. However, there are cases to the contrary, as shown, for instance, for Zay in 3:13b and for Harari in 3:19b.

\(^{32}\) Leslau (1997:172) expresses his opinion that the -n- of Zay can be identified with the n of Selt’i and Wolane.

\(^{33}\) According to Hetzron (1972:93), the long converb in Inneqor takes -ani.

\(^{34}\) Hetzron (1972:108) does not discuss the short converb in Wolane.
Zay

(2:35a) bil-e acʼirākʼ-ā-m ji-hid-āl
work-DEF finish-MSG-CVBII 3MSG-go:IPFV-AUX
‘He will leave having finished the work.’

(b) kʼäcʼi-nā-nim maarāk-nā-nim ji-grāgbī-nā-n-a
kill:PFV-1PL-CVBII capture:PFV-1PL-CVBII 1PL-return:PFV-1PL-FOC-DCM
‘We will return after having killed and having taken prisoners.’ (Leslau 1999:82)

No discussion of a semantic difference between the short and long converbs is found in Leslau (1999) for Zay. Meyer (2006), however, claims that such a difference exists between short and long converbs in Wolane. The long converb is used to emphasize that the events/situations expressed by the converb and the principal verb (dependent or main) are distinct/independent, whereas the short converb is used primarily to express an adverbial modification of the principal verb (the sequentiality is only an implicature).\(^{35}\) Consider the glosses given for the short converb in 2:36a and the long converb in 2:36b.

Woane

(2:36a) rowātʼā mātʼā
rāwātʼ-ā-ā mātʼ(aa)-ā
run:PFV-3MSG-CVBII come:PFV-3MSG
‘He came running.’

(b) rowātʼaani mātʼā
rāwātʼ-ā-aani mātʼ(aa)-ā
run:PFV-3MSG-CVBII come:PFV-3MSG
‘He ran (at a certain place) and then came (after he finished running).’ (Meyer 2006:267)

According to Hetzron (1972:94), the short converb in Seltʼi is limited to the coextensive function. Later (p. 108) he points out that there are instances of the short converb in a consecutive-serial function, as shown in the following ‘artificial example’ (2:37) (elicited without a natural context).

\(^{35}\) Note that short and long converbs also exist in other languages such as Wolaitta. Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:400-401) observe that the short form of the same-subject anterior converb in Wolaitta is mainly used in verb compounding (complex predicates), whereas the long form is used to express manner, sequentiality, aspectual distinctions, and clause-chaining.
Selt’i

(2:37) uhā inc’ā sābār-ā-Ø māt’-ā

he wood break:PFV-3MSG-CVB come:PFV-3MSG

‘Having broken wood, he came.’ (Hetzron 1972:108)

Gutt (1997:929) couldn’t find any data to verify any difference between the use of the short and long converbs in Selt’i. They are said to be interchangeable and show no semantic difference.

The converb normally agrees in aspect with the following verb, but there could be mismatches. So, imperfective verbs can be modified by converbs based on the perfective in Wolane (Meyer 2006:132). In Zay, not only imperfective verbs, but jussive verbs (cf. assic in 2:38) can also be modified by a converb based on the perfect(ive) (cf. inzāhām).

Zay

(2:38) azehullu inz-ā-hā-m arāk’e a-ssic

fever seize:PFV-3MSG-2MSG.OBJ-CVB spirit NEG-drink:IMP-2MSG

‘As you have a fever, do not drink spirits.’ (Leslau 1999:81)

Meyer (2006) states that the two converbs in Wolane (i.e. converbs based on the perfective and the imperfective that are used together with a perfective verb) are almost identical in meaning, but show the speaker’s perspective toward the fulfillment of the actions expressed. That is, while the converb based on the imperfective shows that the action is ongoing (2:39a), the converb in the perfective expresses a completed action (2:39b).

Wolane

(2:39a) baarā jigoornā jisidnaan

baarā j-goor-n(ā)-ā j-sid-n(ā)-aan

ox 1PL-slaughter:IPFV-1PL-CVB 1PL-divide:IPFV-1PL-AUX:NP

‘Having slaughtered (the) ox, we will distribute (the meat).’ (the slaughtering is ongoing)

(2:39b) baarā gooraanā jisidnaan

baarā goor-n(ā)-ā j-sid-n(ā)-aan

ox slaughter:PFV-1PL-CVB 1PL-divide:IPFV-1PL-AUX:NP

‘Having slaughtered (the) ox, we will distribute (the meat).’ (the slaughtering is completed) (Meyer 2006:133)

Converbs are inflected for person, number, and gender in these languages. In Wolane, for instance, they obligatorily agree with the subject, but optionally with the object (Meyer 2006:131). And there is no mention in the literature that converbs take possessive suffixes. In fact, Gutt (1997:928) states that it
is the infinitive that takes the possessive suffixes in Selt’i. The infinitive is dependent and is based on the non-aspectual stem (just like the jussive and the imperative, which are instead independent). Consider the verb *bil* ‘eat’ with the infinitive marker -*ol-/oot* in 2:40.

Selt’i  
(2:40) **bil-o** al-*bil-oot-aka**  
eat-INF **al-ewad-a-ɲ-aan**  
‘He did not tell me whether he had eaten or not.’  
Lit. ‘He did not tell me about his eating or not eating.’ (Gutt 1997:928)

The conjugable and the principal verb can have different subjects (in Wolane usually with long conjuncts). The following examples from Selt’i and Harari illustrate this (see, also, example 2:38 for Zay). In 2:41a, for example, the subject of the conjunct is *isoook* ‘thorn’, while the subject of the reference verb is *amaan* ‘Aman’.

Selt’i  
(2:41a) **isoook** aje-e-ɲ-aane  
*thorn* hit:PFV-3SG-1SG.OBJ-CVB  
‘A thorn stuck in me, but Aman pulled it out for me.’ (Gutt 1997: 947)

Harari  
(b) **mätfeek’är** ji-k’äri-ma sinät fooŋ tāraajh-at  
*playing* 3MSG-be.left:IPFV-CVB *craft* toward incline:PFV-3FSG  
‘Playing is abandoned and she inclines toward crafts.’ (Leslau 1970c:272)

Selt’i conjuncts are specified for aspect (Gutt 1997:928). From the explanation given by Meyer (2006) on the Wolane examples above in 2:39 and also from our discussion on Zay examples in 2:38 above, it is safe to say that this also holds true for Wolane and Zay. However, Zay and Selt’i conjuncts do not express tense, i.e. their temporal interpretation is conditioned by the principal verb (Leslau 1999:81; Gutt 1997:928).

Meyer (2006:133) states that Wolane conjuncts are non-finite (as they do not bear a tense marker in the imperfective). He further adds that the event expressed by the conjuncts always precedes the event expressed by the principal verb. The same is true for Harari (Leslau 1970c:264).

The conjuncts in these TSE languages cannot be called ‘non-finite’ in the strict sense of the word as they can be inflected for aspect and agreement.

36 Cf. Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:428), who state that the conjunct in these languages is formed from a ‘tensed verb’.

52
They are also used for clause-chaining or co-subordination functions (see Meyer 2006 for Wolane). These make them more along the lines of ‘functional equivalents of converbs’ in the sense of Ebert (2008). In this work, the converbs will be generally taken as having dual functions, i.e. both adverbial and clause-chaining functions. The difference among the converbs in these languages (or within a single language) is a matter of degree, and it is better to treat them under the same linguistic category: ‘converb’. 37

One peculiar feature of Harari converbs with regard to finiteness, apart from being able to be inflected for aspect and agreement, is the fact that they can also take the negation marker (cf. alhaarama in 2:42), which might make them less converb-like than the converbs in other TSE languages. Meyer (2006:265), for instance, indicates that converbs in Wolane are restricted to the affirmative, i.e. they do not occur in the negative.

Harari

(2:42) k’uraan-gee al-haar-a-ma ji-waalli-zaal
Quran-place NEG-go:PFV-3MSG-CVB 3MSG-roam.about:IPFV-CONJ

waal-a gir wäj-li-zo
spend.day:PFV-3MSG CONJ woe:JUS-APPL-3MSG.POSS
‘If he did not go to school and spent the day roaming about, woe to him.’
(Leslau 1970c:269)

The status attributed to the converbs varies depending on the nature of the converbs in each language and the orientation of the scholars who have analyzed them. Thus, while Hetzron (1972) claims the converb in Ethio-Semitic is not subordinate to the main verb, Gutt (1997:947) considers Selt’i converbs (‘non-final verb forms’) to be subordinate to either subordinate or main verbs. In example 2:43, the converb hoontaane is dependent on the subordinate verb tiissacim, whereas hoonaane is dependent on isac, which acts as a main verb along with the auxiliary naar.

37 Of course, an alternative solution, which is not pursued in this thesis, would be to check if there is a marked difference between converbs used in adverbial and in clause-chaining functions in terms of subordination using the criteria put forth by Haspelmath (1995).
Similarly, Leslau (1999:81) states that the converb in Zay expresses a subordinate action. Concerning the converb in Wolane, however, Meyer (2006:265) claims they are somewhere in between:

- They are not finite main verbs because they cannot form a main predication on their own.
- They are not subordinate verbs because they are not marked by relational prefixes (subordinators).
- Nor are they nominals (relative verbs, verbal nouns) because they cannot occur in the position of arguments or adjuncts.

Therefore, he gives them ‘co-subordinate verb’ status, i.e. verbs that possess features of both main and subordinate verbs. A syntactic distinction, however, is made between the two types of converbs, i.e. short and long converbs. Thus, while acknowledging their semantic similarity (that ‘the two converbs represent a sequence of states of affairs’), he identifies the short converb (formed by -äi) as being syntactically more subordinate-dependent than the long converb (formed by -aaani).

It is, however, interesting to see that Harari converbs can actually take a subordinator, as shown in the following examples. In 2:44a, for instance, the converb takes the circumfix zit-…-lee.
Returning to the difference between Amharic-Argobba and Harari-East Gurage converbs, it is interesting to read the following diachronic explanation given by Hetzron (1972:111):

It seems that Proto-SE had both the ancient converb and a coordinating particle *-ma of Semitic descent …which could express the same thing. Under the influence of Cushitic, Amharic and Argobba…dropped *-ma completely. In the other languages, *-ma lost its independent particle status and came to form converbs with preceding verbal forms, imitating Cushitic patterns…EG except Zway [Zay] replaced *-ma by the endings -ane/ani, possibly an ancient converb form of the verb *hlw (‘there is’).

However, not every scholar agrees on this historical explanation, as we will see in chapter six. Regarding the element -ä that forms the short converb in Selt’i, Hertz (1972) assumes that it is either a survival of the original -m(a) ending or a representative of the adverbial accusative ending. Meyer (2006:210) is inclined to accept the latter alternative as the possible diachronic explanation for the element -ä in Wolane short converbs.

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38 I have not found any diachronic explanation as to how these languages got (i)jna ‘and’, which in Amharic can be traced back to the time the royal songs were composed (Richter 1997:550). Only Girma (2012:148) presents an idea first proposed by Grover Hudson that the coordinate conjunction might have developed from a demonstrative. Note also that the same form is found in Kambaata (Cushitic), i.e. =nna ‘and’. Cf. bero=nna tecco ‘yesterday and today’ (Treis 2012:99).
2.1.3. Grammaticalization/lexicalization of converbs

Brinton and Traugott (2005) and Traugott (2014) deal with the nature of grammaticalization (or procedural constructionalization) and lexicalization (or contentful constructionalization). They give a list of their similarities (e.g. an increase in schematicity and productivity, and a decrease in compositionality) and differences (e.g. instantaneousness, minimal syntactic expansion, and limited bleaching in lexicalization). The most crucial way for identifying them is to see the end result of the process, i.e. whether it results in the production of functional forms (grammaticalization) or contentful/lexical forms (lexicalization). And this in turn is determined by what one considers contentful and functional form. So, for example, Corver and Riemsdijk (2001) classify prepositions as content words, whereas they are function words for Brinton and Traugott (2005:115), who argue that the development of the English present participle *during* into a preposition is a matter of grammaticalization. Similarly, while Kapeliuk (1997:495) talks of the adverbial (and adpositional) use of Amharic converbs in terms of ‘grammaticalization’, Meyer (2012:175-176.177) considers the converbs that have become adverbs as having undergone ‘lexicalization’. Thus, what determines labeling the development of the converb as grammaticalization or lexicalization is the type of function/use it has and the orientation of the particular scholar. Here, generally, adverbial use of the converb will be considered as belonging to the domain of lexicalization and adpositional use to grammaticalization.

Haspelmath (1995:37) states that converbs can grammaticalize into adpositions, subordinating conjunctions, and applicatives. Bisang (1995) adds that they can be used in the formation of lexical juxtapositions (i.e. when verbs form a new polysyllabic verb whose meaning cannot always be known from its parts), resultatives, directionals, and TAM markers. Liljegren (2008) also discusses various extended uses of the converb in Palula (Indo-Aryan) such as a hearsay marker and a manipulee marker in causative constructions. In 2:45a, *jari* ‘do’ and *naosu* ‘fix/repair’ juxtapose and create a new meaning: ‘do over’; in 2:45b, *geʒ* is the converb form of *ge*-x ‘say, speak’ and grammaticalizes as a conjunction; in 2:45c, the converb *nimirntu* ‘lift’ has a directional meaning ‘up’; and finally, in 2:45d the converb *maní* ‘it has been told’ (related to the verb *mané* ‘say’) in Palula grammaticalizes into a hearsay marker to indicate reported (but not self-experienced) information (Liljegren 2008:193, 231).
Japanese (Japonic)
Lexical juxtaposition (-i stem converb form)
(2:45a) jari naosu
do fix, repair
‘do over’

Khalkha Mongolian (Mongolic)
Conjunction
(b) aav margaj ir-ne geʒ med-ne
father tomorrow come-TAM CONJ know-TAM
‘He knows that the father will come tomorrow.’

Tamil (Dravidian)
Directional
(c) paapu avaḷai orumṟai nimir-ntu paar-ṭṭ-aaṇ
Babu she:ACC strangely lift-CVB look-PST-3MSG
‘Babu looked up at her strangely.’

Palula (Indo-Aryan)
Hearsay
(d) se áak bakaraāl phoō the aʃāk’ de manį
3SG INDF shepherd boy to love be:PST HSA
‘She was in love with a shepherd boy.’ (Bisang 1995:158, 163, 171; Liljegren 2008:231)

The manner converb in Beja is also worthy of mention here. Vanhove (2013) states that the manner converb, apart from its predicative use in clauses (adverbial, completive, and relative clauses), is used as a (lexicalized) adverb, adposition, a cognate object, and a (verbal) adjective. Some examples are given below, where ʔakir ‘be strong’ in 2:46a lexicalizes as an adverb ‘really’, abaj ‘go’ in 2:46b as an adposition ‘toward’, and katʔama in 2:46c as an adjective ‘broken’.

Beja (Cushitic)
(2:46a) uu=tak ʔakir-a mha-jee
DEF.SG.M:NOM=man be.strong-CVB.MNR be:startled-CVB.SMLT
‘The man was really surprised.’

(b) abaj a-tar=t
go\INTENS.CVB.MNR 1SG-turn.aside\REFL=COORD
‘I made a detour toward him, and…’
Converbs in TSE languages also show similar features, i.e. they come to acquire different lexicalized and/or grammaticalized functions/meanings. Leslau (1995:365, 373-374) and Meyer (2012) deal extensively with this issue in Amharic. Meyer (2012), in particular, shows that Amharic converbs take a lexicalized function as a (time and manner) adverb (cf. 2:47a), a relational noun (i.e. adposition preceded by the prefix kä-) (cf. 2:47b), and are involved in the formation of lexicalized verbal compounds (i.e. lexical juxtaposition) with the reference verb by which the resulting semantic meaning cannot always be straightforwardly generated from the semantics of each verb (2:47c). They also have a grammaticalized function as a conjunction/complementizer (cf. 2:47d, e) and a benefactive focus marker (i.e. in a construction that emphasizes the beneficiary of a verbal event and based on a copula with a converb clause of the verb ‘say’ as complement) (cf. 2:47f).

Amharic
Adverb
(2:47a) ine [alf-o alf-o] järmän i-hed-all-ah
1SG pass:CVB-3MSG.GEN ~ FREQ Germany 1SG-go:IPFV-NPST-1SG
‘I go to Germany occasionally.’

Relational noun (adposition)
(b) Relational phrase Gloss Source
kä-...ansito ‘starting from (time/place)’ anässa ‘raise’
kä-...k’ät’t’ilo ‘next (time/place)’ k’ät’t’älä ‘continue’

Lexicalized verbal compound
(c) wul-o addär-ä
spend.the.day:CVB-3MSG.GEN spend.the.night:PFV-3MSG
‘stay/last for a long time’

Conjunction
(d) bal-wa-n ti-wädd-äw-all-äcc,
husband-3FSG.POSS-ACC 3FSG-love:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ-NPST-3FSG
‘She loves her husband; however, she does not heed him.’

hon-o-m a-tti-säma-wi-m
become:CVB-3MSG.GEN-FOC NEG-3FSG-hear:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ-NCM
‘She loves her husband; however, she does not heed him.’
Complementizer
(e) siddist mäto birr bl-a sämm-acc
six hundred birr say:CVB-3FSG GEN hear:PFV-3FSG
‘She thought she heard “six hundred birr.”’

Benefactive focus
(f) ine jämm-i-taggäl-äw l-antä bijj-e
1SG REL-1SG-struggle:IPFV-DEF for-2MSG say:CVB-1SG GEN

näw COP:NPST.3MSG
‘That I am struggling is for the sake of you!’

Note that the converb and the principal verb in lexicalized verbal compounds cannot usually be separated by other linguistic elements. Converb-based adverbs vary with regard to agreement: most fossilize the 3MSG agreement suffix (2:47a), others show strong preference for it, and still others must obligatorily agree with the subject (awk’o ‘know > deliberately’). Converb-based adpositions also tend to use an invariant 3MSG subject. The conjunctions honom (2:47d) and dägmo ‘add > also, in addition’ take only a default 3MSG subject. Note also that the complementizer bla in 2:47e agrees with its subject, 3FSG.

In this context, Getatchew (1983a:165) points out that there used to be a ‘double introduction’ of quotations involving two verbs of saying that is disappearing in this century. Here is an instance of this, cf. bilo & sil.39

Amharic
(2:48) wäld fit’ur bil-o s-i-l al-ä
son creature say:CVB-3MSG GEN CONJ-3MSG-say:PFV say:PFV-3MSG
‘He said that the son was created.’ (Appleyard 2003:116-117)

The use of the verb say as a complementizer (and as a quotative) is a widespread phenomenon cross-linguistically (Heine & Kuteva 2004). Consider 2:49a where the verb bé ‘say’ is used to show ‘purpose’ (or ‘cause’) in Ewe. Compare also a related example from Amharic in 2:49b.

39 s- is an allomorph of ijjä- ‘while’ or an iterative marker, which occurs with imperfective verbs, whereas ijjä- occurs with perfective verbs. As a matter of fact, allä ‘be’/’exist’ is the only verb in the perfective that can take s- (Leslau 1995:661, 668).
Ewe (Niger-Congo)

(2:49a) ́d̄ogo ́be ye-á- ḗu nú
he-go:out (say) LOG-SUBJUNCT-eat thing
‘He went out in order to eat.’ (Heine & Kuteva 2004:266)

Amharic
(b) läi-gänzäb bil-o agäbb-∅-at
for-money say:CVB-3MSG.Gen marry:PFV-3MSG-3SG.OBJ
‘He married her for money.’ (Leslau 1995:626)

In Argobba, converbs may function as an adposition, a complementizer/subordinator, and an adverb, as shown in 2:50a, b, and b’, and 2:50c and c’, respectively. Examples 2:50 b’ and c’ are from the Shonke-Tollaha variety, and the rest from the Aliyu Amba variety (Leslau 1997:53-54, 95; Wetter 2007:105-106).

Argobba
Adposition
(2:50a) tä-ˈiwwah ansid-o istä
from-morning begin:CVB-3MSG.Gen until

muʃed diräs bägi-ju-n ji-zor-āl
evening until sheep-DEF-ACC 3MSG-look.for:IPFV-AUX
‘He looks for the sheep from morning until evening.’

Complementizer/ subordinator
(b) kibir tä-hon-a jemmird-o
rich CONJ-become:PFV-3MSG begin:CVB-3MSG.Gen

bis hon-a
avaricious become:PFV-3SG
‘Since he became rich he became avaricious.’

(b’) bä-hand-gi ∅-xon-mäś xädir
at-one-place 3MSG-be:IPFV-CONJ Saturday

gäʔar-u-li-na bijj-äm al-āj
make:IMP-2PL-APPL-1PL.OBJ say:CVB-3PL.Gen say:PFV-3PL
‘They said, “Make it Saturday for us so that it can be at one place.”’

Adverb
(c) äʃit’ k’om-ic i-hed-äll-uḥ
a.little wait:CVB-1SG.Gen 1SG-go:IPFV-AUX-1SG
‘I shall go after a while.’
According to Wetter (2007), the converb in Argobba also forms a ‘complex verb’ with the principal verb (cf. hinjicce ‘take’ and mät’illäw ‘come’ in 2:51b resulting in the meaning ‘bring’). The uses in 2:50b and 2:51a are instead labeled ‘circumstantial or adverbial connotation’ in Leslau (1997:54). Such examples are related to the grammaticalization of the verb ‘take’ or ‘seize’ into the causative or comitative marker discussed in Heine and Kuteva (2004). An example of the comitative use of the de ‘take’ in Twi (Niger-Congo) is given in 2:51c.

Argobba
Complex verb
(2:51a) bäk’lo nidd-o mät’t’ä
mule hold:CVB-3MSG.GEN come:PFV:3MSG
‘He came with a mule.’

(b) ?an mäjora hinjicce-Ø-mät’-ill-äw
I elder take:CVB-1SG.GEN 1SG-come:PFV-AUX-1SG
‘I will bring the elders.’

Twi (Niger-Congo)
Comitative
(c) o-de né nnípa fôro bépow
he-(take) his men ascend mountain
‘He ascends a mountain with his men.’ (Heine & Kuteva 2004:287)

Regarding Harari, Leslau (1970c:264-265) lists some of the ‘circumstantial or adverbial’ uses of the converb. As indicated in the translation, the converbs in 2:52a, a’ have an adverbial use, whereas the converb for ‘say’ presented in 2:52b, b’ has a ‘complementizer’ function, marking, as it does, a direct speech.

Harari
Adverb
(2:52a) islaam ji-rgäbgi-ma j-oolbaa-m-eel
muslim 3-return:IPFV-CVB 3-eat:IPFV-NCM-NEG.AUX
‘A Muslim will not eat of it again.’

40 Niddo is pronounced as widdo in another dialect.
(a’) zä-mäʃ-a-ma k’aac’i-be zi-duŋ-a musaafir
CONJ-be.late:PFV-3MSG-CVB out.side-from REL-come:PFV-3MSG travellor
‘A merchant who came late in the evening from outside (of the city).’

Complementizer

(b) gee usuʔ gee ji-li-ma ji-t’ärh-ä-hāl
gee man gee 3MSG-say:IPFV-CVB 3-call:IPFV-3MSG-AUX
‘The Harari calls her by saying ‘gee’.’

(b’) ji-l-u-ma järgäbg-al-u
3-say:IPFV-3PL-CVB answer:PFV-AUX-3PL
‘They answer saying…’

Note that what is labeled as ‘adverb’ with the meaning ‘again’ in 2:52a is related to what Heine and Kuteva (2004) refer to as ‘iterative’ function, as in itinacoka ‘return’ in 2:53.

Kikuyu (Niger-Congo)

(2:53) i-ti-na-coka kù-rǐa
c10-NEG-PST-return INF-eat
‘They (the cattle) did not feed again.’ (Heine & Kuteva 2004:260)

Similar cases are observed in East Gurage languages. In Zay, conversbs are used as complementizers (i.e. marking the direct speech baŋnim ‘where it was’ in 2:54a); and adverbs (cf. ‘together’ in 2:54b); and function as a causative or comitative (cf. with an intransitive verb mät’ ‘come’ in 2:54c), a function similar to the one labeled ‘complex verb’ in Wetter (2007) for Ar-gobba. Note the long verb functioning as an adverb in 2:54b.

Zay
Complementizer

(2:54a) b-aŋni-m baal-ä-m t-a-j-tisaal
in-where-FOC say:PFV-3MSG-CVBI CONJ-NEG-3-ask:IPFV

bärär-ä-m bā-k’ile wādāk’-Ø
run:PFV-3MSG-CVBI on-cliff fall.off:PFV-3MSG
‘…Without asking where it was, he ran so fast he fell off a cliff.’

Adverb

(b) täsbsäb-nä-nim ji-tfik’āri-nā-n-a…
be.gather:PFV-1PL-CVBI 3-play:IPFV-1PL-FOC-DCM
‘We will play together.’
Causative (or comitative)

(c) bärt inz-ä-m mät'-∅
    stick hold:PFV-3MSG-CVB come:PFV-3MSG

‘He came with a stick.’ (Leslau 1999:82, 175)

Consider also the following Wolane example (2:55), taken from the text samples provided in Meyer (2006:326), where the converb dälästä ‘be late’ is used as an adverb ‘late’.

Wolane
Adverb

(2:55) Ɂarbaaɲɲoo dälsɛ äʃākk
    rabbit belly-3SG.Poss suspicion

gābejtaani bingwaaj jaalej
    enter:PFV-3SG-3SG.OBJ-CVB LOC-way-DEF REL-exist:PFV:3SG-DEF

dufā titk’aat’ir dälästä mät’aat
    grass.tuft SUB-3SG-knot:PFV be.late:PFV-3SG-CVB come:PFV-3SG

‘...the rabbit (f), who had become suspicious, was knotting the long grass together which was standing in tufts along the way, and (thus) arrived late.’

Finally, Hetzron (1972) lists some instances of the ‘coextensive’ function of converbs in Selt’i. Gutt (1997:936) also notes that Selt’i most often uses converbs to express adverbial meaning. Below are adverbials (2:56a, a’) and complementizers (in quotative construction marking direct speech [2:56b] and cognitive process [2:56b’] uses of the converb).

Selt’i
Adverb

(2:56a) uhā hullimgiz fāj-e sābār-ā
    he everything finish:PFV-3MSG-CVB break:PFV-3SG

‘He broke everything completely [= finishing].’

(a’) c’uuloo-j komo baal-a mat’-a
    child-DEF quick:IDEO say:PFV-3MSG-CVB come:PFV-3MSG

‘The child came quickly.’

---

41 No explanation exists regarding the element -e.
Complementizer

(b)  
\[
\text{ba-t-ä} \quad \text{t’ära-t}
\]
\[
say:\text{PFV-3SG-CVBI} \quad call:\text{PFV-3SG}
\]
‘She called saying…’

(b*)  
\[
\text{ba-taaceenaa-j} \quad \text{meelco} \quad \text{sab-ii} \quad \text{ja-sab-a}
\]
\[
in\text{-yesterday-DEF} \quad \text{meeting} \quad \text{people-DEF} \quad \text{POSS-person-ACC}
\]
\[
\text{miåt-a} \quad \text{ja-bad-a} \quad \text{sab} \quad \text{ak’iid-a}
\]
\[
\text{wife-ACC} \quad \text{REL\text{-}take}\text{:PFV-3MSG} \quad \text{person} \quad \text{retribution\text{-}money-ACC}
\]
\[
\text{ja-kfal} \quad \text{baal-a-Ø} \quad \text{aseer-a}
\]
\[
\text{3MSG\text{-}pay}\text{:JUS} \quad \text{say}\text{:PFV-3MSG-CVBI} \quad \text{decree}\text{:PFV-3MSG}
\]
‘The people in yesterday’s meeting made a rule that somebody who marries another man’s wife must pay retribution money.’ (Hetzron 1972:108; Gutt 1997:936, 954)

2.1.4. Conclusion

TSE languages form the converb by using either a special verb template (Amharic and Argobba) or suffixing a marker to a verb (the rest). The morphological, syntactic, and functional features of converbs differ from language to language and show various degree of conformity to the general definition of converbs (e.g. regarding finiteness, the Selt’i converb inflects for aspect and agreement, but not for tense and negation, whereas the converb in Harari can be negated). The tradition of calling them ‘converbs’ will be maintained here. This is by acknowledging the fact that ‘converbness’, like any other linguistic category, is a matter of degree. The inclusion of ‘clause chain’ as one of the functions of converbs is preferable to restricting it to ‘adverbial function’ (cf. Ebert 2008). Besides, as it will be discussed later, the use of converbs as main verbs has a diachronic explanation.

The grammaticalization and lexicalization of converbs is also one of the concerns in Section 2.1. It is pointed out that they take up various functions such as adverb, adposition, lexical juxtaposition, causative, and subordinator/complementizer. Their use in the inceptive construction, the main interest of this thesis, is generally lacking in the literature. Finally, one can say that the converbs in TSE languages belong to the so-called ‘general converbs’ as opposed to ‘special converbs’ because the same verb forms take up various functions, although some tendency toward functional difference is mentioned for the short and long converbs in Selt’i and Wolane.
2.2. The encoding of complex events

This section introduces and discusses some relevant linguistic notions including aktionsart, the inceptive construction, complex predicate, auxiliary, light verb, and the diachrony of light verbs (or more generally complex predicates). Some knowledge of topics will be crucial for understanding the analysis in the next chapter, which is concerned with the encoding of complex events in TSE languages.

2.2.1. Aktionsart/Lexical aspect

As recognized by Butt (1997a) (quoting Chakraborty 1992), Butt (2003), and Bodomo (1997), an event can have three basic phases/parts that are termed variously by different scholars (see Table 7). This thesis will use the terms inceptive, core, and terminative for these components.\(^{42}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Basic phases/parts of events(^{43})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butt 1997a State before the act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or initial stage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal dimension of the act (the event)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State after the act (culmination)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butt 2003 Causing event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caused process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caused result state</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bodomo 1997 Inceptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminative/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accomplishment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In his analysis of complex event structures, Bodomo (1997) considers the expression of the core phase to be obligatory and the expression of the inceptive and terminative phases optional. The optional parts are used to modify

\(^{42}\) Butt (1997a) further discusses the split of the ‘temporal dimension of the act’ into ‘beginning of the act’ and ‘termination of the act’. This account is not taken up here as the relation of these two sub-parts to the ‘initial’ and ‘culmination’ sub-events is not clear. Besides, she does not broach this issue in her later work (2003). Butt (2003) also assumes ‘causality’ to be central among the sub-events. Here, it is the sequentiality of the sub-events that is highlighted.

\(^{43}\) Plungian (1999:313) discusses ‘phasal values’ of a situation and makes a four way distinction in these phases, i.e. inchoative (P begins), continuative (P continues), terminative (P stops), and ‘not begin’. However, his conception of phase is somehow different. He is not concerned with whether a given situation has these phases or not. Consider the following statement:

> These values are concerned with the very fact of the existence or non-existence, respectively, of the situation in question at the point of reference as compared to an earlier moment, rather than with the inner structure of a situation. (p.317)

See also Girma (2005:99-100), who mentions that some verbs, like ‘stop’, ‘begin’, and ‘finish’, may focus on the initial or final part of events.
or further extend the meaning of the core. The first part, the inceptive phase, is a ‘preparatory step’ for the main act to occur. The third part, the terminative phase, shows the endpoint of the core action. He bases this model on Dagaare (a Niger-Congo language with a serial verb construction) in particular. In example (2:57), the verb de ‘take’ is assumed to identify the inceptive phase or form the ‘inceptive serialization’.

Dagaare (Niger-Congo)

(2:57) ayuo da de la a bie zegle kyE
   Ayuo PST INCEPT-take FACT DEF child seat here
   ‘Ayuo seated the child here.’ (Bodomo 1997:7)

Similarly, the Harari verb lahadama ‘grasp’ in 2:58a does not mean that Belay actually grasped Solomon. It rather seems to identify the inceptive phase of the event encoded in mahat‘iw ‘hit’. The basic meaning of the sentence is kept without it, as shown in 2:58b (NB: As will be discussed later, the verb lahadama ‘grasp’ is generalized to be used with other verbs as well).

Harari

(2:58a) bälaj sälämon-u lahad-a-ma mahat’-i-w
   Belay Solomon-ACC grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVB hit:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
   ‘Belay hit Solomon.’
   *‘Having grasped Solomon, Belay hit him.’

(b) bälaj sälämon-u mahat’-i-w
   Belay Solomon-ACC hit:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
   ‘Belay hit Solomon.’ (elic.)

Bear in mind that the number of possible sub-events that events (verbs) should/could be divided into is problematic. Butt (2003) argues that “an event can only be decomposed into a maximum of three potential sub-events” (see Table 7). However, Bohnemeyer, Enfield, Essegbey, Ibarretxe-antunano, Kita, Lüpke, and Ameka (2007:498) mention a case in which Kalam (an East New Guinea Highlands language) does not lexicalize hunting activities in a simple verb and instead employs sequences of four to six ‘conceptual events’.

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44 The term ‘preparatory step or phase’ will not be adopted here, since it has the potential to be interpreted as involving events that may not be part of the ‘complex’ event.
45 Bohnemeyer, Enfield, Essegbey, Ibarretxe-antunano, Kita, Lüpke, and Ameka (2007) employ the notion of Macro-Event Property (MEP) to identify sub-events or the ‘tightness of packaging’ of subevents in a construction, i.e. “A construction has the MEP if temporal opera-
In addition, not every event has all these sub-events. For instance, some may have an endpoint, while others do not. As proposed by Vendler (1957), based on ‘time schemata’, among other things, events (or verbs) can be classified into four classes (aktionsart or actionality, Tatevosov 2002:317), namely,\(^{46}\)

- States: ‘non-dynamic situations’ or ‘quality, being’ (e.g. love, know),
- Activities: ‘open-ended processes’ (e.g. walk, swim),
- Accomplishments: ‘processes which have a natural end point’ (e.g. read the book, make a chair), and
- Achievements: ‘near instantaneous events which are over as soon as they have began’ (e.g. die, reach, find)

(definitions according to Rothstein 2004:6)

Other formulations of verb classes or actionality have been proposed. Tatevosov (2002), for instance, finds it useful cross-linguistically to have a somehow different list of actionality meaning labels, which mainly includes state, (single) process (= activities), entry into a state, entry into a process, and multiplicative process. ‘Entry into a state’ is when a situation results in a state (e.g. *At that moment the door opened.*), whereas ‘entry into a process’ is when a situation results in a new process (e.g. *At that moment the water boiled.*). Additionally, he used the label ‘multiplicative process’ to refer to situations “that repeat many times with the same participants and occupy a single time span.” (p.332) (e.g. He is coughing).

Seemingly synonymous verbs across languages show variations in their aktionsart or actional properties across languages. For instance, the verb for ‘lie down’ in Mari is ‘strong telic’ (= accomplishment), but ‘weak inceptive-stative’ (refers to stative phases of a situation existing after the culmination point) in Bagwalal (Tatevosov, 2002:388). In connection to this, it is important to mention Meyer’s (2014) attempt to specify the lexical aspect/aktionsart of two verbs in Amharic: *dàrrása* ‘reach’ and *tänña* ‘sleep’. *Dàrrása* is assumed to have “an inherent end point plus a preceding situation”, whereas *tänña* ‘sleep’ has “a starting phase (‘lay down’ “sic”) and a following situation (‘remain in this position’)”. Thus, the English *reach* and the Amharic *dàrrása* ‘reach’ seem to have different aktionsart properties.

\(^{46}\) Vendler (1957:146-147, 149) uses ‘time stretch’ to distinguish between accomplishment/achievement (definite) and states/activities (indefinite), as well as activities/achievement (continuous) and states/achievements (not continuous).
Aktionsart has an effect on or interacts with other components of the grammar, such as grammatical aspect. For instance, in English, achievements (cf. *arrive* in 2:59a) cannot occur with the verbs ‘finish’ and ‘stop’; states (cf. *know* in 2:59a’) and achievements (cf. 2:59a’’) cannot be in the progressive aspect. Consider also examples 2:59b, b’, b’’ for the effect of tense in English where the stative verb *believe* acquires ‘entry into state’ in the simple past, as in 2:59b’, but always has the ‘state’ reading in the simple present, as in 2:59b’’.

### Aspect

(2:59a) *The guest stopped/finished arriving.*  
(a’) *John is knowing the answer.*  
(a’’) *John is spotting his friend.*  

### Tense

(b) Macbeth believed in ghosts for years.  
(b’) Macbeth believed in ghosts when he saw Banquo.  
(b’’) Macbeth believes in ghosts.  

However, there are cases in which aspectual properties seem to change. For example, as shown in sentence 2:60, achievement verbs (cf. reach) may appear in the progressive aspect.

(2:60) We are reaching the mountaintop.  

Such cases are attributed to various factors, including the context, the internal structure of the direct object, plurality of the subject (Rothstein [2004:5]; see also Tatevosov [2002:333], which identifies the plural argument as giving the sentence its ‘distributive’ reading). This lends support to the idea that what matters is the analysis at the level of verb phrase, not just the sole verb (Rothstein 2004, after Verkuyl 1972; 1993). Note also that this was already suggested by Vendler (1957:144-145), who, for example, pointed to the effect of ‘a mile’ in making a difference between ‘running’ (activity) and ‘running a mile’ (accomplishment).

The interaction of lexical and grammatical aspect in Amharic grammar has also been briefly discussed in Meyer (2014) and Girma (2005). According to

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47 This in a way relates to DeLancey’s (1982) account of the relation between ‘viewpoint’ and aspect. He argues that in many languages perfectives are seen as ‘terminal’, while imperfectives and progressives are ‘non-terminal’.  
48 Rothstein (2004) further deals with ‘shift operations’ that derive one verb class from the other (see also Tatevosov [2002:349-350] for ‘actionality changing process’ or ‘compositionality theory of aspect’). Vendler (1957) has also made a similar statement: “many activities (and some accomplishment and achievements) have a ‘derived’ state sense” (p.152).
the latter, the perfective refers to the beginning and culmination of an event, and the converb shows the result state. Meyer (2014), for his part, claims that the perfective refers to the result/completion of an action, while the imperfective renders an ongoing or habitual activity. Besides, the perfective has a past reading with dynamic verbs (cf. 2:63a), but stative verbs are either not combinable with perfective or get a present reading instead (cf. 2:61b). In the imperfective, stative verbs have either a future or a habitual reading. Dynamic verbs may, in addition, denote an ongoing situation.

Amharic

(2:61a) sábbär-u
break:PFV-3PL
‘They broke.’

(b) c’ällăm-ä
be(come).dark:PFV-3MSG
‘It is dark.’ (Meyer 2014:3, 5)

Finally, it is reported that perfectives can also have a future reading when the event is considered absolutely certain to happen in the imminent future. Consider mät’t’a’h ‘come’ in 2:62 below.

Amharic

(2:62) k’öj- mät’t’a”h!
k’oj-Ø mät’t’a-hw
wait:IMP-2MSG come:PFV-1SG
‘Wait – I will be back in a minute.’ (lit. I came) (Meyer 2014:6)

2.2.2. The inceptive construction

The literature on event structures, like Bodomo (1997), indicates the possibility that each of the three sub-events discussed above could be spelled out by distinct verbs. In the inceptive construction, which is the main focus of this thesis, the first of these sub-events, the initial phase, is identified by a separate verb. Wiklund (2009) gives 2:63 as an example of an inceptive construction from Swedish.
De Vos (2005:32) uses the term ‘contiguous coordination’ under pseudo-coordination (a coordination of two verbs that behave as one semantic unit where the first verb modifies the second verb) to describe similar examples in English and Afrikaans. The function of the preceding verbs, like went in example 2:64 as markers of the inception of the action of the following main verb, leads him to claim that they play an aspectual role, i.e. ‘prospective aspect’, which shows “the period of the event that relates to the preparatory phase of the event, the ‘run up’ to the event”.

(2:64) *John went* and read the constitution!
   ‘John actually read the constitution’  (De Vos 2005:32)

Wiklund’s terminology ‘inceptive construction’ is adopted here, as ‘inceptive serialization’ and ‘contiguous coordination’ are not general enough to be used as a cover term in that they refer specifically to a serial verb or a coordinate construction; but not to a converb such as in example 2:58a above. Wiklund (2009:213) views the complex event structure in Swedish as “a biclausal structure or minimally partially separate event structures”. She treats the linking element *och* ‘and’ as a subordinating conjunction (p.184), whereas the English *and* is argued to be a coordinating conjunction by De Vos (2005:4).

49 The term ‘construction’ will be used in this thesis for the ‘same type’ of constructions both within and across languages that have comparable function and form, hence converb, serial, and coordinate constructions. It can be regarded as the loose sense of the term as used by construction grammarians like Goldberg (2003:222): “two constructions in different languages can be identified as instances of the same type if and only if they serve a closely related function and form”.

50 Croft (2012:348) compares constructions like the following and claims that the construction with the coordinating conjunction (cf. ib) denotes two events, since it maybe interpreted that a person other than the speaker is bringing the book home, i.e. the speaker only takes the book (see also Bohnemeyer, Enfield, Essegbey, Ibarretxe-antunano, Kita, Lüpke, & Ameka 2007:505 for the MEP in conjunction with *and*). Such an interpretation does not exist in example ia.

Yoruba (Niger-Congo)
(ia) *mo mú iwé wá ilé*
   I took book come home
   ‘I brought a book home.’
Regarding Semitic languages, I should mention Dobbs-Allsopp (1995), who discusses the use of the verb *k'wm* ‘to arise, stand’ as indicative of the ‘ingressive aspect’ (a phasal aspect) in Biblical Hebrew. Ingressive aspect “entails reference to the inception or initiation of a situation, often times focusing more specifically on either the onset of a situation or the initial temporal phase of the nucleus of a situation” (p.31).\(^{51}\) Consider example 2:65.

\[(2:65) \quad k'amtî \ ?ānî liptooah lēdōdī\]  
‘As I started to open to my beloved’  
(Cant 5:5, Dobbs-Allsopp 1995:43)

Dobbs-Allsopp bases this on the notion of Freed (1979), where events are assumed to potentially consist of an onset, nucleus, and coda (comparable to inceptive, core, and terminative). The onset of an event is “a temporal segment which takes place PRIOR to the initial temporal part of the nucleus of that event” (Freed 1979:31) in Dobbs-Allsopp 1995:44). However, he seems to lump together two aspects of the construction. Butt (1997b) and Wiklund (2009) notes the seemingly overlapping meaning of the verbs in the inceptive construction (2:66a) and other verbs (or auxiliaries) with inceptive meanings, such as *lag* in Urdu (2:66a’) and *begin* in English (2:66b) below. They explain that other such verbs denote the beginning of the whole event (external aspect [Wiklund 2009:211 fn23]) or embed “the event structure of another predicate under their own event structure”, while the verbs in the inceptive construction “focus on the point of inception in the event structure of a predicate” (Butt 1997b:128).

**Urdu (Indo-Aryan)**

\[(2:66a) \quad \text{anjum jaag par-ii} \]  
anjum.F=NOM wake fall-PRF.FSG  
‘Anjum woke up suddenly.’

\[(a') \quad \text{anjum so-ne lag-ii} \]  
anjum.F=NOM sleep-INF.OBL be.attached-PRF.FSG  
‘Anjum began to sleep.’  
(Butt 1997b:127-128)

\[(b) \quad \text{mo mú iwé, mo sì wá ilé} \]  
I took book I and came home  
‘I took the book and I came home.’

\(^{51}\) Dobbs-Allsopp (1995) uses the word ‘ingressive’ to mean the same thing as ‘inceptive’ and ‘inchoative’ aspect. This is how such aspects are viewed in this thesis too. Note, however, that some scholars, such as Tatevosov (2002), make a distinction between these aspect types, “‘Inchoative’ is taken to denote the beginning of a state, ‘ingressive’ refers to the beginning of an atelic process, and ‘inceptive’ is associated with telic process” (Tatevosov 2002:335).
The verbs employed in the inceptive construction carry some nuances. They may encode volitionality and surprise or a counterfactual reading.\footnote{Surprise is ‘the emotion experienced when encountering ‘unexpectedness’ or triggered by ‘expectancy violations’ (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006). A speaker who is surprised may use various means to convey the emotion: by employing ‘surprise reaction tokens’ like oops, hell, wow, but also by other vocalized ways, such as ‘That’s amazing!’ A speaker may also use ‘surprise source turns’ to elicit surprise in the listener, which include ‘negative observations’ and ‘extreme case formulations’ (e.g. using words like all, only, just, very, even).}

How does the inceptive construction encode surprise (as a way of expressing the surprise that is experienced or to elicit surprise in the listener)? Wiklund (2009) and De Vos (2005) provide their own accounts of the presence of such nuances in Swedish and English, respectively.\footnote{Surprise reading is viewed as a special type of inceptive reading that arises from the mismatch between the punctual or result property of the core verb, which is considered to have no internal duration (cf. vann ‘win’ in 2:67a) and the focus given to its inception stage by the preceding verb or, alternatively, from the mismatch between a sudden (punctual) onset reading contributed by a punctual preceding verb (cf. tog ‘take’ in 2:67b) and a following core verb that has internal duration. She adds that pragmatic inference about the nature of punctual events is also an important ingredient for the surprise reading.}

\begin{itemize}
\item He began to win (local contests) \hfill (Wiklund 2009:211)
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item In Plungian’s (1999:318) verbal phase account, it is the continuative that is commonly expressed together with other values (or nuances) such as counter-expectation. The inchoative and terminative rarely co-occur with counter-expectation.
\item Their main goal in the article is, rather, to show that surprise is also an interactional achievement and that surprise tokens “are not involuntary spontaneous emotional eruptions but interactionally organized performances” (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2006).
\item We find no such discussion for Dagaare and Biblical Hebrew in Bodomo (1997) and Dobbs-Allsopp (1995).
\item Note that Rothstein (2004:26) points out that achievements may be preceded by a preparatory activity, although this is not entailed by aktionsart /lexical aspect/.
\item Wiklund (2009) is particularly interested in the verbs gick ‘went’ and tog ‘took’ in constructions like 2:67 above. However, there is a seemingly similar construction in the language called the ‘posture verb and verb construction’ in Brocker (n.d:1), which involves a posture verb (‘sit’, ‘lie’, or ‘stand’), a coordinating conjunction (‘and’), and another verb (or) and has an imperfective reading. Consider står ‘stand’ in example i which is used as a progressive marker.
\end{itemize}
for his part, states that the inceptive construction in English has in itself a durative interpretation. He attributes the presence of surprise (unexpectedness) or counter-expectational interpretations to the context, cf. 2:68 below.

(2:68) Mary went and read a book.

The above sentence may have a counter-expectational or surprise reading if, for example, Mary never reads. The focus given to the initial stage of the act of reading stresses its unexpected nature and yields a surprisal reading (De Vos 2005:101).

Other nuances that the inceptive construction is sometimes found to encode are volition/deliberateness and pejoration. Consider the English verb went in 2:69b below, where it is shown to connote deliberateness on the part of the performer and the annoyance of the speaker because of that, i.e. it is a pejorative expression. Note, however, that the pejorative interpretation may be absent in predications like read, which are neutral in terms of social acceptability (De Vos 2005:101).

(2:69a) Mary got pregnant.

‘Mary became pregnant.’

Swedish

(2:67a) han gick och vann två miljoner dollar
he go.PST and win.PST two million dollar
‘He [SURPRISE][INCEPT] won two million dollars.’

(b) Peter tog och läste en bok.
Peter take.PST and read.PST a book
‘Peter [SURPRISE][INCEPT] read a book.’

(2:69a) han gick och vann två miljoner dollar
he go.PST and win.PST two million dollar
‘He [SURPRISE][INCEPT] won two million dollars.’

Swedish

(i) jag står och fiskar
I stand and fish
‘I am fishing.’ (Brøcker n.d:1)

57 In fact, the verbs he deals with are ‘sit’, ‘come’, and ‘go’, which could contribute to the durative interpretation.

58 Volitionality is defined in Kudrnacova (1998:80), citing Webster (1978), as “merely the act of making a choice or decision”. This strong sense of the word does not seem to be available in example 2:69b. The sentence can work for cases in which Mary may not genuinely intend to get pregnant, but perhaps become careless with her birth control pills.
(b) Mary went and got pregnant.
   ‘Mary played an active role in at least some stage of becoming pregnant.’
   (De Vos 2005:100)

De Vos (2005:101) again considers such nuances as parasitic to the construction, i.e. to the focus given to the inceptive sub-event. An ‘indirect’ explanation is also given in Fauconnier’s (2013) work, which is primarily concerned with the presence of non-volitionality in the completive. Consider the following example (2:70) from Kannada, where the completive marker bit’t’a gives a non-volitional reading, as indicated in the gloss ‘accidentally/unintentionally’.

Kannada (Dravidian)

(2:70) avan doose tind-bit’t’a
       3SG pancakes eat.PST.PTCP-COMPL.PST.3SG

‘He ate up the pancakes (accidentally/unintentionally).’
   (Fauconnier 2013:39)

It is argued that a shift in emphasis from the starting point of the action toward its endpoint and unexpected completion contribute to the non-volitionality (also surprise, suddenness, manage-to) reading. Parallel to this, in Barai (Trans-New Guinea), emphasis (i.e. ka) on the patient (= endpoint of the action) brings about non-volitionality (cf. 2:71a), whereas emphasis on the agent (= starting point) brings about volitionality (cf. 2:71b) (see DeLancey [1982:172] for the connection between source/agent/onset, on the one hand, and goal/patient/termination, on the other hand).

Barai (Trans-New Guinea)

(2:71a) a bu-ka oefiad-a
       2SG 3PL-INTENS  sadden-3PL

‘You really saddened them (unintentionally).’

(b) a-ka bu oefiad-a
       2SG-INTENS  3PL  sadden-3PL

‘You really saddened them (intentionally).’ (Fauconnier 2013:50)

De Vos (2005:44) states that in pseudo-coordinations the two conjuncts must share the same morphological specification (tense, aspect, modality), which he calls the ‘sameness principle’. Bodomo (1997) also makes a similar remark using the term ‘predicate integrity’, where verbs that express a complex event structure modify their semantics in order to give the resulting construction a unique semantic and morphosyntactic identity. In fact, they
are considered to exemplify “constructions in which two or more verbal predicates semantically lexicalize a complex event structure and have a tendency to function as a single grammatical unit” (Bodomo 1997:6). Thus, it is important to briefly look at discussions on what constitutes a complex predicate in general.

2.2.3. Complex predicates

Complex predicates are generally conceived of as monoclausal structures formed out of two or more predicates that have the same TAM, share subject and object, and are unable to be negated separately (Butt 1997b; 2003; Bril 2007; Croft 2012). Butt (2003) and Croft (2012:343) further include the presence of a causal relation between each sub-events (or their participants) in the defining criteria.

However, there is variation with regard to how well the data conforms with such a characterization. Bril (2007), for example, deals with complex predicates in Oceanic languages. In what she calls ‘hierarchized complex predicates’ predicates do not obligatorily share the same subject; in co-rankig complex predicates, the object may be different, and if so it is left unmentioned; also, in the language Loniu, the mood marking on the verbs differs within the same complex predicate, namely resultative constructions. The same is true for negation. In Urdu aspectual complex predicates and in Oceanic complex predicates, the same negation has scope over all the predicates (Bril 2007; Butt 2003), whereas the ‘permissive’ complex predicate in Urdu can be negated separately or as a unit (Butt 1997b). So it seems that it is not mandatory for complex predicates to fulfill all the defining features mentioned above.

There is also variation with regard to finiteness among components of a complex predicate. In South Asian languages, it is the second verb or ‘explicator’ that is finite (marked for tense and aspect), not the preceding main verb that harbors the core verbal meaning (Masica 2001). Seiss (2009) even takes such marking of the ‘explicator’ or the ‘light verb’ to be one distinguishing feature of complex predicates. However, in semantically equivalent

59 Although talking about serial verb construction, Aikhenvald (2006) states that the monoclausal status of a clause cannot be violated if its components can be questioned and focused separately (e.g. Ewe).

60 Croft’s (2012) conception of causal relations seems to be between the sub-events (direct causation) and also between the participants (with their roles, such as agent and patient) (causal structure).

61 Hierarchized complex predicates comprise a main verb and a modifying verb. Co-ranking complex predicates belong to an open class and do not determine the semantic and syntactic properties of another predicate in a sequence (Bril 2007).
expressions, like the following English sentence, both verbs can be finite (Masica 2001).

(2:72) He went and did it (Masica 2001:252)

De Vos (2005:2, 39) also states that the first conjunct in English ‘contiguous coordination’ is semantically subordinate to the second one (as the second conjunct is aspectually dependent on the first one) (see also Dobbs-Allsopp [1995:40] for comparable cases in Biblical Hebrew).62 Bril (2007), working within the RRG framework, considers both components of a complex predicate in Oceanic languages to be co-subordinate as they share ‘operators’ (tense, illucutionary force…) at all levels. They are defined as lexically autonomous, but in the process of lexicalization or grammaticalization, they may lose their autonomy (cf. the characterization of complex predicates by Aikhenvald [2006:5] that they are “syntactically combined, but where neither component can function on its own”).

The linear order of complex predicates may be sequential and logically iconic as in co-ranking complex predicates and the aktionsart (inceptive, terminative) verbs in Oceanic languages (Bril 2007:280) (and also in Biblical Hebrew), or not as in Hindi where only the second verb denotes the initial/final event and/or add any other semantic/grammatical effect (Butt 1997a:1). It is further indicated in Masica (1991:326) that the ordering can be reversed in such languages. Thus, it is plausible to take word order as a property of the complex predicate, as Dahl (2001a:100) suggests for constructions in general, although it cannot be taken as a defining feature.

Regarding degree of integration in complex predicates, there are various observations in the literature. Bril (2007:268) states there is no pause between the predicates in several Oceanic languages that she investigated, which indicates a high degree of integration between them. Aspectual complex predicates in Urdu, likewise have a higher degree of integration than permissive complex predicates. They may not be discontinuous, which permissive complex predicates can be. The parts of the complex aspectual predicate can only be separated by emphatic particles and markers of negation or

---

62 Dobbs-Allsopp (1995:41) does not use the term ‘complex predicate’ to express the ingressive aspect construction in Biblical Hebrew. His characterization of this aspect is:

- It includes two identically inflected verbs
- There is only one subject
- The two verbs function as a single semantic unit.
- The aspect verb takes the main verb as a complement
- The aspect verb must precede its complement
- And only the subject(s) can intervene between them
scrambled when a component is topicalized (Butt 1997a; 1997b; Masica 1991). Slade (2013:552-553) also reports that Hindi compound verbs (CVs) can be interrupted by a particle, pronoun, or full noun phrase, whereas Nepali compound verbs cannot. Consider the occurrence of the emphasis marker to and khaanaa ‘food’ in between the two predicates in Hindi (2:73a), while it is ungrammatical to have the emphasis marker ta in Nepali (2:73b).

Hindi (Indo-Aryan)

(2:73a) khaa to khaanaa lij-aa
  eat.ABS EMP food take.PFV_PTCP-MSG
  ‘(I/he/she) did eat food.’

Nepali (Indo-Aryan)

(b) *mai-le bhaat khaa-i- ta sak-em,…
  I-AGT food eat-ABS- EMP finish-PST.MSG
  ‘I did eat food.’  (Slade 2013:552, fn24; 553)

This can be interpreted in many ways.63 Slade (2013:553) says that “The inseparability of Nepali CVs suggests that they are either formed in the lexicon, or else composed at a much lower level of syntax than Hindi CVs”. Degree of integration could also contribute to the difference between an ‘auxiliary’ and a ‘light verb’. Kuznetsova (2006), for instance, argues that a first verb meaning ‘take’ in pseudo-coordination is a (modal) auxiliary and, under the minimalist framework, considers the presence of an adverb srazu ‘at.one.stroke’ between the predicates in the following Russian example (2:74) as a piece of evidence, since it shows that vzial ‘took’ moved to T (Tense) like an auxiliary does.64

Russian

(2:74) nu vot, vzial srazu i ugadal
  what here took at.one.stroke and guessed
  ‘What, you guessed at one stroke.’ (Kuznetsova 2006:5)

Should such predicates in complex predicates be regarded as auxiliaries or light verbs? Section 2.2.4 will define these terms and elaborates on this issue.

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63 One may see this in terms of ‘informational value’ in the parlance of Dahl (2001a), i.e. if each component of a complex predicate is informationally rich, it is treated as a prominent expression and gets independent articulation, and so may not be required to be tightly aligned.

64 However, this argument is weak, as word order is instead very flexible in Russian (Östen Dahl, p.c.).
2.2.4. Auxiliary vs. light verb


An example is Bengali fele or phello ‘throw/throw away’, which is taken as a light verb that shows ‘completion’ or ‘clear end point’ in Basu and Wilbur (2010) (cf. 2:75a), but labeled an auxiliary that marks the completive in Fauconnier (2013) (cf. 2:75b).

Bengali/Bangla (Indo-Aryan)

(2:75a)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>john</th>
<th>aam-ta</th>
<th>khe-ye</th>
<th>phel-lo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>mango-CLF</td>
<td>eat-PFV</td>
<td>throw-PST.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘John ate the mango.’ (he finished the mango) (Basu & Wilbur 2010:2)

(b)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ami</th>
<th>b’h at</th>
<th>puke</th>
<th>fele</th>
<th>c’h i-l-am</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>rice</td>
<td>burn.PFV.PTCP</td>
<td>COMPL.PFV.PTCP</td>
<td>be-PST-1SG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘I burned the rice by mistake.’ (Fauconnier 2013:36)

Other terms used for the first verb in these constructions are ‘special auxiliaries’ (Masica 1991) and ‘auxiliary (or vector) verbs’ (Hook 1993). Others, such as Butt (1997a; 1997b; 2003), Wiklund (2009), and Seiss (2009), treat these and related verbs in other languages as light verbs. What criteria can be used to distinguish auxiliaries and light verbs then?

One scholar who tries to give an answer to that question is Butt (2003). One distinguishing feature is form. Light verbs have a form identical to a main verb, i.e. a verb shows no formal difference between its use as a light verb and as a main verb. Hook (1993) expresses this by saying that light verbs are homophonous with members of their inventory of basic lexical meaning. Also related is the fact that light verbs can appear with different tense and aspect forms, and so show no deformed paradigm (Seiss 2009). It is reported that no loss of morphosyntactic properties or phonological form characterizes Oceanic complex predicates (Bril 2007), and this might be an argument for considering their secondary verbs to be light verbs rather than auxiliaries. However, as pointed out by Butt, auxiliaries may also be form identical at an early stage of development. Conversely, Slade (2013:537, 560) argues that Indo-Aryan light verbs may not be form identical with their main verbs (e.g. Nepali light verb baksinu ‘bestow’ may appear in its reduced form s-, Hindi
saknaa ‘to be able to’ lacks a full verb counterpart). Slade argues for a manifold, rather than a binary division between light verbs and auxiliaries, claiming that they both have much in common. Note also that Brinton and Traugott (2005:108) report that auxiliaries like *may and *must in English have undergone very little phonological reduction.

Light verbs impose selectional restrictions on the kind of verbs they co-occur with (Butt 1997a; 1997b; 2003; Seiss 2009), while auxiliaries do not. The reason is that they are only partially emptied of their lexical content. Co-occurrence restrictions are observed in English pseudo-coordination involving the verbs *go, *sit and *come. De Vos (2005:43) notes that not only are these verbs few in number, but they also coordinate with a restricted number of second conjuncts. In addition, he asserts that the lexical verb is intrinsically related to the pseudo-coordinative verb. The ungrammaticality of 2:76b results from the clash between a static-natured first conjunct and a dynamic second predicate.

(2:76a)  John could SIT and run programs on his computer all day.
(b) *John could SIT and run to school.

In the following Urdu example, the verb *uthii ‘rise’ has a light verb use when it co-occurs with the verb *gaa ‘sing’ in 2:77a, but not with *soc ‘think’ in 2:77b. What determines the choice is attributed to the verbs’ lexical semantics (Butt 1997a; also Masica 1991).

Urdu (Indo-Aryan)

(2:77a)  naadjaa  gaa  uth-ii
  Nadja.F.NOM  sing  rise-PFV.FSG
  ‘Nadja fell to singing (suddenly).’

(b)  naadjaa  soc  uth-ii
  Nadja.F.NOM  think  rise-PFV.FSG
  ‘Having thought, Nadya got up.’ (Butt 1997a:2, 5)

No such combinatorial properties are claimed to exist in auxiliaries, although it is acknowledged that they may not combine with every main verb (Seiss 2009). See also Kuteva (2001:13), who points out that auxiliaries may show variation in terms of whether, for example, they are used with all verbs in the language or not, whether adverbials are allowed in between the auxiliary and the main verb, and whether gender/number agreement holds between the subject/object and the components of the auxiliary structure. These features somewhat blur the difference between auxiliaries and light verbs.
Complex predicates generally encode various meanings or functions. So, in Oceanic languages, co-ranking complex predicates have sequential, purposive, and resultative functions, cf. 2:78a, whereas the hierarchicized ones have aspect and aktionsart (inceptive, terminative), circumstantial (manner, location, direction, posture, property, value, overlapping actions), and modality, depictive, comitative, simulative functions (cf. 2:78b) (Bril 2007). These meanings arise depending on the classes of verbs/predicates, their syntactic slot, and contextual inferences. Examples are given below from Paamese (Vanuatu), where 2:78a is an instance of a co-ranking complex predicate (i.e. sequential action), whereas 2:78b is an instance of a hierarchicized complex predicate where the \( v_2 \) \textit{gaih} ‘real-hard’ is a modifying verb.

Paamese (Vanuatu)

(2:78a) kirovaatei kiihol
ki-ro-vaa-tei kii-holu
2SG.DIST.FUT-NEG.1-go-NEG.2 2SG.DIST.FUT-dance
‘Won’t you go and dance?’

(b) inau namuasik gaih
inau na-muasi-ko \( \emptyset \)-gaiho
1SG 1SG.REAL-hit-2SG 3SG.REAL-hard
‘I hit you hard.’ (Bril 2007:270)

The function of the predicational element of a complex predicate is one of the criteria used to distinguish between a light verb and an auxiliary. That is, auxiliaries are understood to give information about tense, aspect, and mood (Butt 1997b; Seiss 2009). In fact, this is how Heine (1993:70) defines an auxiliary: “a linguistic item covering some range of uses along the verb-to-TAM chains”, although he acknowledges that it also depends on the theoretical framework one adopts (p.11).\(^{65}\) Light verbs, on the other hand, can change valency, or assign case (Butt 1997b; Seiss 2009). In the following example 2:79b from Urdu, the use of \textit{par} ‘fall’ results in a change of case from ergative to nominative.

Urdu (Indo-Aryan)

(2:79a) us=ne gaanaa gaa-yaa
PRON=ERG song.M=NOM sing-PFV.MSG
‘He sang a song.’

\(^{65}\) Anderson (2006:37) has a broad definition of auxiliary that includes expressing adverbial semantics of ‘very’ (emphasis) and suddenness (unexpectedness) (along with others like TAM, polarity, and voice) as part of the function of an auxiliary. However, this is not taken up here since it implies that emphasis and surprise are verbal categories, too.
In languages like Urdu, light verbs are shown to mark suddenness, forcefulness, inception, boundedness, intensity, completion, volitionality, and benefaction (Butt 1997b; 2003). For Butt (1997b; 2003), the difficulty of knowing the precise semantic contribution/nuance, i.e. fuzzy meaning, and the aktionsart information about the event of the main verb are among the things that characterize complex predicates.

Butt (1997) generally labels the above functions, such as marking suddenness or giving aktionsart information, ‘internal event modification’, whereas Masica (1991; 2001), dealing with similar data, prefers to call it ‘(manner) specification’. Note also that Hook (1993) identifies ‘perfectivity’ as one of the functions of light verbs, although it is argued to be absent in Butt (1997), (see also Masica 1991).66

2.2.5. Diachrony

One might wonder why certain verbs come to mark the inceptive sub-event, or more generally, why they are chosen for the formation of complex predicates. De Vos (2005) attributes the function of the verbs go and sit as ‘prospective aspect’ markers (or their use in English contiguous coordination) to the lexical items themselves. He claims that these verbs are semantically bleached in the first place and are already being used for similar function in other contexts, such as for the verb go in 2:80 below.

(2:80) John is going to die.

‘John is about to die.’ (De Vos 2005:32)

Butt (2003) notes that light verbs in the Indo-Aryan language family have been stable for thousands of years (and also mentions the stability of English verb-noun complex predicates such as take a chair) and comes to the conclusion that the use of light verbs is a matter of polysemy, not grammaticalization. She further claims that light verbs do not develop into auxiliaries (see also Seiss 2009). Other scholars have a different opinion. Masica (1991:328-329) treats light verbs as a case of ‘incipient grammaticalization’ that would ultimately develop into ‘grammatical marker’. He speculates that the contin-

66 Light verbs are considered to be semantically equivalent to preverbs or adverbial particles like out in throw out (Butt 2003:16-18, see also Masica 1991:328, ).
uous marker (rah-) in New Indo Aryan (NIA) may have completed this process. Slade (2013) argues explicitly against Butt’s stability claim and provides some of the same counter-examples from Hindi and Nepali (e.g. the Hindi light verb rahnaa ‘to stay, to remain’ developing into an auxiliary). Similarly, Bril (2007: 292, 304) states that complex predicates are at an ‘intermediate stage’ between multi-clausal constructions and highly integrated morphological expressions. She gives examples from South North New Caledonian languages where complex verbs are known to develop into compounds, adposition, and affixes.

2.2.6. Converbs in complex predication

Converbs, being verbs, are known to play part in the formation of complex predicates as well. The discussion of converb-based complex predicates in Wolaitta (Omotic) is relevant here (Azeb, 2010). Wolaitta complex predicates involve a converb (v₁) that in most cases contributes the basic lexical meaning and a subsequent verb (v₂) that carries TAM, encodes transitivity, and modifies the converb in terms of manner, direction, intensity, certainty, and duration. In example 2:81, gel- ‘enter’ and ṭagg- ‘give up’ form a complex predicate in which the action of happening with ‘speed and unexpectedness’ is expressed.

Wolaitta (Omotic)

(2:81) nu k’aála-n nu k’aála-n waass-ifdí b-i ídí he
1PL GEN word-LOC 1PL GEN word-LOC cry-SS:S:CVB go-SS:A:CVB₂ that

ʔifitt-áa súg-ídí gel-í ṭagg-ana
door-ACC push-SS:A:CVB₂ enter-SS:A:CVB₂ give.up-FUT

yáa-g-ífsi
that-say-3MSG.PFV

‘(The donkey) said (to the cat, chicken and dog), “We will go each crying/shouting in our respective language and push that door (open) and enter (the house) quickly.”’ (Taani Wolqaama, p.11) (Azeb 2010:269)

Only short (i in 1; ídí is its long counterpart) and same subject anterior converbs are employed for this purpose. They keep this order (v₁ < v₂), and no linguistic element intervenes between them. In addition, the verbal complex can be nominalized. In the next chapter, the role of converbs in the formation of complex predicates, more specifically in the inceptive construction, in TSE languages will be discussed.

67 Recall, for instance, Wetter’s (2007) remark on the ‘complex verb’ (or causative function of a converb) in Argobba, although he does not discuss it in detail.
2.2.7. Conclusion

We have seen that events can be seen as consisting of three basic sub-events, namely an inceptive, core, and terminative sub-events. This is not the same thing as grammatical aspect, although it interacts with it. The inceptive construction, a kind of complex predicate, highlights the inceptive sub-event and has associated nuances like pejoration and surprise. However, the exact cause for the rise of such interpretations appears to differ among languages. The distinction between light verbs and auxiliaries in terms of the formal, functional, and selectional properties discussed above will be maintained throughout the thesis. At the same time, the fact that the two categories may share a number of features and also the possibility that auxiliaries may diachronically arise from light verbs is acknowledged.
III. Converbs in complex predication in TSE languages

This chapter is on the inceptive construction in TSE languages as mainly marked by converbs, which behave more like ‘light verbs’. Their functions, syntactic features, and diachrony will be discussed in detail. In addition, the terminative construction, which is linked to the inception construction, will be briefly examined.

3.1. Converbs marking inception

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapters, in TSE languages, there is a construction that involves the verbs ‘take’, ‘grasp’, ‘get up’, and ‘pick up’ (see Table 8 for the list).\(^{68}\)

Table 8: Instances of converbs (in the PFV for 3MSG.SBJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>Argobba</th>
<th>Selt’i</th>
<th>Zay</th>
<th>Harari</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get up</td>
<td>tänästo</td>
<td>innesido</td>
<td>nák’an</td>
<td>nák’am</td>
<td>haf baajama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bidigg bilo</td>
<td>biddig bi(l)do</td>
<td>biddig baalane</td>
<td>nuk’ul baaläm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick up</td>
<td>ansito</td>
<td>ansido</td>
<td>nák’àlan</td>
<td>anák’am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bidigg argo</td>
<td>biddig mäŋpido</td>
<td>biddig jaŋane</td>
<td>nuk’ul abäŋäm</td>
<td>haf aajama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasp</td>
<td>jizo</td>
<td>wizdo</td>
<td>enzane</td>
<td>inzám</td>
<td>lähadama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take</td>
<td>wäsdo</td>
<td>ahido</td>
<td>wäsädane</td>
<td>nák’àlam</td>
<td>nása’ama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Forms like the Amharic tänästo and its ideophonic counterpart bidigg bilo correspond in meaning to ‘get up’.

The converbs in the following examples do not independently encode the physical act of picking up, grasping, taking, or getting up as such. Their semantics is bleached and generalized so as to make them function as ‘initial sub-events’ of a number of events, i.e. they are used to identify or call attention to the inceptive part of the event encoded in the subsequent principal/reference verb. They do not identify the core phase of the event, which makes them optional components of the constructions (recall the discussion

\(^{68}\) Other candidates, like the lexeme for ‘go’, were not accepted by consultants as verbs used in the inceptive construction.
on encoding of complex events in section 2.2). In example 3:1a, for instance, the subject does not have to physically get up in order to rent out the land. Instead, the construction identifies the initial phase of the act of renting construed as if it involves ‘getting up’. The basic meaning of the sentence is retained in 3:1a’ despite the fact that the converb is absent.

Selt’i – ‘get up’
(3:1a) j-al-ät-äj hadd t’ind dácc
REL-exist:PFV-3FSG-DEF one pair land

näk’-Ø-ani awäkäb-Ø-et
get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII rent.out:PFV-3MSG-3FSG.OBJ
‘He rented out a piece of land.’

*‘He got up and rented out a piece of land.’ (elic. using an Amharic example from a blog)71

(a’) j-al-ät-äj hadd t’ind dácc awäkäb-Ø-et
REL-exist:PFV-3FSG-DEF one pair land rent.out:PFV-3MSG-3FSG.OBJ
‘He rented out a piece of land.’ (elic.)

Amharic – ‘grasp’
(b) bä-mäk’w’ätärija jiz-äw järba-w laj
by-chaplet grasp:CVB-3HON.GEN back-3MSG.POSS on

fämt’ät si-j-aräg-u-t
whoop:IDEO CONJ-3-do:IPFV-3HON-3MSG.OBJ
‘When he (the priest) whips his (the disciple’s) back with a chaplet.’

*‘When he (the priest) grasps and whips his (the disciple’s) back with a chaplet.’

*‘When he (the priest) takes the chaplet and whips his (the disciple’s) back.’
(YouTube)72

Note that the converb näk’-Ø-ani is marked by -ani instead of -ane. As shown in Table 5, -ani is a converb marker in Wolane, although the long converb in Inneqor, a variety of Selt’i, is reported to be marked by -ani (Hetzron 1972:93). The consultants for the elicitation come from Dallocha and Me’rab Azernat (Selt’i zone). So, either it is evidence of the effect of language contact between Wolane and Selt’i or of the idiolects of the consultants.

70 ‘One pair of land’ is a unit of land measurement that is equivalent to a quarter of a hectare.

71 http://www.cyberethiopia.com/warka3/viewtopic.php?t=19583&sid=692a54135a34d9f09bd7fe81

72 A YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AG_J0-16VMA) by Ethiopianism.com with the title ‘goofing off in Addis’. The comedians who star in the clip are named Tadesse and Hailu.
(b’) bä-mäk’ʷt’ärija järba-w laj
by-chaplet back-3MSG.POSS on

jämt’át si-j-aräg-u-t
whop:IDEO CONJ-3-do:IPFV-3H-3MSG.OBJ
‘When he (the priest) whips his (the disciple’s) back with a chaplet.’
(elic.)

Harari – ‘grasp’
(c) ʔahad wäk’ti läha-ti-ma doxä
one time grasp:PFV-3SG-CVB make.trouble:IDEO
af-ti när-a
do:PFV-3SG PST-3MSG
‘One day she rocked.’
*‘One day she grasped (something) and rocked.’ (elic.)

(c’) ʔahad wäk’ti doxä af-ti när-a
one time make.trouble:IDEO do:PFV-3SG PST-3MSG
‘One day she rocked.’ (elic.)

Argobba – ‘take’
(d) mängüstu näwaj-in ahid-äm säk’äl-Ø-i
Mengistu Neway-ACC take:CVB-3PL.GEN hang:PFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ
‘They hanged Mengistu Neway.’
*‘They took and hanged Mengistu Neway.’ (elic.)

(d’) mängüstu näwaj-in säk’äl-Ø-i
Mengistu Neway-ACC hang:PFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ
‘They hanged Mengistu Neway.’ (elic.)

It is also tempting to say that the Amharic converb ansɨt- ‘pick up’, which Leslau (1995:359) regards as untranslatable in 3:2 is best understood as a converb used to identify the inception of the action of the reference verb, amät’t’acciw ‘bring’.

Amharic – ‘pick up’
(3:2) ansít-a a-mät’t’-acciw
pick.up:CVB-3SG.GEN CAUS-come:PFV-3SG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She brought it.’
*‘Picking up she brought it.’ (Leslau 1995:359)
Note, however, that in other contexts the converb anṣit- ‘pick up’ can have a full lexical meaning where the agent actually picks up the theme. This makes the sentence ambiguous, i.e. is the speaker actually relating two distinct events or two sub-events? The complex predicate interpretation arises when one highlights the pragmatic effects of volition, emphasis, and surprise. A similar instance is given below from Zay.

Zay – ‘take’

(3:3) jā-bāwu-ja libaṣā nāk’āl-ā-m sādāk’-e-j
    POSS-child-DEF cloth take:PFV-3MSG-CVB1 tear:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
    ‘He tore the boy’s cloth’ (elic.)

This inceptive use should not be confused with the ‘inceptive aspect’ or the ‘ingressive/initiative manner of action’ discussed in Baye (2006) and Richter (1994:539) for Amharic. Among the four sub-aspectual types proposed in Baye (2006), i.e. prospective, inceptive, progressive, and completive, the inceptive aspect indicates the beginning of an event. As noted in 1.1, the auxiliary used to mark this in Amharic is jämmār ‘begin’/‘start’ (cf. example 3:4).

Amharic

(3:4) kāsa inc’āt ji-fālt’ jāmmār
    kāsa wood 3MSG-chop:IPFV INCEPT
    ‘Kassa starts to chop/chopping wood.’ (Baye 2006:199)

Richter (1994) also lists the Amharic verbs jämmār ‘begin’/‘start’, gābb- ‘enter’, and amāt’t’- ‘bring’ under functional verbs (FVs) that are used to express temporal relations or phases of action, i.e. the ‘ingressive/initiative manner of action’.

The function of the inceptive construction cannot be subsumed under this aspect type. I argue that the Amharic verbs jämmār ‘begin’/‘start’, gābb- ‘enter’, and amāt’t’- ‘bring’ denote the beginning of the whole event (cf. Butt 1997b and Wiklund 2009). They basically have distinct functions from the inceptive construction, and it is possible to use both in the same sentence as shown in 3:5a. This also holds for the other TSE languages as well. Consider the Harari and Zay equivalent examples in 3:5b and c, respectively.
Amharic – ‘grasp’

(3:5a) bä-mäkʷt’ärijä jiz-äw järba-w laj
by-chaplet grasp:CVB-3HON.GEN back-3MSG.POSS on

ğämt’ät j-aräg-u-t jämmär
whop:IDEO 3-do:IPFV-3HON-3MSG.OBJ START
‘The priest began to whip his (the disciple’s) back with a chaplet.’ (elic.)

Harari – ‘get up’

(b) haf baaj-a-ma má-mhät’ egäl-e-w
get.up:IDEO say:PFV-3MSG-CVB NMLZ-hit start:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘He began to hit.’ (elic.)

Zay – ‘grasp’

(c) inz-Ø-im bü-t’iffi jo-maat’ jämär
grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVBI by-slap NMLZ-hit start
‘He began to slap (him).’ (elic.)

Apart from marking an inceptive stage, the converbs are also associated with the presence of a volitional act and emphatic/surprisal occurrence of situations, which the above auxiliaries or FVs lack. That is, they are uttered in a way to signal volition, surprise, and emphasis. Examples with the actions of whipping or slapping, as in 3:1b and 3:5 are said when they occur unexpectedly or with a high intensity. Example 3:1a is said in a context in which someone is renting out a piece of land. However, there was not enough land left for the person (or his/her family). The speaker utters the sentence filled with wonder, i.e. wondering why the subject rented out this piece of land that should have been kept in the person’s possession.73 Example 3:1c is a discussion between two individuals about a mad woman. The addressee asserts that she is now becoming peaceful. This assertion conflicts with the speaker’s presupposition. The speaker argues emphatically against this and provides tangible evidence that even recently the woman has disturbed the village (by hitting children, etc.). The topic of example 3:1d is Mengistu Neway, known for a coup that he attempted with his brother Germame Neway in 1960. The place he was taken to or hanged is not a point here and was not mentioned in the conversation. The speaker instead expresses the sad and regrettable action done to this great man. Henceforth, the presence of such nuances would be indicated with emphatic, surprisal.74

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73 As stated in the methodology section, such elicited materials are obtained mainly by using the Amharic instances. In the case of 3:1a, for instance, the subject of discussion in the Amharic version is Lucy (Australopithecus).

74 Recall that some consultants express that the verbs are used for expressive power, suddenness, and mental readiness, while others suggest they are mere sayings and are redundant.
The inceptive construction in TSE languages also displays characteristics usually ascribed to complex predicates. To begin with, the verbs share subject and object (cf. 3:6 a, a’). If they have different subjects, ungrammaticality or a different interpretation results, as in the Selt’i example 3:6b”, i.e. the converb takes up its basic verbal meaning. Recall that a converb heading a subordinate clause may have a subject different from the subject of its reference verb in Selt’i (cf. 3:6c).

Argobba – ‘grasp’

(3:6a) bä-musbäha wizd-o mahat’ s-i-māñ-e
with-chaplet grasp:CVB-3MSG-GEN hit:IDEO CONJ-3MSG-do:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ
‘When he whips him with a chaplet’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

(a’) bä-musbäha wizd-ān jārba-w-n
with-chaplet grasp:CVB-1PL-GEN back-DEF-ACC
mahat’ s-il-māñ-in-e
hit:IDEO CONJ-1PL-do:IPFV-1PL-3MSG.OBJ
‘When we whip him in the back with a chaplet’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic)

Selt’i – ‘grasp’

(b) c’ulo-j enze-t-a bā-t’ifi wok’a-t-āj
child-DEF grasp:PFV-3SG-CVBI by-slap hit:PFV-3SG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She slapped the boy.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

(b’) c’ulo-j enze-t-a bā-t’ifi wok’-u-j
child-DEF grasp:PFV-3SG-CVBI by-slap hit:PFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ
*’She/they slapped the boy.’ (elic.)

Cf. Selt’i – different subject (subordinate clause)

(c) järore bā?lā sir wab-t-āj-aan he-t-n-a
big many grass give:PFV-3SG-3MSG.OBJ-AUX go:PFV-3SG-DISC?-CVBI
bi-d-gääb-a gin sik’l-oo-t-aani75
CONJ-3F-enter:IPFV-CVBI/3SG time hang:PFV-3PL-3SG.OBJ-CVBI
‘When she, goes and enters after having given him a lot of grass, (she, finds out that) he has hanged her,’ (recording)

expressions. It should be clear that the opinion of the latter is not taken up in the present analysis.
75 *Bidgääba could be the Amharic word bitgäba ‘when she enters’. It should have at least been tii-t-gab.
As discussed in Section 2.1.2, object agreement on converbs is restricted in Amharic (Meyer 2012). If the converb and the reference verb have the same object, it is the reference verb that is marked for object agreement. However, this is not an absolute rule and exceptions can be found where the converb takes object agreement (cf. -ɲ in gälamt’-oɲ in 3:7a). There is also an instance in which the converb in the inceptive construction takes an object agreement marker (cf. -at in jîz3at in 3:7b).

Amharic – subordinate clause

(3:7a) iski-säläcc-ä-w bä?-ajn-u jîk’k’b=innä k’ulk’ul
gälamt’-oɲ taw-äɲ
glare:CVB-3MSG GEN-1SG.OBJ leave:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ
‘He glared at me (looking up and down) until he got bored and left me.’
(Chanyalew 2008:148)

Amharic – ‘grasp’

(b) tadja and k’än antä akist-accin in lä-mä-t’äjjäk’
sø-t-hed ine bet ji33-ø-at
Nazreth CONJ-2MSG-go:IPFV I house GRASP:CVB-1SG.GEN-3SG.OBJ

s-ø-at’t’at’m-ø-at àddär-hu
CONJ-1SG-taste:PFV-3SG.OBJ spend.night:PFV-1SG
‘So, one day, when you went to Nazareth to visit our aunt, I spent the night in the house tasting (making love with) her.’ (emphatic, surprisal)
(Bewketu 2012:114)

The converbs do not take the negation marker, not only because this is the feature of Amharic converbs in general (except in the dialect of Gojjam), but also because they do not encode a separate action/event. When the verb form changes into an imperfective and inflects for negation, it takes up its core verbal meaning (cf. sattijiz in 3:8b). Besides, a negation marker on the main verb does not specifically target the meaning/function of the converb. It negates the whole verbal complex, i.e. they cannot be negated separately (cf. ajdälläm in 3:8c).

Amharic – ‘grasp’

(3:8a) jîz-a inkitkit adärräg-äcc-iw
grasp:CVB-3SG.GEN break:IDEO do:PFV-3SG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She broke it into pieces.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)
The same applies to the other languages. In Zay, negating the sentence with the inceptive construction (cf. 3:10a) results in ungrammaticality. Even in Harari, where the converb heading a subordinate clause can be negated (cf. 3:10b), no negation marker is allowed in converses used in the inceptive con-
struc-
tion (cf. 3:10 b’’). When asked to negate sentences like 3:10c, speakers tend to avoid using the converb, as in 3:10c’.

Zay – ‘pick up’

(3:10a) *bäjwu anäk’i-t-im bää-käämbälasä
boy-DEF pick.up::PFV-3FSG-CVB by-slap

al-mät’-it-ej-u
NEG-hit::PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ-NCM
‘She didn’t slap the boy.’ (elic.)

Harari – subordinate clause

(b) wäld-aac-zo awaw baajti-ziju
child-PL-3MSG.POSS shout::IDEO say-3PL.POSS

ji-färku-m-eel-ma aw j-il-zaal
3MSG-bear::IPFV-NCM-NEG.AUX-CVB shout::IDEO 3-say::IPFV-while

Selt’i – ‘grasp’

(c) birc’ik’o-j enze-t-a sibbir aní-t-e
glass-DEF grasp::PFV-3FSG-CVB break::IDEO do::PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She broke the glass.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Regarding TAM, converses in Amharic and Argobba have an invariable form. The TAM of the verb complex is determined by the TAM specified in the reference verb. It is compatible with most TAM markers. So, although
past time reference is most common, future (cf. 3:11a) and present time (cf. 3:11b) references are possible. Similarly, either perfective or imperfective aspect and mood like declarative, exclamative, or rhetorical question (cf. 3:11b) are allowed.

Argobba – future reference
(3:11a) and k’äna wole jā-itjo telekom räʔis innesid-äm
one day also POSS-ethio telecom manager get.up:CVB-3.HON.GEN

k’äbela sāb-u jā-däwlät network t’ebak’-i
village person-DEF POSS-government network expect-AGT

mä-honid jell-a-b-w-o m-aläti
NMLZ-become not.exist:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ-NCM NMLZ-say

dämu a-j-k’är-u77
also NEG-3MSG-remain:IPFV-NCM
‘It is inevitable that one day the manager of Ethio-telecom will say, “the society should not be passive recipients of government’s network.”’
(emphatic, surprisal)
(elic. – Addis Admas, Oct. 23, 2006 E.C, p.8)

Argobba – present reference
(b) hudi biddig bi(l)d-o su-w ijjā-häd-a
here get.up:IDEO say:IDEO-3MSG.GEN man-DEF ITER-go:PFV-3MSG

an-e-w78
NEG.COP:3MSG-NCM
‘Behold, aren’t people going (abroad)? (its easy nowadays).’
(emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

The reference verb may be a main verb or a dependent verb. The dependent verb may be include a verb with a subordinating conjunction (cf. 3:7b), a relative verb (cf. 3:8c), a verbal noun or an infinitive (cf. 3:11a), and another converb. Note that the verbal noun or infinitive may lack subject agreement and become itself less finite than a converb. The converb sometimes takes a fossilized 3MSG form, as in the following Argobba example (3:12).

77 räʔis, but also mäʔul
78 ijjā- ‘ITER’ also ājjā-. And anew ‘he is not’ as ahune’u (see Leslau 1997:35, 55, 100).
Argobba

(3:12) jā-llej-a jīman ṣanṣid-o uṯra ma-hawid
REL-exist:PFV-3MSG deposit pick:CVB-3MSG:GEN payment NMLZ-give

min ji-Ø-behāl-āl79
what 3-PASS-call:IPFV-AUX

‘What do you call giving away the only deposit (we have) as payment? (it is madness).’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

What was said above about the TAM of the verb complex and the interaction of the converb and the reference verb seems to be the case in the other languages as well, except that the converb is marked for aspect (and mood). The converb may agree with the reference verb, or there could be a mismatch, in which case the verb complex takes up the TAM of the reference verb. Here are examples showing agreement and disagreement in aspect between the converb and the main and dependent reference verb. In 3:13a, for instance, both are in the perfective. In 3:13c, the converb is in the perfective, whereas the reference verb is in the imperfective.

Same verb form80
Harari – perfective

(3:13a) mākina-w lāhad-ti-ma hut’ur-bah adgac’-i-teh
car-ACC grasp:PFV-3SG-CVB fence-against smash:PFV-3SG

‘She smashed the car against the fence.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Zay – infinitive/verbal noun

(b) had madabārija maʃullo jo-ank’-i-im jo-walek’-at
one sack maize NMLZ-pick.up-NMLZ-CVB NMLZ-lend-NMLZ

buj-it min buj-it-in
say-NMLZ what say-NMLZ-FOC

‘It is inappropriate to lend one sack of maize.’ (emphatic, surprisal)
Lit. ‘What does it mean to pick up and lend one sack of maize?’
(elic.)

79 jīman, but may be also fema (Leslau 1997:221).
80 The agreement between the converb and the reference verb may not be restricted to TAM. Both verbs may be inflected for the same category like the reciprocal, as evidenced by the following Selt’i example (i).

(i) tinzaz-Ø-one tänakāt-u
grasp.RECP:PFV-3PL-CVBII hit.RECP:PFV-3PL
‘They hit one another.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)
Different verb form

Selt’i: perfective – imperfective

(c) maʔînɨm-ka nāk’-Ø-ani jā-kizb aʃîr
   anyone-3MSG.POSS get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII GEN-fallacious doctrine

j-Ø-astāmir-aan ajam ji-c’elm-aan
   REL-3-teach:IPFV-AUX day 3-get.dark:IPFV-AUX
   ‘The day where anybody teaches the fallacious doctrine will come to an end.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Zay: perfective – infinitive/verbal noun

(d) wajä al-Ø-ak’ātil-u ahi-mi nāk’-hu-m
   it.can’t.be NEG-1SG-be.able:IPFV-DCM now-even get.up:PFV-1SG-CVB

wā-mt’-at-aj gidd-in
   NMLZ-come-NMLZ-1SG.POSS obligatory-FOC

   bi-j-han-bi-j-o
      CONJ-3MSG-become:IPFV-APPL-1SG.OBJ-DCM
   ‘No, I cannot: even my coming now is because I ought to (even now, it was because I ought to that I came).’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic. from Goldenberg 1965:15)

The converb and the reference verb may or may not be adjacent to each other or have a low degree of integration. Other linguistic elements, like the Harari prepositional phrase hut’ur-bah ‘against the fence’ in example 3:13a, the Selt’i noun phrase jā-kizb aʃîr ‘fallacious doctrine’ in example 3:13c, or a complement clause, as in the following Harari construction indicated with bold, may intervene.

Harari – ‘get up’

(3:14) haf baa-ku-ma hoji-k baj-a
   get.up:IDEO say:PFV-1SG-CVB today-TOP? say:PFV-3MSG

baj-a-ma dufan zā-lel-a gaar-in
   say:PFV-3MSG-CVB bed REL-not.exist-3MSG house-FOC

boräde-na ba-ku
   receive:PFV-1PL say:PFV-3MSG
   ‘I said, “Little by little, today we received a house with no bed.”’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic. from Amharic YouTube)82

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81 Wajä may be related to waj ‘worthless, useless’ in Leslau (1999:264).
No high degree of integration is observed between the converb and reference verb in the other type of Amharic complex predicate discussed in Mengistu (2010) (see Section 3.2.3 for more on this). In the following examples, a relativizer j- (cf. 3:15a) and a copular nāw (cf. 3:15b) separate the ideophone from the ‘say’ or ‘do/make’ light verbs.

Amharic – light verb
(3:15a) k’ililt’ j-al-ä-w k’ilabe
melt:IDEO REL-say:PFV-3MSG-DEF butter
‘The butter that melted.’ (Mengistu 2010:304)

(3:15b) k’uc’e’ nāw jämm-i-l-u-t sira tit-äw
sit:IDEO COP:NPST REL-3-say:IPFV-3PL-DEF work abandon:CVB-3PL.GEN
‘They sit around abandoning work.’

Note that the Harari word haf baa-ku-ma in example 3:14 above is itself composed of the ideophone haf ‘get up’ and the converb baa-ku-ma ‘say’. They together give one verbal meaning ‘get up’. This complex verb again comes to be used to mark the inceptive sub-stage. This is the case in all the languages studied here.

The reference verb could also be omitted when it can be recovered from the context. It is mainly verbs of saying that exhibit such behavior. In examples 3:16a, b, and c, they are shown in parentheses in the translations.

Selt’i – ‘get up’
(3:16a) hiine-j anže-t näk’a-t-ané jä-gaar-kä
this-DEF see:PFV-3SG get.up:PFV-3SG-CVB POSS-house-3MSG.POSS

indät bel-Ø jähé-nä-m adenä-jä
lady say:IMP-3MSG > so.then I-ACC-also mother-1SG.POSS

wisäd-Ø-anne t’al-Ø-et-aa
take:IMP-2MSG-CVB throw.away:IMP-2MSG-3SG.OBJ-FOC?

‘Having seen this, the lady of the house (said), “So then, take my mother and throw her (into the jungle).”’ (emphatic, surprisal) (Short story)

82 A YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQqOiEt6OZ6&playnext=1&list=PL8D898A628965DEA4&feature) featuring an interview with singer Maritu Kebede broadcast via ebs
83 http://hornaffairs.com/am/2014/05/28/ethiopia-minister-blame-indian-company-tendaho-project/
84 A short story entitled ‘amat wa mirat’, one of the two texts kindly given to me by Rawda Siraj.
Zay – ‘pick up’
(b) wä-gb-at-ä-j lä-gba-n-o bol-u-nommu
   NMLZ-enter-NMLZ-ACC-DEF 1PL-enter:JUS-1PL-DCM say:PFV-3PL-COP.3PL

jähunu angä bā-gāba-n ireni jā-k’är-∅-i
3PL.HON but REL-enter:PFV-1PL later REL-remain:PFV-3MSG-DEF

min jā-hun b-i-buli hadi jāba
what 3MSG-become:JUS CONJ-3MSG-say:IPFV one patriot

anäk’-ā-m wā-fätt-at-u nukä
pick.up:PFV-3MSG-CVB NMLZ-rebel-NMLZ-COP? it.is

“‘Let’s say we enter.” he said. “But what about those who remain?’”
One patriot (replied). “They shall rebel!” (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Harari – ‘get up’
(c) ahad-ze haf t-il-ma ?an hebälit
   one-3FSG.POSS>DEF get.up:IDEO 3FSG-say:IPFV-CVB I so-&-so

?asir aläk’a-bäh zi-hadär-xu ājen-na-nä-j
ten chief-with REL-spend.night:PFV-1SG hero-COP:NPST-1SG
‘One (says), “I so-and-so, I am a hero who slept with a commander-often.”’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic. from Amharic YouTube)\(^\text{85}\)

Whenever the two verbs appear, they are ordered iconically. That is, the
converb precedes the reference verb. This is illustrated below where the sen-
tence is unacceptable because the converb tinä‘ani comes last, i.e. after the
reference verb batani.

Selt’i – ‘get up’
(3:17) *had-ite eh ebelute k-asir aläk’a ji-jñä
   one-F.DEF I so-and-so with-ten chief 3MSG-sleep:IPFV

hun-ku mift ba-t-ani ti-näk’-ani
become:PFV-1SG woman say:PFV-3FSG-CVBII 3FSG-get.up:IPFV-CVBII
‘One said, “I so-and-so, I am a woman who slept with a commander-of-
ten.”’ (elic.)

The conversbs in Selt’i, Wolane, and Zay are different from the others in that
they are of two kinds, i.e. short and long (which is in fact based on the form
of the converb markers). The data shows that in Selt’i and Zay both the short

\(^{85}\) YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mOLW7S-zMU) of a television
comedy show called ‘Seletet’.
and long converbs are employed in the inceptive construction, although the long converb in Zay is less preferred. The use of long and short converbs is not unexpected at least for Selt’i where the short and long converbs are said to be interchangeable (Gutt 1997:929). There is also a converb in Zay formed from the suffix -ma which is not mentioned in the literature. Remember that -ma is known to be a converb marker in Harari. Consider the following examples in (3:18) below.

Selt’i
Long converb (-ane)
(3:18a) nák’-Ø-ane wâk’-a-j
get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII hit:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘He hit him.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Crass, Girma, Meyer, and Wetter (2004) argue that nu, which was considered to be a copula in Leslau (1999), is rather a mixture of the focus marker -n and the declarative clause marker -u because these elements can be separated, as shown clearly below.

(ii) mäjii-j ji-k’od-i ji-k’od-ii-m
water-DEF 3MSG-fetch:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS 3MSG-fetch:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS-CVB
ji-hodn-ii-n-im ji-hiid-i maar-o
3MSG-cover:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS-CVB 3MSG-go:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS PST-3MSG
‘They used to fetch the (ground) water, cover (the opening), and leave.’
Lit. ‘It used to be left after the (ground) water was fetched and (the opening) covered.’ (record.)
Short converbs (-ä, -a)

(a') c’ulo-j näk’äl-tä bä-t’ifi wok’a-t-äj
child-DEF pick.up:PFV-FSG-CVBI by-slap hit:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She slapped the boy.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

(a’’) hadd ajam enze-t-a räbfa ap-it
one day grasp:PFV-3FSG-CVBI make.trouble:IDEO do:PFV-3FSG
‘One day she rocked.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Zay
Long converb (-nim)

(b) in-e-j at’im ji-näk’li-nim b-i-ni
this-ACC-DEF bone LSG-take:PFV-CVBI onto-eye-3MSG.POSS

där ji-wräwr-äj-lohu
onto LSG-throw:PFV-3MSG.OBJ-AUX
‘I will throw this bone onto his eyes.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic. from Amharic comedy on YouTube)87

Short converb (-m)

(b’) juh säb-i nak’-ä-m ti-j-asumid
here person-DEF get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBI COMP-3MSG-go:IPFV
al-ä-m-il
exist:PFV-3MSG-FOC-AUX
‘Behold, aren’t people going (abroad)?’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

The -ma verb (-ima)

(b’’) anäk’-it-ima uta-j gäfär-t-äj88
pick.up:PFV-3FSG-CVB scream-DEF let.go:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She screamed.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

3.2. Converbs as light verbs

In Section 3.1.1, it was argued that the construction involving the verbs of ‘take’, ‘grasp’, ‘get up’, and ‘pick up’ in TSE languages displays features that can be said to characterize it as a complex predicate. The verbs themselves can also be taken to belong to the category known as ‘light verbs’, as

87 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4S50ffTZPlg
88 anäk’itima or anäk’itima maʔin
opposed to ‘auxiliaries’. This is because they fulfill the criteria outlined in Butt (2003) (also Seiss 2009) that are best known to identify light verbs. These include having a form that is identical with that of a main verb, co-occurrence restrictions, and functions such as marking emphasis, surprise, and volition.

3.2.1. Verb forms

The form of the converbs used in the inceptive construction in TSE languages is identical to the form they take when they head a dependent clause. This is one piece of evidence, albeit a weak one, in support of the argument that they are light verbs rather than auxiliaries. Consider the converbs jinok’um and mānsiʔima in their non-inceptive use.

Zay – ‘get up’

(3:19a) see-caa-j jaw aruut-ä-n jì-nok’-u-m
woman-PL-DEF well night-ACC-FOC 3-get.up:IPFV-3PL-CVBI

jì-foc’-u
3-grind:IPFV-3PL
naar\(^{89}\)
PST-3MSG

‘The women, well, they used to get up in the night and grind (grain).’
(record)

Harari – ‘take’

(b) ?usu-kulum māhawā-zo-w mā-nsiʔi-ma
person-all stuff-3MSG.POSS-DEF NMLZ-take-CVB

dināt-zo-le zi-dij-a-sāʔa
property-3MSG.POSS-to CONJ-come:PFV-3MSG-time

‘When everyone takes their property and comes…’ (record)

The inceptive construction prominently employs converbs. Apart from converbs, other verb forms are also attested, which along with their ability to occur with various kinds of reference verbs, strengthens the light verb analysis. Two such cases will be briefly discussed: the construction with a coordinating conjunction (four instances in Amharic) and with an iterative marker or the conjunction ‘while’ (five instances in Amharic) (see Table 9).

\(^{89}\) jaw ‘well’, which is probably an Amharic word.

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Table 9: The number of distinct example sentences found in Amharic (and especially followed up in the other languages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>Argobba</th>
<th>Harari</th>
<th>Zay</th>
<th>Selt’i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get up</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick up</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasp</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recall that light verbs, as a rule, do not show a deformed paradigm and are not restricted to appearing with one type of tense and aspect form (Seiss 2009). This does not hold for auxiliaries. Hailu (1970) observes that the Amharic modal auxiliaries jihon (‘indicates probability’) and noro (‘expresses assertion of a cause-effect relationship’) take only the shape of an imperfect and a converb, respectively. The present tense marker all(ä) occurs only with the ‘gerundive perfect’ (i.e. converb) and the imperfect. Consider examples 3:20a and b below.

Amharic

(3:20a) almaz birc’ik’k’o ti-säbr ji-hon-all
Almaz glass 3FSG-break:IPFV 3MSG-become:IPFV-NPST
‘Almaz may break a glass.’

(b) jä-fälläg-u-h läkka-ss gänzäb
REL-look.for:PFV-3PL-2MSG.OBJ indeed-TOP money

indi-t-sät’-accäw nor-o-all (> nor’äl)
COMP-2-give:PFV-3PL.OBJ live:CVB-3MSG.GEN-NPST
‘They looked for you so as to give them money.’
‘Indeed, why they looked for you was so that your (you) may give them money.’ (Hailu 1970:4-5)

3.2.1.1. Verbs with a coordinating conjunction

Amharic and Argobba, two closely related languages, display a feature peculiar to them. That is, the light verb and the reference verb can be conjoined by a coordinating conjunction in a manner similar to the one observed in languages like Swedish and English. In example 3:21a, the perfective verb (light verb) wahazät’ is conjoined with the reference verb mähat ’ätê by the coordinating conjunction =enna. The verbs in this ‘pseudo-coordination’

90 läkka ‘a particle indicating surprise of discovery’ (Leslau 1993:10).
take the same verb form, i.e. perfective, conforming to De Vos’ ‘sameness principle’. However, different aspect marking is also attested in Amharic as shown in 3:21b, i.e. imperfective – perfective. Furthermore, the reference verb may not appear overtly (cf. 3:21c).

Argobba – ‘grasp’

(3:21a)  
li-j-\text{n} wahaz-\text{ät}=\text{enna} bā-t’īfi māhat’ā-\text{t-e}  
child-DEF-ACC grasp:PFV-3SG=and by-slap hit:PFV-3SG-3MSG.OBJ  
‘She slapped the boy.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Amharic – ‘get up’

(b)  
wiha li-n-k’āda si-n-wāt’a jā-sārratā-jən-occ-u  
water CONJ-1PL-fetch:IPFV CONJ-1PL-go.out:IPFV POSS-servant-PL-DEF  
gurra and-wa ti-nəs-sa=\text{enna} ine igālit ikko k-asir  
boast one-F 3SG-get.up:IPFV=and I miss FOC with-ten  
alāk’a igāle ga ansola jā-tāgaffā-jū  jāgn-it  
chief mister with bed sheet REL-strip.off.RECP:PFV-1SG hero-F  
na-\text{ŋ} al-\text{ācc}=\text{enna} lela-wa tā-kātt-a …  
COP:NPST-1SG.OBJ say:PFV-3SG=and other-F PASS-follow:PFV-3SG  
‘… (House) servants’ boast when we go out to fetch water:

One said, “Me so-and-so, I am a hero who slept with a commander-of-ten so-and-so.” And the other one following her …’ (emphatic, surprisal) (YouTube)\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{91} YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mOLW7S-zMU) of a television comedy show called ‘Seletet’.
Amharic – ‘pick up’

(c) ɨjjä-bäll-u ɨjjä-t’ät’-u ɨjj-all-ä
CONJ-eat:PFV-3PL CONJ-drink:PFV-3PL CONJ-exist:PFV-3MSG

and-u bidigg j-aräġ= inna abba
one-DEF pick.up:IDEO 3MSG-do:IPFV=and father

to day

abet yes

zare gin mikaʔel min jä-hon-ä-bb-ät k’än
today but Michael what REL-become:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ day

nä-w s-i-l-accäw
COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ CONJ-3MSG-say:IPFV-3HON.OBJ

fit’t’it’ a-j-awk’-u-t-im
stare:IDEO NEG-3MSG-know:IPFV-3HON-3MSG.OBJ-NCM
‘When they were eating and drinking’
one person (said), “Father”
Sp2: “Yes.”
Sp1: “Today, what has become of Michael?”
‘(The father) went blank! He doesn’t know.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (record)

The ‘sameness principle’ of light verbs is in line with the general statement made in Leslau (1995:359) and Motomichi (2001:431-432). That is, the con-

Amharic – conjunction (subordinate clause)

(3:22a) bärr-u-n käft-a wäädä bet
doors-DEF-ACC open:CVB-3FSG.GEN toward house

ti-gäb-all-äcc
3MSG-enter:IPFV-3FSG
‘Having opened the door, she enters the house.’

(b) bärr-u-n ti-käft=inna wäädä bet ti-gäb-all-äcc
doors-DEF-ACC 3FSG-open:IPFV=AND toward house 3FSG-enter:IPFV-3HON-3FSG
‘She opens the door, and enters the house.’ (Motomichi 2001:432)
What is muddling about the ‘pseudo-coordination’ here is that the conjunction is used to link verbs that are used to form a complex predicate. This is in contradiction to Azeb and Dimmendaal’s (2006:411) assertion that converbs and co-ordinate verbal forms are not interchangeable when the converb is used as an adverbial modifier and in compound verbs (see also Meyer [2012], who points out that narrative clause-chaining is marked when the conjunction \( \text{inna/}=nna \) ‘and’ is used to connect two clauses headed by a finite verb). They further note that consecutive forms (coordinate verbal forms) are used when focusing on the sequencing or temporal ordering of specific events. This makes it necessary to look into the nature of the coordinating conjunction in Amharic in more detail, which is the subject of chapter five.

The other languages do not use a coordinating conjunction in the inceptive construction. This is illustrated in the following translations of the above Amharic sentences. Note, for instance, that the conjunction \( =\text{wa} \) in Zay is not used to link the two verbs in example 3:23a (see Leslau 1999:146 for \( =\text{wa} \) ‘and’). The Harari conjunction \( =\text{wa} \) ‘and’ is also known to normally link nouns (Leslau 1965:158, fn17; cf. Gutt 1997:947 for Selt’i where it is indicated that \( =\text{waa} \) coordinates noun phrases and also gerunds or subordinate clauses with each other). At least, the Harari case makes sense when one considers the fact that the converb marker -ma was originally a coordinating conjunction. The Harari example 3:23b’ is instead a translation of the Amharic sentence after changing the coordinate forms into a converb plus reference verb pattern.

Zay – ‘pick up’

(3:23a) ti-j-bol-u=\( w \)a ti-Ø-soc-u t-al-ä
CONJ-3-eat:IPFV-3PL=and CONJ-3-drink:IPFV-3PL CONJ-exist:PFV-3MSG

hadi \( \text{anāk}’-ä-ma \) abba\(^{92} \)
oj one pick.up:PFV-3MSG-CVB father

awuji mikaʔel min jā-han-ä-b-i-n ajam today Michael what REL-become:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ-FOC day
‘When they were eating and drinking
one person (said), “Father”
Sp2: “Yes.”
Sp1: “Today, what has become of Michael?”’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

\(^{92}\) \( \text{anāk}’-ä-ma \) or \( \text{ji-nāk}’-ma \) māʔin

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3.2.1.2. Verbs with an iterative marker/or ‘while’

The Amharic prefix *ijjä-* attached to verbs may function as a progressive, an iterative, and a ‘concomitant circumstance’ marker (Baye 2006; Meyer 2014; Polotsky 1983). The resulting verb forms cannot stand by themselves and require either a copula/tense marker (*näbbär* ‘past’ or *näw* ‘present’) (cf. the progressive in 3:24a) or a reference verb (cf. the iterative in 3:24b). Note that the iterative meaning spreads to the reference verb, i.e. *jibälall* ‘eats’). It is, however, somewhat difficult to consider the use of *ijjä-* in example 3:24c as being different from its use in example 3:24b, as it too signifies iterative actions, except that the label ‘concomitant circumstance’ is used to highlight the co-occurrence of the two actions, i.e. writing and copying.

**Amharic – progressive**

(3:24a) kasa inc’ät *ijjä-fällät’-ä* näbbär(-ä)

kasa wood PROG-chop:PFV-3MSG PST(-3MSG)

‘Kasa was chopping wood.’ (Baye 2006:199)
Amharic – iterative

Amharic – concomitant circumstance

The inceptive construction is compatible with such iterative interpretation(s) and uses a verb form that can take the prefix (cf. *ijjaräku* in 3:25a). This is the case in Argobba and in the other languages as well. Argobba has the same form as Amharic, i.e. *ijjä-* (cf. *ijjäwähazin* (3:25)b). *k-* and *t-* have the equivalent meaning of *ijjä-* in Harari (cf. *haf kilaja* in 3:25c) and Selt’i (cf. *tihnk’il* in 3:25d), respectively.

Amharic – ‘pick up’

Argobba – ‘grasp’

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95 Here the subordinate verb acts as a main verb comparable to the exclamative function of insubordinated converbs, which will be discussed later in chapter six.

96 The *nnɨ-* in *si-nni-mäht’-emm* instead resembles the Amharic 1PL as in *si-n-mät-accäw* (cf. *il-* in *il-säkrin* ‘get drunk’ [Leslau 1997:48]).
Harari – ‘get up’

(c) abba kudaj zi-let-xi-ba attaj kulubem
big brother REL-go:PFV-2MSG-in place all

kämmom haf k-i-laja ?an abu-sult’a97
everyone get.up:IDEO ITER-3MSG-say:IPFV I POSS-authority

märiɲ int-äñ ji-lä-h-al
friend COP:NPOST-1SG.OBJ 3MSG-say:IPFV-2MSG.OBJ-AUX
‘My brother, everywhere you go, everyone tells you that they are friends of an authority,’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic. – from Reporter, Dec. 27, 2006 E.C., vol. 19, no. 1428, p. 71)

Selt’i – ‘pick up’

(d) binj-e alon birr-i ti-hnk’il
hand-1SG.POSS isn’t.lit birr-DEF ITER-2MSG-pick.up:IPFV

ti-käf-ahä-j bil-ot-in
2MSG-SEEK:IPFV-AUX-3MSG.OBJ eat-NMLZ-COP
‘Isn’t the money in my hand? (I have money). So, I just eat what I desire.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

3.2.2. Co-occurrence restrictions

The converbs involved in the inceptive construction are not completely devoid of their semantic content. They no longer designate an actual action of ‘getting up’, ‘picking up’, ‘grasping’, and ‘taking’ as such, but can put restrictions on the type of verbs that can combine with them. So, the transitive verbs ‘grasp’, ‘take’, and ‘pick up’ require the subsequent reference verbs to be transitive as well; otherwise the inceptive use doesn’t hold. In example 3:26a, for instance, the transitive converb ansita ‘pick up’ occurs with the intransitive reference verb därräsäcc ‘arrive’, making the inceptive interpretation impossible.

Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘arrive’

(3:26a) ansit-a därräs-äcc
pick.up:CVB-3SG.GEN arrive:PFV-3SG
‘Picking up (something), she arrived.’
*‘She arrived.’ (elic.)

97 ṭihe kudaj ‘little brother’
Argobba: ‘pick up’ – ‘sit down’
(b) ansid-a arāgāz-ād
pick.up:CVB-3FSG,GEN sit.down:PFV-3FSG
‘Picking up (something), she sat down.’
*‘She sat down.’ (elic.)

Zay: take – ‘cry’
(c) nāk’ol-u-m boc-u
take:PFV-3PL-CVB cry:PFV-3PL
‘Taking (something), they cried.’
*‘They cried.’ (elic.)

Harari: grasp – ‘die’
(d) lāhad-a-ma mot-a
grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVB die:PFV-3MSG
‘Grasping (something), he died.’
*‘He died.’ (elic.)

However, not every combination of ‘transitive-transitive’ is acceptable in the inceptive construction. As shown below, the transitive reference verbs for ‘learn’ and ‘find’, for example, cannot co-occur with the light verbs for ‘pick up’ and ‘take’, respectively. It may have to do with agentivity as the subjects of the ‘finding’ and ‘learning’ events seem to rank low as initiators or causers (recall that the choice of a light verb and an accompanying reference verb in Urdu and related languages is attributed to the lexical semantics of the verbs [Butt 1997; Masica 1991]).

Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘learn’
(3:27a) ansīt-a tāmar-ācc
pick.up:CVB-3FSG,GEN learn:PFV-3PL
‘Picking up (something), she learned.’
*‘She learned.’ (elic.)

Selt’i: ‘take’ – ‘find’
(b) wāsād-a-Ø sāba rākāb-a
take:PFV-3MSG-CVB person find:PFV-3MSG
*‘He found someone.’ (elic.)

The intransitive verb for ‘get up’ (cf. jinok’um in Zay in 3:28a) can co-occur with intransitive verbs (like fāk’ jubulol ‘return’) and also with transitive ones (like inimāppibom ‘do [stop]’ in Argobba). It is more like the English and Swedish cases where the light verb is intransitive (like went) or transitive, but can be used without an object like the Swedish tog ‘take’ in example 3:28c.
They spend the day there and turn away (return) when it gets dark.’ (emphatic) (record.)

Argobba

Now I also age-1SG.POSS ITER-increase:PFV-3MSG

‘Now, I am getting old. It is not the time to do that (to stop the interference of football fans).’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

And yet, two different converbs may show preference for co-occurring with the same type of reference verb. No basic meaning difference is reported because of the substitution of one verb by the other in the following examples (Although I see an additional element of suddenness/unreasonableness in the Amharic example 3:29a’, perhaps because of interference from its other metaphorical uses such as kä-märet tänäst-a ‘without any reason’, lit. ‘she having gotten up from the ground/land’). I assume that this shows speakers’ perspectives of various situations. Thus, a Selt’i speaker may construe the initial phase of the action of smashing a car as involving grasping or taking (cf. 3:29b, b’).

Amharic: ‘grasp’ – ‘slap’

‘She slapped the boy.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

98 ahuně’u ‘he/it is not’ (Leslau 1997). Also ädme ‘age’.
Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘slap’
(a’) lij-u-n ansit-a bä-t’iffi mätt-acc-iw
child-DEF-ACC pick.up:CVB-3FSG.GEN by-slap hit:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She slapped the boy.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Selt’i: ‘take’ – ‘smash’
(b) mäkina-j wässä-t-a/aane aggace-t-e
car-DEF take:PFV-3FSG-CVBI/CVBII smash:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She smashed the car.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Selt’i: ‘grasp’ – ‘smash’
(b’) mäkina-j enze-t-a aggace-t-e
car-DEF grasp:PFV-3FSG-CVBI smash:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She smashed the car.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Related to this, there are cases where two light verbs simultaneously occur within a single verb phrase. Consider the two verbs for ‘get up’ in Argobba in example 3:30a and the verbs for ‘grasp’ and ‘get up’ in Selt’i in example 3:30b.

Argobba: ‘get up’ – ‘get up’ – ‘demolish’
(3:30a) hand su-w biddig bid-o innesid-o
one man-DEF get.up:IDEO say:CVB-3MSG.GEN get.up:CVB-3MSG.GEN
tä-färäs-a bää-hig tä-t’ajak’-i mää-hon
CONJ-demolish:PFV-3MSG by-law PASS-ask-AGT NMLZ-become
hal-ä-b-o
exist:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ
‘If someone demolishes (a house), they should be accountable by law.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.-from Sheger Radio, k’irsooc ‘relic’, sep 29, year(?)

Selt’i: ‘grasp’ – ‘get up’ – ‘hit’
(b) enz-ä-Ø nāk’-Ø-ane fäk’-a-j
grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVBI get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBI hit:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘He hit him.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Similar cases are also observed in other languages, such as Nepali. Slade (2013:553) reports that Nepali, but not Hindi, allows a main verb to be modified by more than one light verb. Consider the light verbs dii ‘give’ and haalin ‘put’ in the following example (3:31).
Nepali

(3:31) un-le kican sapha gar-ı- di-ı- haal-in
he/she.MIDHON-AGT kitchen clean do-ABS give-ABS put-PST.3FSG
‘She cleaned the kitchen for me straightaway.’ (Slade 2013:553)

One could simply take this as a means of enhancing the expressive power of the construction by resorting to repetition, in a similar fashion as what Haspelmath (2007) calls ‘augmentative conjunction’ (e.g. she ran and ran). However, the precise contribution of each light verb, the structural relationship they have with each other and with the reference verb, etc. are yet poorly understood. I leave this for future research.

It is interesting to note that although the four verbs for ‘get up’, ‘pick up’, ‘take’, and ‘grasp’ are attested in all the TSE languages studied, there are variations among speakers and languages in their use. Some (Amharic) combination of a converb and a reference verb may be translated into a language as grammatical, marginally accepted, or rejected by various speakers. So, one Zay consultant replaced Amharic instances of the verb jiža ‘grasp’ by anäk’ɨtɨma ‘pick up’, as shown in 3:32a’. Another consultant avoided the combination of the verb for ‘pick up’ with the reference verbs for ‘eat’ and ‘say’, replacing it with the verbs for ‘take’ and ‘get up’, respectively. In 3:32b’, the Amharic word ansita ‘pick up’ is substituted by the Zay näk’ālītim ‘take’.

Amharic: ‘grasp’ – ‘rock’

(3:32a) and k’än jiz-a k’iwwut’ arg-a
one day grasp:CVB-3FSG GEN rock:IDEO do:CVB-3FSG GEN
‘One day she rocked.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (record)

Zay: ‘pick up’ – ‘scream’

(a’) anäk’-it-ima uta-j gäfär-t-aj
pick.up:PFV-3FSG-CVB scream-DEF let.go:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She screamed.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘eat’

(b) muz-u-n ansit-a bäll-acc-iw
banana-DEF-ACC pick.up:CVB-3FSG.GEN eat:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘She ate the banana.’ (emphatic, surprisal)

99 anäk’itima or anäk’itima maʔin
Zay: ‘take’ – ‘eat’

\[
\text{(b')} \text{ muz-e-j nāk'āl-it-im bāl-it}
\]

\text{banana-ACC-DEF take:PFV-3SG-CVB eat:PFV-3SG}

‘She ate the banana.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Harari is the language that shows the least resemblance to Amharic in that certain Amharic converb and reference verb combinations (like the verbs for ‘get up’ – ‘do’; ‘pick up’ – ‘punish’, ‘slap’; ‘grasp’ – ‘break’) are only marginally accepted. It is followed by Zay. Argobba is the most Amharic-like in that all instances of the Amharic inceptive construction have correspondences in the language. This observation, however, relies on data from only one person. This result is consonant with the genetic classification of the languages, where Amharic is more closely related to Argobba than it is to the other languages.

Harari does not allow the co-occurrence of the verb for ‘pick up’ with the reference verbs for ‘eat’ and ‘say’. Individual differences also exist where a speaker avoids using the verb for ‘take’ altogether and replaces it with either ‘grasp’ or ‘pick up’. In example 3:33a’ below, the Amharic \textit{bidigg arigge} ‘pick up’ and \textit{alku} ‘say’ are replaced by \textit{haf baakuma} ‘get up’ and \textit{baku} ‘say’ in Harari. Examples 3:33b’, b’’ show differences among the Harari speakers where the equivalent of Amharic \textit{wäsdäw} ‘take’ is considered to be \textit{lāhaduma} ‘grasp’ and \textit{nāsāʔoma} ‘take’.

Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘say’

\[
\text{(3:33a) ine bidigg arigg-e ärä zare-s iddil-accin}
\]

\text{I pick.up:IDEO do:CVB-1SG.GEN oh today-TOP luck-3PL.POSS}

\text{hon-o alga Ø-jälläl-ä-w}

\text{become:CVB-3MSG.GEN bed REL-not.exist:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ}

\text{nä-w jā-dārrās-ā-n al-ku}

\text{COP:Npst-3MSG.OBJ REL-arrive:PFV-3MSG-1PL.OBJ say:PFV-1SG}

‘I said. “Oh! Today it is our fate to get (a house) with no bed.”’ (emphatic, surprisal) (YouTube)\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{100} A YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQqOiEt6OZ6&playnext=1&list=PL8D898A628965DEA4&feature) featuring an interview with singer Maritu Kebede broadcasted via ebs.
Harari: ‘get up’ – ‘say’
(a’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Locality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>haf</td>
<td>IDEO</td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baa-ku-ma</td>
<td>say:PFV-1SG-CVB</td>
<td>TOP? say:PFV-3MSG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

baj-a-ma dufan zä-lel-a
say:PFV-3MSG-CVB bed REL-not.exist:PFV-3MSG

gaar-in boräde-na baa ku
house-FOC receive:PFV-1PL say:PFV-3MSG

‘I said, “Little by little, today we received a house with no bed.”’
(emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Amharic: ‘take’ – ‘hang’
(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nääwaj-in</td>
<td>wäsd-äw sääk’äl-u-t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neway-ACC take:CVB-3PL GEN hang:PFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ

‘They hanged Neway.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (Heard in Addis Ababa)

Harari: ‘grasp’ – ‘hang’
(b’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nääwaj-u lähad-u-ma sääk’äl-o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neway-ACC grasp:PFV-3PL-CVB hang:PFV-3PL

‘They hanged Neway.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

Harari: ‘take’ – ‘hang’
(b’‘)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nääsä?-o-ma sääk’äl-ä-w</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
take:PFV-3PL-CVB hang:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ

‘They hanged him.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

The individual differences among Harari and Zay speakers can be attributed to various reasons. In the case of Harari, there is a clear (age and) multilingualism difference where the (elder and) highly multilingual (about nine Ethiopian and foreign languages) speaker has accepted most combinations of converb and reference verb compared to the (younger and) less multilingual one. Although they are both originally from a Harari town, the time they spent in Addis Ababa (and thus their high frequency of contact with Amharic speakers) could also explain the result in that the younger speaker is a student at Addis Ababa University and the elder lives and works in Addis Ababa. Although no distinct varieties have been reported for Harari in the literature, consultants report that the Harari spoken in Addis Ababa is influenced more greatly by Amharic. There is positive evidence for this in the recorded data, which contains much Amharic (and also English, as well as some Oromo) expressions. In 3:34a, the word dämo ‘also’ is an Amharic word. In 3:34b, tägamälkuma ‘turn’ is considered to be following the Amharic pattern and was corrected by a consultant as wändäl if it is to be ‘true’ Harari. In fact, wändäl baaja is glossed as ‘change direction to the side and
walk, turn’ in Leslau’s (1963b:160, 237) Harari dictionary. Tägamälkuma seems to be related to the word gaamäla ‘fold’ (Leslau 1963b:72).

Harari

(3:34a) azo saʔa an däm-o uc’-u-l-un
at.that time I repeat:CVB-3MSG.GEN take.out:IMP-2PL-APPL-1SG.OBJ

wäld-ijä-w ji-därk’-ib-āɲ-al ba-hu
child-1SG.POSS-ACC 3MSG-dry:PFV-APPL-1SG.OBJ-AUX say:PFV-1SG

‘Also, at that time, I said, “Take out my child (i.e. from my womb); (otherwise) it will die(?)”.’” (record)

(b) azo mäkanis-be k’ore ji-lit’-zal uga-w
there Mekanisa-to Qore 3MSG-take:IPFV-REL road-ACC

hadäg-ā-ma alaj uga tägamäl-ku-ma baj-a
leave.aside:PFV-3MSG-CVB another road turn:PFV-1SG-CVB say:PFV-3MSG

‘He said, “We abandon the road that takes us to Mekanisa Qore and turn toward another road.”’” (record)

The two Zay speakers consulted for the inceptive construction have no multilingualism, dialect, and sex differences. There is no major difference in their acceptance of the Amharic sentences either, except that the speaker who replaced the Amharic verb for ‘grasp’ with the Zay verb for ‘pick up’ lives in Mek’i and is older than the one who lives in Addis Ababa. So, factors like multilingualism, place of living, and speaking a distinct variety in the case of Harari, and age and place of living in the case of Zay may have influenced the data. However, there is also room for ‘performance’ to play a part in both Zay and Harari cases (see Penke & Rosenbach 2007) for arguments that grammaticality judgments are performance data, and also Bird-song (1988) and Nagata (1988) for the instability of grammaticality judgments and the effect of repetition on intuition.

3.2.3. Functions of the converses

Hailu (1970) defines the function of auxiliaries in Amharic as having to do with the marking of tense, aspect, and mood. As we have seen in Section 2.2.4, this is also the function Heine (1993) and Butt (2003) consider auxiliaries as having. The functions of light verbs, on the other hand, are, e.g. changing valency and assigning case. In this regard, the role of Amharic
verbs of ‘say’ and ‘do/make’ light verbs, as discussed in Mengistu (2010) (see also Amsalu 1988, Taddese 1980, and Wetter 2002) on valency (or transitiv-ity), can be mentioned here. The intransitivity and transitivity of the following sentences is due to the use of alä ‘say’ (cf. 3:35a) and adärrägäcc ‘do/make’ (cf. 3:35b), respectively.

Amharic

(3:35a) k’ibe-w k’illit’ al-ä
butter-DEF melt:IDEO say:PFV-3MSG
‘The butter melted.’

(b) aster k’ibe-w-in k’illit’ adärräg-äcc
Aster butter-DEF-ACC melt:IDEO do/make:PFV-3FSG
‘Aster melted the butter.’ (Mengistu 2010:294, 305)

In addition, the light verb construction renders an intensive (also a sudden-ness and a completeness) (cf. 3:36a) or an attenuative (cf. 3:36b) reading compared to the neutral counterpart (cf. 3:36c).

Amharic

(3:36a) t’ärmus-u sibbir al-ä
glass-DEF break:IDEO say:PFV-3MSG
‘The glass broke (in a smashing manner)/ (suddenly).’

(b) t’ärmus-u sábärr al-ä
glass-DEF break:IDEO say:PFV-3MSG
‘The glass broke (slightly, somehow).’

(c) t’ärmus-u tä-säbbär-ä
glass-DEF ANTC/PASS-say:PFV-3MSG
‘The glass broke.’ (Mengistu 2010:296, 297)

These light verbs are different from the converb-based light verbs investigated here. First, they are obligatory, as ideophones do not normally occur alone. Second, the converbs do not influence valency or assign case. As indicated earlier, they instead highlight the inceptive phase of an event. How-

101 I also found a single instance of the verb sät’t’- ‘give’ used as a light verb in the dialect of Gondar.

(i) indä-därräs-ku-ɲ git’t’im i-sät’-äw-all-ahu
CONJ-arrive:PFV-1SG-FOC hit:IDEO 1SG-give:PFV-3MSG.OBJ-NPST-1SG
‘When I hit him immediately as I arrive…!’ (record)
ever, similar to the *say* and *do/make* light verbs, they further render nuances such as volition, surprise, and emphasis.

It can be said that the use of a simple and complex (ideophonic) light verb differs from the interpretation of the inceptive construction where the degree of surprise or emphasis is slightly higher with the complex light verbs. This is because, as shown in Mengistu (2010), the complex light verbs themselves encode an intensive action. For instance, *bidigg alä* in Amharic is ‘stand up (suddenly)’/ ‘to be high’ (Kane 1990) (this doesn’t have an attenuative counterpart). Also *bidigg jahil* means ‘large, huge’ (lit. amount to *bidigg*), which further shows how the speakers conceive of the act of getting up.\(^{102}\)

Volitionality is a condition on the use of the inceptive construction. That is, giving focus to the initial phase of an event entails it is done with some sort of volition or intention (see Fauconnier 2013). Support for this comes from the fact that the construction is not compatible with passivization, as shown in 3:37a below for Selt’i. This volitionality reading is also used to highlight the wrong deed of an agent, as in the Amharic example 3:37b, where the opposing parties accuse the government of lending huge amounts of money to some group to obtain political acceptance (i.e. it is done on purpose).

**Selt’i – ‘get up’**

(3:37a)  *ç’u’lo-j nâk’-ä-Ø bâ-t’ifi t-ok’a*  
child-DEF get.up::PFV-3MSG-CVBI by-slap PASS-hit::PFV-3MSG  
‘The boy got slapped.’ (elic.)

\(^{102}\) It should be mentioned that the light verbs *jiz-* ‘grasp’ and *wäsd-* ‘take’ also have ideophonic variants *jazz argo* and *wässädd/wusidd argo*, respectively, which could potentially be used in the inceptive construction, although they are not systematically investigated here.
Surprise is ‘expectancy violation’. This is illustrated below in a case in which the unexpected behavior demonstrated by a governing body elicits surprise in example 3:38a. There is also a case in which a surprise involves a suddenness reading, as in 3:38b, where a person is thought to obtain higher-ranking driving licenses all of a sudden (see also 3:29b’). These two readings have some connection. The fact that something happened suddenly or abruptly often suggests it was not expected to happen at a particular point in time. However, a surprising event does not often suggest suddenness (cf. Wiklund 2009:185-186).
Zay – ‘get up’

(3:38a)  igzer  j-a-sema-hum-o  tabot
God  3MSG-CAUS-hear/IPFV-3PL.OBJ-DCM  covenant

lo-w-afän-at  jä-wät’-u  säb-ca
to-NMLZ-accompany-NMLZ  REL-go.out:PFV-3PL  person-PL.

kit’äk’ät’-ä-m=wa  k’ac’i-Ø-m  nak’-ä-m
beat:PFV-3MSG-CVBI=and  kill:PFV-3MSG-CVBI  get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBI

k’is-e-j  jäwwär-ä-m  jä-säb-c-äj
accusation-ACC-DEF  return:PFV-3MSG-CVBI  POSS-person-PL-ACC

wä-sa-ni  bä-gize-ni  jä-hulämäni
NMLZ-do-3MSG.POSS  at-time-3MSG.POSS  POSS-the.whole

säb  ozänä  jä-god-Ø  nar-o
person  heart  REL-hurt:PFV-3MSG  PST-3MSG

‘Behold, its (the government’s) act of counter-accusing the people, after beating and killing those who went out to accompany the ark of the covenant (to celebrate epiphany), had at the time deeply hurt everyone’s heart.’

(emic, surprisal)

(elic. – based on an Amharic example from a facebook upload)

Amharic – ‘get up’

(b) and säw mänja fäk’ad si-j-a-wät’a ee
one man driving license CONJ-3MSG-CAUS- got.out:PFV ee

ind-al-äcc-iw hulät sost arat ijj-al-ä
CONJ-say:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ two three four ITER-say:PFV-3MSG

mä-hed all-ä-bb-ät inji mannim
NMLZ-go exist:PFV-3SG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ on.the.contrary anyone

idme-w silä-därräs-ä bicca tänäst-o
edge-3MSG.POSS CONJ-arrive:PFV-3MSG only get.up:CVB-3MSG.GEN

aratäɲɲa ammistäɲɲa si-j-a-wät’a tinnif’
fourth fifth CONJ-3MSG-CAUS-get.out:PFV little

adäga-wocc-in jä-m-as-k’ärrät jä-mä-kkälakäl
accident-PL-ACC POSS-NMLZ-CAUS-stop POSS-NMLZ-prevent

bik’at-u ji-k’ännis-all
ability-3MSG.POSS 3MSG-decrease:IPFV-NPST

‘When a person obtains a driving license, as she said it, it should start from the lowest level and go up smoothly. When a person obtains fourth and fifth level only because their age qualifies them, their ability to avoid and be protected from accidents gets a little low.’ (emphatic, surprisal)

(Sheger Radio, andand någārocc ’some things’, part one, may 2013)

The class of light verbs and reference verbs used in the inceptive construction is diverse, which makes it difficult to stipulate a clash of aktionsart as a possible cause for the interpretation (cf. Wiklund 2009). If we take the Amharic verb ansit- ‘pick up’ as an example, it is telic. This is illustrated in 3:39a below, where the verb is incompatible with expressions that highlight duration, at least in this syntactic environment (see Tatevosov [2002:350] for the ‘in x time’ vs. ‘for x time’ diagnostics of telicity; cf. also Vendler’s [1957] ‘at what time’ vs. ‘for how long’).

Amharic – ‘pick up’

(3:39a) *k”as-u-n lä-sost däk’ik’a jahl anäss-acc-iw
ball-DEF-ACC for-three minute about pick.up:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ

‘She picked up the ball for about three minutes.’ (elic.)
Consider, however, *ansit-* ‘pick up’ and its ideophonic variant *bidigg arigg-* ‘pick up’ co-occurring with the telic and atelic reference verbs *alku* ‘say’ (in 3:33a, repeated below as 3:40a) and *makārajāt* ‘rent’ (3:40b), respectively, and giving a surprise reading.

Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘say’

(3:40a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ina <em>bidigg arigg-e</em></td>
<td>I pick up:IDEO do:CVB-1SG.GEN oh today-TOP luck-3PL.POSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hon-o</td>
<td>alga Ø-jälläl-ä-w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>become:CVB-3MSG.GEN</td>
<td>bed REL-not.exist:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nā-w</td>
<td>jā-dārräs-ä-n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ</td>
<td>REL-arrive:PFV-3MSG-1PL.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I said, “Oh! Today it is our fate to get (a house) with no bed.”’” (emphatic, surprisal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amharic: ‘pick up’ – ‘rent’

(b) *biccänja k’irs ansit-o m makārajāt min*

sole heritage pick up:CVB-3MSG.GEN NMLZ-rent.out what

j-il-u-t-al

3-say:IPFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ-NPST

‘It is madness to rent out the sole heritage we have.’ (emphatic, surprisal)

Lit. ‘What would one call picking up and renting out our the sole heritage?’

We again resort to the focus given to the inception phase as an explanation of how such emphatic and surprisal effects arise. That is, reporting an event with extra focus on its initial stage gives an extra emphatic and (especially if it is not supposed to occur at all or not at a particular point in time) surprisal effect (see de Vous 2005). Example 3:40a, for instance, is uttered by giving a clue beforehand that there was a (retractable) bed in the house that the speaker did not notice at the time. Recalling her conversation with a person in which she said there isn’t any bed is by itself humorous, but placing extra focus on the initial sub-stage of the act of saying makes it even more so. Similarly, 3:40b, presupposes that Lucy (Australopithecus) is a very special...
heritage, one deserving of protection. Renting her out endangers her safety and must be avoided at any cost. The writer gets angry at the people who did exhibit her in certain American museums. Focusing on the initial phase further increases the unexpectedness value, as it tells that the people rented her out with volition or intention, as opposed to being forced to do so (the suddenness reading may have to do with the lexical semantics of the light verb).

3.3. The terminative construction

In Sections 3.1 and 3.2, I presented evidence that the event structure of verbs may include three basic parts (see Butt 1997; 2003; Bodomo 1997). We have seen that the inceptive phase can be marked by a separate verb and encode volitional, emphatic, and surprisal readings in TSE languages. One might also wonder whether the ‘state after the act’, result, or terminative/accomplishment phase can also be identified by an independent verb like bare ‘leave’, as in the following Dagaare example (3:41). This section will briefly reflect on this, focusing on Amharic.

(3:41) ayuo de la a bie zegle Bare
Ayuo INCEPT-take FACT DEF child seat Leave
‘Ayuo has seated the child there.’ (Bodomo 1997:7)

The Amharic data contains some instances of verbs that can be analyzed, although tentatively, as identifying the terminative phase of an event and rendering a surprise effect. The construction mainly involves a converb, but other verb forms conjoined by =nna ‘and’ as well, with full lexical meaning and followed by a semantically bleached verb. The verbs include arräf- or irrif’ (al-) ‘rest, land, make a stop’, k’uc’c’ (al-) ‘sit down, settle down’, zimm (al-) ‘be quite’, and k’ärr- or kirrit (al-) ‘remain’. In examples 3:42a and b, the verbs are indicated by bold lettering.

Amharic – ‘sit’ (sit down)

(3:42a) jä-täfal-ä t’äbs-o k’uc’c’ al-ä
REL-better:PFV-3MSG roast:CVB-3MSG.GEN sit:IDEO say:PFV-3MSG
jämm-it-wädd-äw-in m-alät nä-w
REL-3F-love:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ-ACC NMLZ-say COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ
‘He found a better (girlfriend), i.e. the one who loves him.’
(surprisal) (record)
Amharic – ‘remain’

(b) tækʷla-wocc-u märet laj jä-tänä’t’täf-ä-w-in
  jackal-PL-DEF ground on REL-spread:PFV-3MSG-DEF-ACC

  jä-tækʷla k’oda si-mäläkkät-u bü-diniggat’e kiw
  POSS-jackal hide CONJ-see:PFV-3PL with-fright stupefy:IDEO

  bil-äw k’ärř-u
  say:CVB-3PL.GEN remain:PFV-3PL

‘When the jackals see the jackal hide spread on the ground, they are stupe-fied.’ (climax of the story) (surprisal) (Alem 2001:23)

The basic verbal meaning is contributed by the preceding converb, and the subsequent verb carries tense and aspect information, perfective and past in the above sentences.\(^{105}\) Note also that they share the same argument. The semantically bleached verbs are assumed to identify the result/terminative sub-stage of the preceding core sub-stage (lexical verb).

A comparable conclusion has been reached by Richter (1994) and Leslau (1995). Leslau (1995:297-298, 428 fn1) provides examples of the verb arräf-‘rest, land, make a stop’ and states that it (and the other verbs too) are used to express “a permanent situation that has resulted from the completion of the action of the main verb”.\(^{106}\) His examples only show the verbs coordinated by =nna ‘and’ where they take the same form, similar to what we have observed in the inceptive construction, i.e. perfective in example 3:43a below. He further claims that the conjunction =nna ‘and’ is key to this use. This does not hold true since it could be absent, as shown in example 3:43b,

\(^{105}\) The position of the verbs following the converbs makes the construction look similar to the converb-auxiliary construction (e.g. säkr-o näbbär(-ä) ‘He was drunk’). However, they are different in that the verbs identify the terminative sub-stage and also exert a pragmatic effect.

\(^{106}\) This observation resembles one pointed out in Tatevosov (2002:390-391). Tatevosov states, quoting Johanson (1999) and Schönig (1984), that in Tatar (Turkic), there are semi-auxiliary verbs (‘come’, ‘go’, ‘stand’, ‘take’, ‘throw’) used in complex predicates of the following kind.

Tatar (Turkic)

(i) daut ike sägat bujyna akca-ŋy jugat-yp tyr-dy
  Daut two hour for money-ACC lose-CVB stand-PST

  ‘Daut lost money for two hours (and then found it)’ (Tatevosov 2002:391)

He states that the semi-auxiliary tyrdy is used to express the resultant state of the situation, i.e. ‘to be lost’, which cannot be expressed by the main verb alone. He also notes that such constructions are attested cross-linguistically (e.g. Uralic and Altaic) and that the ‘semi-auxiliaries’ are often observed grammaticalizing into ‘plain auxiliaries’.

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note that the verb is in the imperfective. There are also cases in which the ideophonic form appears alone, as shown in 3:43c.

Amharic – ‘rest’

(3:43a) gäna gimmaʃ k’älad inkʷa s-a-j-ars
yet half plot even CONJ-NEG-3MSG-plough:IPFV
däkkäm-ä-w=inna arräf-ä-w
be.tired:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ=and rest:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘Even before ploughing half a plot he tired himself out.’ (Leslau 1995:298)

Amharic – ‘rest’

(b) nati iːj-ih bädämb mä-c’abbät’-ikko
Nati hand-2MSG.POSS well NMLZ-clutch-FOC
k-al-cal-ä burij-ih-in ansit-äh
CONJ-NEG-be.able:PFV-3MSG brush-2MSG.POSS pick.up:CVB-2MSG.GEN
jä-säw fit mä-sal ti-jämmir=inna j-asama joro
POSS-person face NMLZ-paint 2MSG-begin:IPFV=and POSS-pig ear
sil-äh t-arf-äw-all-äh
paint:CVB-2MSG.GEN 2MSG-rest:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ-NPST-2MSG
‘Nati, if your hand cannot clutch well, you pick up your brush and begin painting a human face, but end up painting a pig’s ear.’ (YouTube)\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{107} Object markers like -w in arräf-ä-w instead “express special emotions depending on the context” (Leslau 1995:420).

\textsuperscript{108} A YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaFFxA2ihRQ) of a television comedy series entitled Gorebetamochu ‘The Neighbors’.
Amharic – ‘be quite’

(c) ɨne- m  jā-sāmma-hu-t-in  sāmíc-e
I also REL-hear:PFV-1SG-3MSG.OBJ hear:CVB-1SG.GEN

indih- m  j-all-ā  sāw  all-ā
like.this-FOC REL-exist:PFV-3MSG person 3-exist:PFV-3MSG.OBJ

bijj-e  zimm
say:CVB-1SG GEN be.quite:IDEO

‘And I, after hearing what I heard, thought, “is there such kind of person?
(or what sort of a person is this?”” (surprisal)

Richter (1994:540) states that arräf- ‘rest, land, make a stop’ is a functional
verb that is used to mark what she calls ‘conclusive manner of action’, al-
though in the gloss the verb rather seems to function as a full lexical verb.

Amharic – ‘rest’

(3:44)  mɪsa  bāllā-Ø=nna  arrāf-ā
lunch eat:PFV-3MSG=and rest:PFV-3MSG

‘He took his lunch and relaxed.’ (Richter 1994:540)

Conclusive manner of action uses the pattern CVB + FV or PFV + nna + FV
(Richter 1994:540). The other example (3:45) given for the CVB + FV pat-
tern involves the word fās’-s’āmā ‘complete’.

(3:45)  bet-u-n  sārt-o  fās’s-ām-ā
house-DEF-ACC build:CVB-3MSG GEN complete:PFV-3MSG

‘He finished building his house.’ (Richter 1994:540)

Other verbs with a general meaning ‘finish’ and with a role similar to
fās’s’āmā ‘complete’ are also listed in Leslau (1995:362). These include
c‘ārrāsā ‘finish, terminate’, abāk’k’a ‘cease’, ak’omā ‘cause to stop, finish’,
and allāk’ā ‘come to an end’. He states that in such constructions the con-
verbs are rendered in English by the ‘present participle’, as in 3:46.

Amharic

(3:46)  märfe  wägt-āw  c‘ārrís-āw-all
syringe stick:CVB-3PL GEN finish:PFV-3PL-NPST

‘They have finished giving injections.’ (Leslau 1995:362)

These verbs do not identify the terminative sub-stage of the action encoded
by the preceding convers and are not used especially for the encoding of 124
surprisal or emphatic interpretations. Like the auxiliary jämämark-(ä) ‘start/begin’, their scope is external, indicating the end of the whole event.

The verbs that identify the terminative sub-stage seem highly grammaticalized compared to the verbs in the inceptive construction, with the exception of tänñas- or bidigg al- ‘get up’, in that they can occur with either transitive/intransitive or punctual/durative verbs. Compare, for instance, k’ärr- ‘remain’ with the intransitive punctual verb kiw biläw ‘stupefy’ in 3:42b, repeated below as 3:47a, with the transitive durative verb jîzze ‘hold/grasp’ in 3:47b.

Amharic: ‘stupefy’ – ‘remain’

(3:47a) ták’la-wocc-u märet laj jä-tänät’t’äf-ä-w-in
jackal-PL-DEF ground on REL-spread:PFV-3MSG-DEF-ACC

jä-ták’la k’oda si-mäläkkät-u bä-diniggät’e kiw
POSS-jackal hide CONJ-see:PFV-3PL with-fright stupefy:IDEO

biläw k’ärr-u
say:CVB-3PL.GEN remain:PFV-3PL
‘When the jackals see the jackal hide spread on the ground, they are stupefied.’ (surprisal) (climax of the story) (Alem Eshetu 2001:23)

Amharic: ‘hold’ – ‘remain’

(b) zärʔa jaʔk’ob nä-ηŋ j-al-ä-w-in saw
zärʔa jaʔk’ob COP:Npst-1SG.OBJ REL-say:3MSG-DEF-ACC person

bärgit’ jä-näbbär-ä saw indä-hon-ä
surely REL-exist:PFV-3MSG person CONJ-become:PFV-3MSG

iskä-mä-t’t’ärat’är j-a-därräs-ä-ηŋ-in hassab
upto-NMLZ-doubt REL-CAUS-reach:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ-ACC idea

jîzze k’ärrä-hu
hold:CVB-1SG.GEN remain:PFV-1SG
‘I end up holding the idea that put me in a situation where I doubt whether the man who calls himself zärʔa jaʔk’ob actually ever existed.’ (emphatic, surprisal)


The surprisal or emphatic readings are assumed to arise from the focus given to the result state (see Fauconnier 2013; cf. also Dahl 1985:95). The shift toward the final phase indicates the completeness of the action, and if it is especially less prone to occur, highlights the unexpectedness reading. How-
ever, this construction seems neutral with regard to volitionality. So, the verbs are compatible with events happening with some intention of the subject, as in 3:48a, or not, as in 3:48b.

Amharic – ‘rest’
(3:48a) let-u-n lä-nk’ilf-u k’än-u-n lä-sira-w
night-DEF-ACC for-sleep-3MSG.POSS day-DEF-ACC for-work-3MSG.POSS

alläwawwät’-ä=nnamarräf-ä
exchange:PFV-3MSG=andrest:PFV-3MSG
‘...They (the thieves) exchanged the night time for sleep and the day time for work.’ (surprisal) (Afework 1905 in Girma 2014:324)

Amharic – ‘sit’
(b) j-al-asäb-ku-t-in sisaj-is agïnçç-e
REL-NEG-think:PFV-1SG-3MSG.OBJ-ACC fortune-TOP find:CVB-1SG.GEN

k’uč’ć
sit:IDEO
‘I got an unexpected fortune.’ (surprisal) (record)

There are also other verbs like t’al- ‘throw, drop’ (cf. 3:49a) and läk’k’äk’- ‘let go’ (3:49b) that show rather detrimental results.

Amharic – ‘throw’
(3:49a) imm-al-Ø-fällig-äw bota laj a-wrid-o
REL-NEG-1SG-like:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ place in CAUS-get.off:CVB-3MSG.GEN

t’al-ä-p
throw:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ
‘He (the taxi driver) got me off in a place where I didn’t intend.’ (emphatic, detrimental) (Heard – Addis Ababa)

Amharic – ‘let go’
(b) izija-w nä-w sinima bet-u lic’ć-e
there-DEF COP:Npst-3MSG.OBJ cinema house-DEF scrape:CVB-1SG.GEN

jä-liik’k’ä-ku-t bä-fuc’ć’ ira
REL:let.go:PFV-1SG-3SGM.OBJ with-scratch
‘Its there in the cinema that I scraped my face, by scratching.’ (emphatic, detrimental) (record)

This reading seems to arise from the semantics of the verbs. Throwing and dropping, for instance, depict downward movement, which is, in a way, un-
desirable on the part of the object undergoing it (see Kudrnacova [1998:83] on verbs like fall and stumble). Two light verbs may co-occur with the same kind of verb, but with a slight difference in the interpretation. Consider the emphatic and surprisal reading in 3:50a, but the emphatic and detrimental reading in 3:50b with the verbs k’uc’c’ ‘sit’ and läk’k’äk’ān ‘let go’, respectively.

Amharic – ‘sit’
(3:50a) ahun b-i-zor bä-h’ala m-i-mät’a-w
maräʃa-w wägt-o-t k’uc’c’
plough-DEF jab:CVB-3MSG:GEN-3MSG:OBJ sit:IDEO
‘Now, when he turns, the plough that comes behind jabbed him.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (record)

Amharic – ‘let go’
(b) g’w onn-e-n wägt-o läk’k’äk’-ā-n
flank-1SG.POSS-ACC jab:CVB-3MSG:GEN let.go:PFV-3MSG-1SG:OBJ
‘It jabbed me in the flank.’ (emphatic, detrimental) (heard – Addis Ababa)

Regarding the other languages, it is rare to find the construction in short recordings. However, the following instances are found in Selt’i, where 3:51a is said with the verb jīg balā ‘be quite’ at the end of a fairy tale narration so as to elicit laughter, and 3:51b, with the verb t’alāj ‘throw’, expresses an undesirable action and more of an emphatic sense than surprise.

Selt’i – ‘be quite’
(3:51a) hanä wäkt af’ b-af-i-m bi-j-a-gäb-u-f
at.that time 2FSG into-mouth-also CONJ-3-CAUS-enter:IPFV-3PL-2FSG:OBJ
lā-suto toč’-if’ bal-e-t-a jīg
through-buttock go.out-2FSG say:PFV-3MSG-3FSG:OBJ:CVBI quite:IDEO

bal-a109
say:PFV-3MSG
‘At that time, he (the lion) said, “You, when one gets you into the mouth you come out through buttock.”’ (emphatic, surprisal) (record)

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109 hanä, but also jannä
Selt’i – ‘throw’

(b) busk’ej fiirk’a gägäk hadbelä tä-fuman-kä
wet-DEF dung it.self like.anything else with-urine-3MSG.POSS

hine-hane ti-räwit’ betän-ä
here and there CONJ-run:IPFV-3MSG scatter:PFV-3MSG

t’al-ä-j j-il-en
throw.away:PFV-3MSG-3MSG OBJ 3MSG-say:IPFV-AUX

‘It is said that they (the cattle) scattered the wet dung and urine around when they wander here and there.’ (emphatic, detrimental) (record, short stories)

In Section 3.4, the diachrony of the inceptive construction is discussed.

3.4. On diachrony

As pointed out in the literature review earlier, Butt (2003) and Seiss (2009) claim that light verbs are instances of polysemy rather than grammaticalization and that they cannot lose their status through time and become auxiliaries. This line of argument does not seem to hold since we have also seen that evidence to the contrary exists in Oceanic languages where components of complex predicates have developed into other linguistic elements such as adpositions (Bril 2007).

Regarding the languages discussed in this work, Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:414) make the general statement that complex predicates involving converbs arise from “permanent drift or slant from collocations of converbs plus main verbs in Afroasiatic as well as Nilo-Saharan languages”. The inceptive construction can also be viewed from this perspective, as it may have resulted from the combination of two clauses, i.e. a dependent clause headed by a converb and a following independent clause headed by a main verb. These clauses later come to act as a single complex construction.

110 Butt (2003) uses the word ‘polysemy’ for two words with one lexical entry (e.g. main verb and light verb), i.e. to indicate the distinct but related meanings of a word where one does not diachronically arise from the other. However, grammaticalization and polysemy are not conflicting notions. Grammaticalization often results in polysemy or, more appropriately, heterosemy/cross-class heterosemy (Lichtenberk 1991; Enfield 2006).

111 There is no reason to assume that the inceptive construction started out only as a combination of a converb and a main verb. The other alternatives, such as the one involving coordination, may have also originated from combinations of two independent clauses.
In the creation of the inceptive construction, converbs lose their core lexical features, such as encoding an independent event, and adopt more functional roles (see Heine [1993:92-93] for a discussion of ‘bleaching’ and ‘lose and gain’ models that emphasize different aspects of the process). That is, the converbs identify the initial phase of the event of another verb and render volitional, emphatic, or surprisal reading. In the examples involving the verbs for ‘grasp’ and ‘hit’, for instance, there does not need to be a physical act of grasping (Note that the actions ‘grasp-and-hit’ usually go along together, which creates some ambiguity). I take this as a matter of grammaticalization (or procedural constructionalization), not lexicalization (or contentful constructionalization) (contra. Bodomo 1997; Butt 2003). Note also that this does not violate the regularities observed in language change that functional elements develop out of lexical ones (Heine & Kuteva 2011).

Unfortunately, there is no historical data for most of the languages studied here, except for Amharic and Harari, that could give us a clue on how the inceptive construction has developed. The construction itself is rare in discourse. Even so, it is plausible to assume that the inceptive construction is not a recent development. Instances of the construction are found in one of the oldest texts of Amharic, i.e. the royal song for As’e jishak’ from the 15th century (from 1407-1422 [Gezahgen 2006] or from 1414-1429 [Richter 1997]) as shown with the verb ihizo ‘grasp’ in example 3:52 below. Keep in mind, though, that poems may not be ideal sources for the study of grammar (Getatchew 1983a).

Amharic – ‘grasp’

(3:52a) isat ji-mäsil ʒan tärara
fire 3MSG-resemble:IPFV emperor mountain

?Ixizo s-i-lis
grasp:CVB-3MSG.GEN CONJ-3MSG-burn:IPFV
‘The emperor resembles wild fire that burns mountain.’

112 Note that this statement is concerned with converbs as used in the inceptive construction. Their ‘lexical’ counterparts continue to function as heads of (in)dependent clauses.

113 I was able to only find a single text in Selt’i, containing some 10 verses from an article by Wagner (1983a): ‘Selt’i-verse in Arabischer schrift aus dem Schlobies-Nachlass’. A Selt’i speaker has translated it for me, and I found nothing interesting regarding the inceptive construction in the text. Also I was not able to translate the Harari text ‘Mus’t’afaa (a collection of prayers and praises of the prophet)’ from the book ‘Harari-texte in Arabischer schrift’, again by Wagner (1983b).

114 *silis’ probably related to Modern Amharic *silit* ‘peel’.

115 ʒan seems to be an archaic form of *janhoj* ‘title used in addressing the emperor’.
The emperor resembles a lion that struggles with (holding) a heifer.’ (or ‘a lion that crushes the spine of a prey’) (Gezahegn 2006:117)

Note that ʔixizo is the old converb form for jizo ‘grasp’. It resembles the Ge’ez pattern, c1ic2ic3- (Meyer 2012:168, fn7) (cf. also c1äc2ic3- nägir-a ‘tell’ [Edzard 2014:4]). Meyer points to the possibility that it could either be borrowed from written Ge’ez or is an archaic form common to both languages.

Other instances are also found in the 1962 Bible translation, based on the Ge’ez version (https://bible.org/foreign/amharic/). Consider täñästa and täñstäw ‘get up’ in examples 3:53a and a’ and jizo ‘grasp’ in examples 3:53b and b’. The degree of emphasis or surprise they express seems rather low, perhaps because of the formal nature of the text.

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116 It has been pointed out to me by Ambjörn Sjörs (p.c.) that in Guidi’s (1889) *apparatus criticus*, the manuscripts differ between xizo and ʔixizo.

117 There are also other (old) texts that represent Amharic in various times. These include

- Fragmentum Piquesii (about Mary anointing Jesus’ feet) (16th or pre-16th c) (Girma 2014)
- Timhirtä hajmanot ‘teaching of the faith’ (most likely in the 16th c) (Cowley 1974; also Girma 2014)
- Ank’äs’a hajmanot ‘gate of faith’ (late 16th or early 17th c) (Getatchew 1983b)
- Treatise on the theology of the Trinity (early 17th c) (Getatchew 1979)
- ‘Three Amharic documents of marriage inheritance from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ (Crummey 1988)
- ‘An Amharic version of the origin of the cross’ (19th c) (Kane 1981)
- Mängädä sāmaj ‘Journey to heaven’ (19th c) (Getatchew 2004)
- Mās’hafl c’awata: sigawi wämänfäsawi ‘The book of play: spiritual and secular’ (1857 E.C) (Zeneb or Aleqa Zeneb)
- Some early Amharic letters (19th-20th c) (Ullendorff 1972)
- ‘An Amharic manuscript on the mythical history of the Adi Kyaz (Dizi, South-West Ethiopia)’ (1956) (Haberland 1983)

However, I found no convincing data in them. Part of the reason is that most of them are formal and religious. As a result, it becomes difficult to fully understand the life cycle of the inceptive construction.
Amharic – ‘get up’

(3:53a) j-akazijas-im innat gotolja lj-wa indä-mot-ä
POSS-akazjas-FOC mother Gotolja son-3FSG.POSS COMP-die:PFV-3MSG

b-ajj-äcc gize tänäst-a jä-mängist-in
CONJ-see:PFV-3FSG time get.up:CVB-3FSG.GEN POSS-government-ACC

zär hullu at’äff-acc
seed all destroy:PFV-3FSG
‘And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she destroyed all the seed royal.’ (emphatic) (2 Kings 11:1)

(a’) barija-wocu-u-m tänäst-äw ?ammäs’-u-bb-ät
salve-PL-DEF also get.up:CVB-3PL.GEN rebel:PFV-3PL-APPL-3MSG.OBJ

wädä sila bä-mi-wärd-ä-w mängäd bä-milo
toward sila by-REL-go.down:IPFV-3MSG-DEF road in-milo

bet gäddäl-ə-u-t
house kill:PFV-3PL-3MSG.OBJ
‘And his servants made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.’ (emphatic) (2 Kings 12:21)

Amharic – ‘grasp’

(b) bä-zija-n gize-m p’ilat’os ijäsus-in jiz-o
at-that-FOC time also Pilate Jesus-ACC grasp:CVB-3MSG.GEN

gärräf-ä-w
flog:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘Then Pilate therefore scourged Jesus.’ (volition) (John 19:1)

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118 The context does not allow for an interpretation (of a synonymous meaning of jiz- ‘arrest’) where Jesus is being caught/arrested by Pilate; he is already imprisoned. In addition, we do not know for sure that the translator wants us to consider Pilate as the one who did the (grasping and) scourging actions. Here it is assumed that it is more likely that his soldiers did. Maybe he is mentioned for his role in giving the order.
(b') bä-innä-zija-m sifra-wocc silä-näbbär-u ajhud
in-ASSOC-there-FOC place-PL CONJ-exist:PFV-3PL Jew

\begin{align*}
\text{jiz-o} & \quad \text{gärräz-ä-w} \\
grasp:CVB-3MSG.GEN & \quad \text{circumcise:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ}
\end{align*}

‘He would Paul have to go forth with him; and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they all knew that his father was a Greek.’

Or

‘Paul had a desire for him to go with him, and he gave him a circumcision because of the Jews who were in those parts: for they all had knowledge that his father was a Greek.’ (Acts 16:3)

Here again, caution should be taken concerning the representativeness of such translated material, as it may rather reflect the wording of the source language, i.e. Ge’ez, and, by extension, Hebrew and Greek. Dobbs-Allsopp (1995:46), for instance, discusses the Hebrew version of example 3:53a and claims that there is a high probability that the word k’wm ‘to arise, stand’ is being used aspectually and prefers the English word ‘set out’ as its equivalent, which presents a function of marking inception.

(3:54) As soon as Athaliah mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she set out to destroy all the royal line.\(^{119}\)

The meaning of ‘begin’ is translated regularly into Ge’ez with nasʔa ‘take’ (Ambjörn Sjörs p.c.). The Ge’ez version of example (3:53)b is given below.

Ge’ez

(3.55) wa-ʔimze našʔo p’ilaat’os la-ʔijaasus wa-k’aásafo
‘And then Pilate took Jesus and whipped him.’ (John 19:1)

The fact that Amharic allows the construction and employs the verbs for get up and grasp suggests it is not completely unnatural.

Grammaticalization of a word, as in the converbs, is generally understood to involve more than just the word itself. The process is thought of as involving the construction within which the word appears or the context (see Heine 1993:30; Dahl 2001a:99; Brinton & Traugott 2005:94).\(^{120}\) In all probability,

\(^{119}\) Dobbs-Allsopp (1995:46) points out that a translation like the Amharic ‘she destroyed all the seed royal’ is incorrect, as she didn’t kill all, namely, Joash, Ahaziah’s son, was not put to death.

\(^{120}\) See also Heine (1993:98) and Brinton and Traugott (2005:28) for discussion and debate on the role of metaphor and metonymy or context in language change.
this is the case with the development of the converbs as inceptive markers in TSE languages (see Azeb & Dimmendaal 2006 on collocation). Brinton and Traugott (2005:29-30) also discuss the role of frequency. Indeed, the overall occurrence of (con)verbs seems to be frequent. There is some evidence for the frequent use of the verbs of *grasp* and *take*. Leslau (1969:184, 187) deals with the role of frequency in language change in Ethiopian languages. He mentions that the Argobba verb *nizdo/wizdo* (converb forms of *nd and *wd from the root *hz* ‘seize, hold’) also appears as *niddo/widdo* due to the process of assimilation. Likewise, the Harari verb *wäsäda* ‘take’ undergoes contraction. So, when it takes the causative *a*- it changes into *asäda* ‘cause to take’ (cf. *wäsäxa* ‘be dirty’ … *awäsäxa* ‘make be dirty’).121 This is all attributed to the fact that the verbs are frequently used.

The occurrence of the verb for *grasp* with something that does not naturally go with it, i.e. burning a mountain, suggests that the construction had high type frequency back in the 15th century. However, the lack of high token frequency, which is supposed to be a logical consequence of type frequency, may indicate that the verbs are still less grammaticalized in their use as inceptive markers.

In explaining why such verbs are especially used in the inceptive construction, there is yet another clue to point to, i.e. the use or meaning of the verbs in constructions or contexts other than the inceptive. Most of the verbs have a meaning related to ‘start’/‘begin’ (cf. 3:56a, b, d) or ‘source’/‘cause’ (cf. example 2:50a, repeated below as 3:56c).122

Amharic – ‘grasp’

(3:56a) má-nnaggär kä-jaz-ā a-j-a-k’om-im

NMLZ-talk CONJ-grasp:PFV:3MSG NEG-3MSG-CAUS-stop:IPFV-NCM

‘After having started to talk, he never stops.’ (Amsalu 1973:245)

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121 Leslau (1963b) and a Harari-Oromo-Amharic dictionary give ‘take’ for *näsāʔa*, but ‘take (from one place to another)’ for *aasāda* (does not list *wäsāda*). The Harari consultants never use the verb *wäsāda* ‘take’ in the inceptive construction, but use *näsāʔa* instead. It could be that *wäsāda* has too specific a meaning compared to *näsāʔa* to be used in the inceptive. Eventhough it is instead *wäsāda* that is cited as an example of frequency, both represent the verb for ‘take’, which makes it relevant (or indirect evidence). *Aleet’a* is the other verb for ‘take’ in the material, which is a combination of the causative *a*- and the verb *leet* ‘go’. This word is instead translated as ‘push forward’ and ‘cause (something) to go’ in Leslau (1963b:101) and the Harari-Oromo-Amharic dictionary, respectively. NB: *tànsaasāʔa* ‘pick up one another’ (Leslau 1963b:119)

122 Additionally, the noun *afhii*, related to *haf* ‘get up’, means ‘source’ in Harari. Similarly, the Amharic words *männäʃa* and *männäʃo* mean ‘starting point’ and ‘cause’, respectively.

133
These are indications that the speakers of the languages under study conceptualize the action of such verbs as a kind of initial stage for other activities to follow. A person grasps or picks up something in order to do something with it (hit, eat, throw, etc.). This conception is so basic that it is not limited to these particular speakers. Hayward (1991:149) mentions that Oromo (Cushitic) and Gammo (Omotic) languages use the verbs k’abe and ḥójkkides to mean both “hold, catch” and “start, begin”, respectively. Regarding Semitic languages, example 3:57 from Middle Arabic shows the word for “get up”, i.e. k’aamuu, being used to mean “begin” (also Ge’ez ḥaxaza “take”, as in wa-ḥaxazku ḥibaḷ ‘I began to talk’ [Ambjon Sjörs, p.c.]). Recall also the verb k’wm “to arise, stand” in Biblical Hebrew.

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123 This by no means applies only to these verbs. As stated in Richter (1994), other verbs like gább- “enter” in Amharic have this interpretation. However, they are not attested in the inceptive construction.

Amharic
(i) ḥe-bahir maʃilla-w-in ti-fałaf ḥe-båff-a-acc POS-sea millet-DEF-ACC 3SG-husk:IPFV enter:PFV-3SG ‘She began to husk the maize.’ (Tesfaye 2004 E.C:152)

124 This gives a hint to the possibility of the inceptive construction being present in other Ethiopian languages as well, which suggests that it is an areal or, considering its presence in languages like English and Swedish, even a universal phenomenon.
Middle Arabic: k’aama ‘get up’

(3:57) **k’aamuu**  
get.up:PFV-3MSG  

**tak’aataluu**  
fight:PRF-3MSG  

‘They began to fight with each other.’  (Edzard 2014:16)

It is also stated in Detges (2004:214) that the meaning of ‘to start doing something’ arose from the word *sterten* ‘to jump, to leap’ in English, from *mettersi a fare qc* ‘to sit down to do something’ in Italian, and from *incipere* ‘to grasp, to catch’ in Latin. It is worth quoting Detges’ explanation regarding the use of the GO (TO)-construction in Catalan to denote inchoative aspect (i.e. ‘to start doing something’) (predecessor to the perfect periphrastic).

If an agent MOVES to some PLACE (event 1) with the intention of carrying out some ACTION there (event 2), then she is visibly making a gesture which will take her to the BEGINNING of this ACTION. In this event sequence, movement and beginning are in contiguity… since MOVEMENT (event 1) and event 2 generally overlap at the BEGINNING of the latter… (p.213).

Detges captures such a conceptualization strategy in the following diagram.

Conceptual setting: from MOVEMENT to BEGINNING

![Conceptual diagram](image)

He goes on to describe the role of inchoative constructions as discourse-structuring devices, i.e. giving prominence to dramatic narrative events like 3:58b below.

(3:58a) Bernie hits Paul.  
(b) (Suddenly) Bernie starts hitting Paul. (Detges 2004:215)

For such a pragmatic effect to arise (out of the inchoative aspect), the following cognitive principle is offered as an explanation.

All other things being equal, incipient events are perceived as more dynamic and more spectacular than aspectually unspecified ones. (p.215)

Detges states that “unexpected speech acts are typical ‘turning-point’ events of narrative sequences”(p.218) and thus it makes sense to find an inchoative
aspect in this use. However, the comparison with only aspectually unspecified ones is problematic, since aspectually specified terminative events can also have such a pragmatic effect in languages like Amharic.

Detges’ statement that the inchoative aspect is a prerequisite for the discourse-structuring function of inchoative constructions raises a related question regarding the diachronic relation between the inceptive construction and the inceptive (or external) aspect (as in 3:56a) in TSE languages. The respective position of the verbs in relation to the main verb, i.e. before and after it, suggests they may have a separate origin, i.e. one from a main verb use and the other from a dependent verb use. As also noted by Detges (2004:215), the verbs in the ‘inceptive aspect’ cannot be taken to have full auxiliary status, as they often occur with noun complements (i.e. verbal nouns or infinitives). Thus although they may be diachronically connected at some point, it is difficult to say that one has directly developed out of the other.

It is also interesting to note that the verbs used to identify the terminative phase in Amharic have a meaning that can simply be glossed as ‘stop’. An instance is given below.

Amharic – ‘rest’

(3:59) já-mäjämärja-w-in kifí já-ingid-accin- in j-artist abäbä
POSS-first-DEF-ACC part POSS-guest-3PL.POSS-ACC POSS-artist Abebe
mälläsä-n c’äwata izih laj inn-as-arif-all-än
Melese-ACC conversation here in 1PL-CAUS-rest:IPFV-NPST-1PL
‘We stop here the first part of the conversation with our guest artist Abebe Melese.’
(Sheger Radio, jäc’awata ingida, June 8, 2013, with Ato Abebe Melese, week two, part two)

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter presents the core theme of the thesis, i.e. the function of converbs of ‘get up’, ‘pick up’, ‘grasp’, and ‘take’ in the inceptive construction in TSE languages. The converbs are further associated with the presence of volitional, surprisal, and emphatic interpretations, depending mainly on the context. Syntactically, the construction shows features that characterize it as belonging to the family of complex predicates. The converbs in this use are also analyzed as light verbs as their forms, co-occurrence restrictions, and functions suggest. There is not much variation between the languages, ex-
cept for differences in some co-occurrence restrictions and the presence/absence of some converbs, which is not surprising considering their close genetic ties. Diachronically, there are some traces of the inceptive construction in Amharic dating back to the 15th century. These scant historical data cannot ascertain the origin and development of the converbs (or the inceptive construction) in Amharic, let alone in the other languages. However, it is plausible to assume that collocation, frequency, and speakers’ conception of the action of the converbs could lead to their grammaticalization into markers of the inception phase. They are not considered to be unchanging and always polysemous with their main verb counterpart. In fact, it is plausible to consider the possibility that there could be a further semantic development in which the "inceptive" element is completely bleached and the other nuances (surprise, etc.) are solely highlighted. Finally, the terminative construction shows that the final or terminative phase of an event can be given prominence as well with associated surprisal/emphatic and detrimental interpretations.
IV. Contrast to other converbal uses

Apart from its function in the inceptive construction and in the ‘ordinary’ adverbial function (the major function, according to Haspelmath [1995]), the converb in TSE languages is used as an adposition, a lexicalized adverb, a causative, a conjunction/complementizer, and a part of lexical juxtaposition. This chapter aims to compare and contrast these uses to the inceptive use and to each other based on some formal and functional features. It first gives a brief background on the characteristics of some ‘canonical’ categories (e.g. conjunction) in Amharic.

4.1. Other converbal uses

The converb in TSE languages has various uses. This is well known in the literature, and we have seen some examples in section 2.1.3. More instances were observed in the recorded materials, too. So, a causative use in Harari

125 This does not include Wolane and Argobba. As mentioned in section 1.5, not enough data was collected on Wolane. And the Argobba material is transcribed so poorly (and is such a small amount) that it is not considered here at all. Even the data from the other languages is not so neat, as the biases of the transcriber/translator are transparent. The following two versions of the same material from two Zay speakers illustrate this.

Zay

(ai) jä-k’äc säb b-al-han ju-t’ubäti-m
REL-kill:PFV person CONJ-NEG-become PASS-squeeze-3MSG-CVB

ju-gub-al säb j-amsit-in nar
REL-sit-AUX person 3PL-ridicule:IPFV-FOC PST
‘A person who sits tight used to get ridiculed, unless he is a killer.’

or
‘They used to ridicule people who sit tight, but those who kill.’

(b) gägäni ji-t’uubit’-im jukku ji-gguub-aal säb
himself 3MSG-squeeze:IPFV-CVBI like.this 3MSG-sit:IPFV-PRS person

ji-sodbii-m-aal
3MSG-insult:PASS-FOC-PRS
‘A person who sits himself tight like this gets (himself) insulted.’ (record)
(besides the adverb and complementizer/conjunction uses) (cf. 4:1a), an adposition and causative uses in Selt’i (beside the adverb and complementizer uses) (cf. 4:1b & b’), an adposition use in Zay (besides the complementizer, adverb, and causative uses) (cf. 4:1c) have been identified. In Zay, the converb is also found forming a single verbal meaning with a subsequent verb (cf. 4:1c’).

Harari – causative
(4:1a) näfsi-zo-w mut’i lāhad-a-ma let’-a
soul-3MSG.POSS-ACC only grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVB go:PFV-3MSG
‘He brought only his soul (i.e. himself) (to Harar).’ (record)

Selt’i – adposition
(b) b-ūha nāk’-Ø-on ji-ʃenan-jon
because-3MSG get.up:PFV-3PL-CVBII 3-fight:IPFV-AUX
‘They fight because of it/this.’

Causative
(b’) kāramela wājm mastika enz-āf bi-t-māc’i
candy or chewing.gum grasp:PFV-2FSG CONJ-2-come:IPFV-2FSG

fājē-ka ji-māc’ nar126
nice- 3MSG.POSS (ADV) 3MSG-come:IPFV PST
‘If you had brought candy or chewing gum, many (children) would have come.’ (record)

Zay – adposition
(c) bā-brāt awdā anāk’-ā-m amāt’-a-j-m
from-metal area pick.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII bring:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ-CVBII

bā-ʃaj hatāt-e-j
in-zay place:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘He (God) brought them from the battlefield and placed them in Zay.’

126 Wājm, kāramela, and mastika are probably Amharic words.
Lexical juxtaposition

(c’) ihii-j mäji tägläbat’-ä-m wot’aa-Ø -m
this-DEF water overturn:PFV-3MSG-CVBI go.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBI

däcii-j molaa-Ø-jii-nim tä-rähä-Ø
land-DEF fill.in:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ-CVBII PASS-find:PFV-3FSG

ju-bl-ii-l
3PL-say:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS-AUX
‘It is said that this water was found flooding the land after it came out (of the ground).’ (record)

This multitude of uses makes the converses in TSE languages similar to the manner converse in Beja (Vanhove 2013) and the present participle in English (Brinton & Traugott 2005). As discussed in Brinton and Traugott (2005:111), the English present participle is used as an adjective (e.g. fascinating), preposition (e.g. during), conjunction (e.g. concerning), and degree adverb (piping hot). Identifying the features that the inceptive construction shares with these constructions and the features that set it apart from them helps us get a complete picture of the nature of the inceptive construction. In what follows, an attempt will be made to present some observed characteristics of the converses with such uses.

4.2. Canonical categories

There are ‘canonical’, i.e. already recognized, adverbs, conjunctions, adpositions, and causatives in the languages. A short overview of these categories will be given below, taking Amharic as a case in point. This will be relevant later while comparing and contrasting various uses of converses.

4.2.1. Adverbs

According to Leslau (1995:843-880) and Baye (2008:202-203), Amharic has (a few) lexical/primary adverbs like indägäna ‘again, anew, once more’, tolo/tälo ‘quickly’, bicca ‘only, alone, solely, just, simply’, and jät/jet ‘where’ and also derived adverbs, i.e. derived from other parts of speech, such as adjectives and nouns, as exemplified below.

From adjectives:

(4:2a) kifu → kifu-ɲɲa
‘evil, bad’ ‘badly, severely’
From nouns:

(b) godɨn → jä-godɨn
   ‘rib, side of the body’ ‘aside’

Baye (2008:202-203)

Baye (2008) reports that adverbs express categories like manner, time, reason, and comparison. They don’t have morphology as such, but syntactically they occur with verbs, with bät’am ‘very’, and with prepositional phrases such as īndā kasa ‘like kasa’. Such features cannot be used to single out adverbs, however. For instance, in the following examples, bät’am ‘very’ is used to modify an adjective (cf. 4:3a) and a verb (4:3b).

(4:3a) amanujel bā-lijjinnät-u bāt’am ḥāt’t’an bāt’am
Amanuell in-childhood-3MSG.POSS very fast very

fāt’t’an n-āw
fast COP:NPT-3MSG
‘Amanuell was very fast when he was a child.’

(b) bāt’am igzer ji-st’i-ll-ip
very God 3MSG-give:JUS-APPL-1SG.OBJ
‘Thank you very much.’
Lit. ‘May God give you very (much).’
(Sheger Radio, Ye Chawata Engida (Ato Amannuel Yilma Part Four), May 18, 2013)

Besides, as also noted in Baye (2008:88), noun phrases (cf. 4:4a), prepositional phrases (cf. 4:4b), and clauses (cf. 4:4c, marked with bold) also have adverbal function.

(4.4a) dāgginnät-u
kindness/virtue-DEF/3MSG.POSS
‘fortunately, luckily, happily’

(b) bā-akbirot
with-respect
‘respectfully’ (Leslau 1995:859, 862)

(c) aster jā-kasa lij wādā gondār s-i-hed
Aster POSS-kasa child to Gondar CONJ-3MSG-go:IPFV

alāk’k’ās-ācc
cry:PFV-3FSG
‘Aster cried when Kasa’s son went to Gondar.’ (Baye 2008:88)
Meyer (2012:175-176) instead claims that there is no rigid dichotomy between nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Adverbs and adjectives “may function as arguments and can be marked for definiteness.” In the following example, the word dähna ‘good, well’ is used as a noun (4:5a), an adjective (4:5b), and an adverb (4:5c).

(4:5a) kä-dähna täwäläd-∅ wäjm kä-dähna tät’äga-∅
into-good be.born:IMP-2MSG or into-good be.near:IMP-2MSG
‘Be born into a well-to-do (family) or be a protégé of one!’

(b) dähna säw
good person
‘good, honest, polite person’

(c) dähna idär-∅
good spend.night:IMP-2MSG
‘Good night! (lit. spend the night well)’ (Meyer 2011a:1189-1190)

4.2.2. Conjunctions

The conjunctions in Amharic include ijjä- ‘while, when’; i- ‘until, so long as’; si- ‘as, when’; li- ‘in order to’; zänd ‘so that, in order that’; kä- ‘after, since, rather than’; silä- ‘because, as’; bä-/bi- ‘whenever, as often as, even if’; indä-/indi- ‘in order that, instead of, as soon as’; iskä-/iski- ‘as long as’; gin ‘but’; nágär gin ‘however’; and mknijatumm ‘because’ (Leslau 1995: 660, 728, 748). Consider indä-, mknijatumm, and zänd in 4:6a, b, and c, respectively.

(4:6a) gämäd-u indä-tä-bät’täs-ä as-t-awäk’k’-ä-p
rope-DEF COMP-PASS-snap:PFV-3MSG CAUS-PASS-know:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ
‘He informed me that (or as soon as) the rope had snapped.’

(b) lä-gize-w mä-hed a-jí-ccal-imm mknijat-u-mm
at-time-DEF NMLZ-go NEG-3MSG be.able-NCM reason-DEF-FOC > because
mängäd-u c’äk’jitʷ-all
road-DEF be.muddy:CVB-3MSG.GEN-NPST
‘It is not possible to go for the time being because the road is muddy.’
As shown in examples 4:6a, b, and c above, some conjunctions are bound and others unbound; some precede the verb and others follow it. Some of the conjunctions also occur with a particular type of verb form (e.g. zänd with the ‘simple imperfect’).

4.2.3. Adpositions

There are prepositions and postpositions in Amharic. The prepositions include lä- ‘to, for’; bä- ‘with, by, through’; kä- ‘from, of, in’; wädä ‘toward, about, into’; iskä- ‘until, upto, including’; i- ‘in, on’; silä- ‘on account of, on behalf of, regarding’; indä- ‘such as, depending on’; alä- ‘without, outside of’; bästä- ‘to, in the direction of’. They can be attached to a noun, pronoun, or adjective. The postpositions include hala ‘behind, afterward’; zänd ‘by, at, close to’; akkababi ‘around, until’; mälläs ‘on this side of’; at‘ägalb ‘near’; wuc’c ‘outside, beside’; diräs ‘upto, as far as’; and gar ‘with, in the company of’. They are both nominal and verbal in origin (Leslau 1995) (see Hailu [1969:5], however, for the argument that the nouns are true nouns and that they head prepositional phrase). Prepositions (cf. kä- in 4:7a) and postpositions (cf. diräs in 4:7b) normally occur together (cf. bä- and wuc’c’ in 4:7c) and form a circumpositional construction (Leslau 1995:616).

(4:7a) kä-bit därräs-ä
at-house arrive:PFV-3MSG
‘He arrived home.’

(b) terara-w diräs inni-hid
mountain-DEF as far as 1PL-go:JUS
‘Let’s go as far as the mountain.’

(c) bä-bit-u wuc’c’ lij-occ ji-c’awwät-all-u
by-house-DEF outside child-PL 3-play:IPFV-NPST-3PL
‘Children are playing outside the house.’ (Leslau 1995:605, 643, 649)

Baye (2008:91) states that adpositions do not take any (inflectional or derivational) affixes and are not used for derivations of new words in the lan-
guage. In addition, he states that they have (adverbial) function of indicating reason, comparison, direction, time, place, and purpose.

As pointed out in Leslau (1995:660) (see also Baye 2008:92), some forms like bä, lä, i, kä, indä, iskä, and silä may function both as prepositions and conjunctions in a similar way to English since, i.e. ‘since yesterday’ (preposition) vs. ‘since he came’ (conjunction). Consider the following examples where 4:8a and 4:8b represent their use as prepositions and 4:8a’ and 4:8b’ as conjunctions.

(4:8a) silä-ne minimm a-t-ti-ccäggär
      about-I nothing NEG-3MSG-PASS-trouble:JUS
      ‘Don’t go to any trouble because of me (or on my account).’

(a’) waga-w widd silä-hon-ä
     price-DEF expensive CONJ-become:PFV-3MSG
     al-gäzz-ahu-t-imm
     NEG-buy:PFV-1SG-3MSG.OBJ-NCM
     ‘I did not buy it because of the high price (lit. Because the price was high).’

(b) wäre-w-in lä-wändimm-u näggär-ä-w
    news-DEF-ACC to-brother-3MSG.POSS tell:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
    ‘He told the news to his brother.’

(b’) kä-rs”w o gar li-∅-nnägaggär or lä-mä-nnägagär
     with-you(HON) with CONJ-3MSG-converse:IPFV to-NMLZ-converse
     mät’t’a-∅
     come:PFV-3MSG
     ‘He came to speak (or in order to) speak with you.’ (Leslau 1995:601, 609, 674, 710)

There is a good discussion in Sweetser (1988:393-394) about why this could be so. Cases, especially like those represented by 4:8b and b’, are understood to be the result of metaphorical extension in which there is a mapping of spatial motion onto event-chains (source-to-cause, location-to-condition, goal-to-purpose).

4.2.4. Causatives

Mengistu (2002) provides a detailed analysis of two kinds of valence-increasing derivations in Amharic: the causative (CAUSE (x, p) = x causes p) and the applicative (promotion of an oblique argument to a core syntactic
role). He distinguishes three ways of expressing causation in the language, i.e. lexical, morphological, and periphrastic. As the name indicates, a lexical causative is when “causative is an integral part of the lexical-semantics of the verb” (p.27) (cf. 4:9a). A morphological causative employs the prefixes a- and as- (cf. 4:9b-b’’’). The periphrastic causative involves the verb *adärräg ‘make, do’* (cf. 4:9c & c’). Finally, the affixes -ll- and -bb- are used as applicatives (cf. 4:9d & d’).

Lexical causative

(4:9a) wäddäk’-ä vs. t’al-ä
fall:PFV-3MSG drop:PFV-3MSG
‘fall’ ‘drop’

Morphological causative

(b) mät’t’a-Ø vs. a-mät’t’a-Ø
come:PFV-3MSG CAUS-come:PFV-3MSG
‘come’ ‘bring’

(b’) k’wärrät’-ä vs. as-k’wärrät’-ä
cut:PFV-3MSG CAUS-cut:PFV-3MSG
‘cut’ ‘make x cut y’

(b’’) Aster c’äffär-äcc
Aster dance:PFV-3FSG.OBJ
‘Aster danced.’

(b’’’) lämma aster-in as-c’äffär-Ø-at
Lemma Aster-ACC CAUS-dance:PFV-3MSG-3FSG.OBJ
‘Lemma made Aster dance.’

Periphrastic causative

(c) aster lämma wädä bet ind-i-hed a-därräg-äcc
Aster Lemma to house COMP-3MSG-go:IPFV CAUS-make:PFV-3FSG
‘Aster made Lemma go home.’

(c’) aster lämma-n mäs’haf ind-i-gäzza
Aster Lemma-ACC book COMP-3MSG-buy:IPFV

a-därräg-äcc-iw
CAUS-make:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘Aster made Lemma buy a book.’
Applicative

(d)  aster  met’rägiya-w-in  däjj  t’ärräg-äcc-ibb-ät
  Aster  broom-DEF-ACC  doorway  sweep:PFV-3FSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ
  ‘Aster swept a doorway with the broom.’

(d’)  aster-in  färräd-ä-H-at
  Aster-ACC  judge:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3FSG.OBJ
  ‘He judged in Aster’s favour (i.e. he acquitted her).’
  Mengistu (2002:28, 30, 47, 54, 57, 58)

The causatives may appear with both intransitive and transitive verbs. In the causative a-, the causer is directly involved in the event (‘bring’ in 4:9b), whereas it is indirectly involved in the causative as- (4:9b’). As shown in 4:9b”’ and (4:9)c’, the causee can take the accusative case (the subject of the intransitive verb becomes the object and the new argument becomes the subject). Note also that the periphrastic causative marker adärrägä ‘make, do’ has the role of the predicate of the matrix clause.

4.3. Observed features

The converb in Amharic is said to belong to the category of ‘general’ or ‘contextual’ converbs (Meyer 2012:173). That means the language sees these various uses as similar at some level, which explains why all can share the same verb form (converb) without distinct grammatical morphemes to distinguish between them. While this is basically true, there are other morphological and syntactic aspects of the grammar where the difference is manifested. We will look at some of the similarities and differences observed among converbs used in various functions in Amharic as well as in the other TSE languages investigated here.

4.3.1. Function

While some converbs in the inceptive construction are specifically used to identify the inception stage of the action of a following reference verb, along with the volitional and surprisal/emphatic readings associated with it, other converbs have developed functions of their own. That is, in addition to their canonical use as head of a subordinate clause that modifies a main clause or is used in a clause chain, they are used as adverb, adposition, causative/transitivizer, subordinating conjunction/complementizer, and part of a lexical juxtaposition.
4.3.1.1. Crossing category

Note that some converb forms are multifunctional. For instance, some converbs used as adpositions also function as conjunctions in a fashion similar to the Amharic ‘canonical’ categories discussed above. Consider the Amharic jämmiro/ jämmissra ‘start’ and ansitän/ ansito ‘pick up’ in examples 4:10a, a’ and 4:10b, b’, respectively (no meaning difference exists between jämmir- and ansit- in this use). Examples 4:10c, c’ prove to be a similar case in Zay with respect to the word baaläm/baatim ‘say’. In the examples, 4:10 a, b, c represent the use of converbs as prepositions and 4:10 a’, b’, c’ as conjunctions.

Amharic
(4:10a) jä-federal polis gin bäl-liju liju zigijit-occ
POSS-federal police but with-different different arrangement-PL

m-akbär jäm-i-jämmissi-r-a-w kā-zare
NMLZ-celebrate REL-3-begin:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ from-today

jämmiss-o indā-hon-a nä-w
begin:CVB-3MSG.GEN COMP-become:PFV-3MSG COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ

jā-sāmma-n-āw
REL-hear:PFV-1PL-3MSG.OBJ
‘What we heard is, however, that it is from today on that the federal police begins to celebrate with various ceremonies.’

(Fana Radio, 90 minutes, Friday morning, May 30, 2005 E.C.)

(a’) kā-tā-t’āmmānk’-ācc jämmiss-a s’ālōt-āŋna
CONJ-PASS-baptize:PFV-3FSG begin:CVB-3FSG.GEN pray-AGT

hon-all-ācc
become:PFV-NPST-3FSG
‘Ever since she was baptized she has been pious.’ (Leslau 1995:707)
(b) kā-mārfe=nna kā-kirr **ansit-ān** iskā
from-needle=and from-thread pick.up:CVB-1PL GEN upto
mak’āzk’āza=nna balā-k’ālām televiṣin j-all-u-t-in
cooler=and POSS-color television CONJ-exist:PFV-3PL-DEF-ACC
k’us-occ hulla jamm-inn-agāŋp’âw bā-liiwuwut’
material-PL all CONJ-1PL-find:IPPFV-3MSG.OBJ through-exchange
ammakajnät nā-w
means COP:NPOST-3MSG.OBJ
‘It is through exchange that we get everything from needle and thread to a cooler (refrigerator) and color television materials.’

(b’) kā-timhirt bet kā-wā’t’a-∅ **ansit-o**
from-school house CONJ-go.out:PFV-3MSG pick.up:CVB-3MSG.GEN
minimm al-sārta-∅-mm
nothing NEG-WORK:PFV-3MSG-NCM
‘He hasn’t done anything since he left school.’ (Leslau 1995:707)

Zay
(c) igzeer lä-zaaj-iin **baal-ā-m** fāt’ār-e-j-uu
god for-zay-FOC say:PFV-3MSG-CVBI create:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ-DCM
‘God created it (the fish) for Zay.’

(c’) mājii-j bä-k’ād-it iirāni ahmi lä-daaimaa-nā
water-DEF CONJ-fetch:PFV-3FSG later also to-baby-3FSG.POSS
loogrāgāb **baa-t-im** jārjār haan-it-im
CONJ-return:JUS say:PFV-3FSG-CVBI hurry:IDEO become:PFV-3FSG-CVBI
girāgāb-it
return:PFV-3FSG
‘And after she fetched the water, (in order) to get to her baby, she returned quickly.’ (record)

Similarly, Meyer (2012:176) notes that “some converbs which became lexicalized adverbs may also function as nouns, or converbs which become nouns may also be used as adjectives”. Hence, **kārm-o** ‘after a while’ (lit. ‘spend the rainy season’/’spend the year’), listed under adverbs in Meyer (2012:177), is shown to take a preposition (**lä-kārm-o** ‘for next year, season’)

127 teaminitiatives.org/2014/06/22/የፍላጎት-ግጭት-በጨዋዎቹ-ምድር-በማወ/
and a possessive marker (jä-kärmo ‘of-next year’) in Getahun (1995). Note that Getahun instead argues that kärm-o is a noun itself. He claims there are no lexical time and place adverbs in Amharic. For him, time adverbs are prepositional phrases, noun phrases, and gerundive verbs (i.e. converbs), while place adverbs are prepositional phrases.

4.3.1.2. Crossing language

It also appears that because of language contact, some converbs with a particular function in one language may be used by speakers of another language for a similar function. This is particularly true of Amharic converbs. In the following example, the Amharic converb dägm ‘repeat’ is used with an adverbial (cf. 4:11a) and has a conjunctural (cf. 4:11b) function as a borrowing in Selt’i.

Selt’i – adverb

(4:11a) mirt-im dägm-o ji-t-märta-n
crop-also repeat:CVB-3MSG.GEN 3MSG-PASS-produce:IPFV-AUX
‘Crop also is produced.’

Selt’i – conjunction

(b) dägm-o afi-na l-una t’äk’äs-u-f-in
repeat:CVB-3MSG.GEN 2FSG-ACC to-2MSG propose:PFV-3PL-2FSG.OBJ-AUX

ba-bal-u
CONJ-say:PFV-3PL
‘Furthermore, if they, say they, have proposed you to him…’ (record)

4.3.1.3. Optionality/obligatoriness

As a result of their function or semantic contribution, some converbs may be obligatory constituents of a sentence or a structure, while others are not. Thus, converbs with a causative function and those that form lexical juxtapositions are basically mandatory, otherwise the sentence becomes ungrammatical or obtains a different meaning/interpretation (cf. the causative in 4:12a”). Adverbs are obviously optional (although see example 4:12b’, where the Selt’i consultant is a little uneasy about its absence). Converbs with conjunctural and adpositional function could be obligatory or optional. Recall that inceptive markers are optional.
4.3.2. Morphological/syntactic categories

4.3.2.1. Agreement

It was previously pointed out that Amharic converbs used as adverbs show various ranges of sensitivity toward agreement: most fossilize 3MSG.SBJ, others show strong preferences toward it, and still others must agree with the subject. This is also true of converbs with adpositional and conjunctional/complementizer functions. Verbs in the inceptive construction must agree with the subject (and the object), unless the reference is a verbal noun and they agree with it. Agreement should be seen as an indicator of the level of grammaticalization/lexicalization of a converb, i.e. the more it fossilizes 3MSG.SBJ, the more grammaticalized/lexicalized it has become. Consider the following examples, where the converbs with adverbial (cf. 4:13a) and adpositional (4:13b) functions alternatively agree with 1SG and a fossilized 3MSG subjects.

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128 Note that the focus here is on comparison of some features of converbs with various uses in light of the converbs in the inceptive construction. A full account of the nature of each and every converb requires further investigation. One could, for instance, investigate whether converbs with causative function form a complex predicate in TSE. Bear in mind that some scholars argue for the light verb status of verbs with causative function like the Amharic adärräg- ‘do’ in examples 4:9c, c’ (Mengistu 2002:53, fn7). See also Alsina (1997) on the ‘causative complex predicate’ in Romance.
Amharic – adverb

(4:13a) sigä fäs’s’im-o (fäs’s’imm-e) al-bäla-mm
meat  accomplish:CVB-3MSG.GEN (-1SG.GEN)  NEG-1SG-eat:PFV-NCM
‘I don’t eat meat at all.’

Amharic – adposition

(b) kä-zare jāmmir-o (jāmmirr-e) bät-tigat
from-today  begin:CVB-3MSG.GEN (-1SG.GEN)  with-diligence

i-sär-all-åhu
1SG-work:PFV-NPST-1SG
‘Beginning today (or from today on) I will work diligently.’ (Leslau 1995:368, 650)

In connection to this, Getahun’s (1995) way of categorizing forms based on agreement, i.e. a two-way dichotomy in which a verb that agrees is categorically verbal (cf. 4:14a) and one that does not is non-verbal (cf. 4:14b), is less appealing.

Amharic – categorically verbal

(4:14a) aster k’äd-m-a mät’t’-acc129
Aster  advance:CVB-3SG.GEN  come:PFV-3SG
‘Aster came in advance.’

Amharic – categorically non-verbal

(b) aster kär-m-o ti-mät’-all-äcc
Aster  spend.the.year:CVB-3MSG.GEN  3FSG-come:PFV-NPST-3SG
‘Aster will come next year.’ (Getahun 1995:129-130)

This does not only neglect intermediates like 4:13, but also misses cases like 4:15a and b below, where the verbs (or verb phrases) af awt’ita ‘having let a mouth out’ and järwaccäwin sät’ítäw ‘having given their ears’ may agree with the subject, but may encode no verbal event/action as such and function as a modifier instead of a predicate, which is one of the core criteria characterizing verbhood (Schachter & Shopen 2007).

129 Note also that k’äd-m-o itself behaves as a noun, too, as in jä-k’äd-mow prezidant ‘the former president’, where it takes a possessive marker (recall the discussion on p. 148). A form that seems to develop out of k’ädmo is k’ädäm. Consider example i.

Amharic

(i) hulätt-u-n-im k’ädäm al-Ø-awk’-accäw-im
two-DEF-ACC-FOC before  NEG-1SG-know:PFV-NCM
‘I don’t know both of them before.’ (Chanyalew 2008:174)
Amharic – agreement (adverb)

(4:15a) የሰንድም-ዋን እ صفحة መውት-ጣ ወውታ-
brother-3FSG.POSS mouth/word CAUS-go.out:CVB-3FSG GEN go.out:IMP

ማ-ላት እ የሰ-ማ-ት-
NMLZ-say CONJ-NMLZ-NEG-brave:IPFV

‘Because she is not brave enough to boldly say to her brother ‘go out!’…’ (Bewketu 2012:43)

(b) እሩ-ሰርጨ-ሆ እ Terrace እ-
ear-3PL.POSS-ACC give:CVB-3PL GEN 3-listen:IPFV-NPST-3PL

‘They listen closely.’


More or less the same agreement pattern can be seen in the other languages as well. Agreement between the elements is obligatory, otherwise ungrammaticality results, as in the following Zay and Selt’i examples 4:16a” and b”. The Harari conjunction in 4:16c freezes the 3MSG subject form.

Zay – adverb

(4:16a) ምያ እ ከ-ቃ እ ከ-
slow:IDEO say:IMP-2MSG-CVB go:IMP-2MSG

‘Go slowly.’ (Leslau 1999:82)

Zay – subordinate clause

(ia) እኔብር-ዓት-ማ ከዳን-ማ
bury:PFV-3FSG-CVBI cover:PFV-3FSG

‘She having buried she covered (the corpse).’ (Leslau 1999:81)

(b) እኔብር-ዓማ ከዳን
bury:PFV-3MSG-CVBI cover:PFV.3MSG

‘He having buried he covered (the corpse).’ (elic.)

(c) እ እኔብር-ዓት-ማ ም ከዳን
she bury:PFV-3FSG-CVBI he cover:PFV-3MSG

‘She having buried (the corpse) he covered it.’ (elic.)

(d) * እኔብር-ዓት-ማ ከዳን
bury:PFV-3FSG-CVBI cover:PFV-3MSG

‘S/he having buried s/he covered (the corpse).’ (elic.)

130 Sometimes the overt presence of a subject seems to have an effect on the grammaticality of a sentence. The absence of the two overt subject pronouns for the converb that heads a dependent clause and the reference verb results in ungrammaticality in id.

Zay – subordinate clause

(ia) እኔብር-ዓት-ማ ከዳን-ማ
bury:PFV-3FSG-CVBI cover:PFV-3FSG

‘She having buried she covered (the corpse).’ (Leslau 1999:81)

(b) እኔብር-ዓማ ከዳን
bury:PFV-3MSG-CVBI cover:PFV.3MSG

‘He having buried he covered (the corpse).’ (elic.)

(c) እ እኔብር-ዓት-ማ ም ከዳን
she bury:PFV-3FSG-CVBI he cover:PFV-3MSG

‘She having buried (the corpse) he covered it.’ (elic.)

(d) * እኔብር-ዓት-ማ ከዳን
bury:PFV-3FSG-CVBI cover:PFV-3MSG

‘S/he having buried s/he covered (the corpse).’ (elic.)

152
(a’) ‘jik’ bol-u-m hud-u
slow:IDEO say:IMP-2PL-CVB go:IMP-2PL
‘Go slowly.’ (elic.)

(a’’) *‘jik’ bäl-im hud-u
slow:IDEO say:IMP-2MSG-CVB go:IMP-2PL
‘Go slowly.’ (elic.)

Selt’i – adposition

(b) hadd sab hibbijt-eet nak’-Ø-aane fawa
one person this-place gets.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII Addis Ababa

b-oot’a-t
CONJ-go:PFV-3MSG
‘If a person goes from this place to Addis Ababa.’ (Gutt 1987:255)

(b’). hadd sab hibbijt-eet nak’-aat-ane fawa
one person this-place gets.up:PFV-3FSG-CVBII Addis Ababa

b-oot’a-t
CONJ-go:PFV-3FSG
‘If a person (woman) goes from this place to Addis Ababa.’ (elic.)

(b’’) *hadd sab hibbijt-eet nak’-Ø-aane fawa
one person this-place gets.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII Addis Ababa

b-oot’a-t
CONJ-go:PFV-3FSG
‘If a person goes from this place to Addis Ababa.’ (elic.)

Harari – conjunction

(c) zi-han-a j-āhni-ma zāht’āntan kifil
REL-become:PFV-3MSG 3-become:PFV-CVB ninth grade

zāht’āntan kifli-le
ninth grade-about
‘Anyway, ninth grade… about ninth grade…’ (record)
4.3.2.2. Transitivity/reciprocality/passivity

4.3.2.2.1. Transitivity/reciprocality

Amharic converbs used in other functions, like adverbs and adpositions, are found to block transitivity (or a causative marker) and reciprocality marking. In the following examples (4:17a, a’), there is no distinction in transitivity between the verb tämällis-a and its causative counterpart mällis-o in their use as lexicalized adverbs. In example 4:17b, there is also no reciprocality interpretation, as there is nothing they did to each other, except disappear together.

Amharic: adverb – transitivity

(4:17a) tä-mällis-a angät-wa-n ak’äräk’är-äcc=ına
   ANTI-C-RETURN:CVB-3SG.GEN neck-3SG.Poss-ACC lower.neck:PFV-3SG=and
   ‘She lowered her neck again and…’

(a’) t’urunba näf-i-w mällis-o c’amma
   TRUMPET-PLAY:AGT-DEF return:CVB-3MSG.GEN SHOES
   säfi-w-in t’äjjäk’-ä
   SEWER-DEF-ACC ask:PFV-3MSG
   ‘The man who plays the trumpet asked the shoe maker again.’
   (Berhane 2004E.C.:33, 49)

Amharic: adverb – reciprocality

(b) t’äk’lala täjajiz-accihu t’äft-accihu
   total grasp.REC:PFV-2PL.GEN disappear:CVB-2PL.GEN
   ‘You totally disappear together!’ (record)

There are such instances in the other languages as well. Consider the following Selt’i examples where no causativity is present contrary to what the form of the converbs suggests, i.e. a causative marker a- prefixed to the converb in 4:18a and a transitivizing ‘light verb’ a/tini ‘do’ in 4:18a’. On the other hand, there is no blocking of reciprocality marking in the inceptive construction on footnote 80 in example i, repeated below as 4:18b. Even though there is no actual grasping action involved, the converb syncs with the reference verb, which depicts reciprocality, i.e. hitting each other.

154
Selt’i: adverb – transitivity

(4:18a) **aa-baz-ä-O**

CAUS-increase:PFV-3MSG-CVB|I

conj-grow:PFV-3MSG with-fire

magd-u-j-an
burn:PFV-3MSG.OBJ-AUX

‘If it (the hair) grows at length, it will be burnt with fire.’

(record)

(a’) **k’äs af-Ø-ni**

slow:IDEO do:PFV-3MSG-CVBII steal:PFV-3MSG-3FSG.OBJ-CVBII go:PFV-3MSG

‘He carefully stole her (money…) and left.’ (record)

Selt’i: inceptive – reciprocality

(b) **tinzaz-Ø-one**

tänakät-u

grasp.RECP:PFV-3PL-CVBII hit.RECP:PFV-3PL

‘They hit one another.’ (emphatic, surprisal) (elic.)

4.3.2.2.2. *Passivization*

As we discussed earlier, the inceptive construction is incompatible with passivization. However, converbs used as adverbs, causatives/transitivizers, and subordinating conjunctions/complementizers show a mixed behavior. Example 4:19a-b’ shows instances of Amharic and Selt’i lexicalized adverbs and adpositions they have been passivized (cf. 4:19a, b’), occur with a passive main verb (cf. 4:19b), or are incompatible with passivization (cf. 4:19a’). The causative in Zay and Harari is shown to be permissible and not permissible with passivization in 4:19c and c’, respectively. Consider also 4:19d’ and 4:19e’, where converbs with conjunctional and adpositional uses, respectively, are reported to be incompatible with passivization in Selt’i.

Adverb

Amharic – adverb

(4:19a) **jä-mäzba gädam hon tä-bl-o**

POSS-mäzba monastery be(come):IDEO PASS-say:CVB-3MSG.GEN

mä-k’k’at’äl-u=nn

NMLZ-burn-DEF=and

‘That the monastery of Mäzba got burnt deliberately and…’

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131 http://freedom4ethiopian.wordpress.com/2013/05/28/23-2/
Amharic – Adverb
(a’)  (*tä-fäs’s’im-o/fis’s’um tä-t’älla-Ø
(PASS)-accomplish:CVB-3MSG.GEN/absolute PASS-hate:PFV-3MSG
‘He is hated utterly.’ (elic.)

Selt’i – Adposition
(b)  k’uce li-ʔaʃʃin jāmir-e-Ø jā-t-ite-n
kuche from-here start:PFV-3MSG-CVB 3MSG-PASS-do:IPFV-AUX
‘Kuche (hair style) is made (starting) from this.’ (record)

Selt’i – adverb
(b’)  lodin j-äş-e j-öb-u-h-an
slow:IDEO PASS?-do:PFV-3MSG 3-give:IPFV-3PL-2MSG.OBJ-AUX
‘You will be given (it) slowly.’ (record)

Causative
Zay – causative
(c)  l-ijaa-t bär t-inz-ä-m tä-mät’
for-I-FOC stick PASS-grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVB PASS-come:PFV
‘Is it to beat me that you brought a stick?’
Lit. ‘Is it for me that a stick was grasped and you came?’
(elic.)

Harari – causative
(c’)  *ika min tā-lāhad-a-ma tā-let’-a
INTERJ what PASS-grasp:PFV-3PL-CVB PASS-go:PFV-3MSG
‘Ok, what is taken?’ (elic.)

Conjunction
Selt’i – conjunction
(d)  i-k’adm-aane ataakilt i-kaf-ane gortanna
3MSG-be.first:IPFV-CVB 3MSG-seek:IPFV-CVBII eucalyptus 3MSG-seek:IPFV-CVBII boards
i-falt’-aan
3MSG-split:IPFV-AUX
‘First, he seeks eucalyptus and splits boards.’ (Gutt 1987:223)

(d’)  *tä-k’ädam-aane ataakilt i-kaf-ane
PASS-be.first:PFV-3MSG-CVBII eucalyptus 3MSG-seek:IPFV-CVBII

gortanna i-falt’-aan
boards 3MSG-split:IPFV-AUX
‘First, he seeks eucalyptus and splits boards.’ (elic.)
Adposition

Selt’i – adposition

(e)  b-aadd-eet  \textit{nak’-aane}  gana  eet  l-ahiid-oot
from-one-place  get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII  other  place  to-go-NMLZ
‘To go from one place to another…’  (Gutt 1987:255)

(e’)  *b-aadd-eet  \textit{tä-nak’-aane}  gana  eet  l-ahiid-oot
from-one-place  PASS-get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBII  other  place  to-go-NMLZ
‘To go from one place to another…’  (elic.)

The above Zay sentence (4:19c) should be best understood as pragmatically marked. It is said when mocking somebody (in the sense of ‘how dare you?’). The source of the passive marker \textit{tä-} on the intransitive verb \textit{mät’} ‘come’ could be the preceding transitive verb and may be seen as indicating the unification of the two verbs. However, data from other languages like Amharic suggest that this assertion does not necessarily have to be the case. Example 4:20 shows that the Amharic passive marker \textit{tä-} attaches to the intransitive verb \textit{hedo} ‘go’. The subject of the passive verb can be interpreted as ‘going’.

Amharic – passivization

(4:20)  \textit{ja-n}  jä-gäbäre  mahbär  tat’ak’i  k-and
that-ACC  POSS-farmer  association  soldier  about-one  > about

sost  arat  amät  bäfit  agänän-än-äw
three  four  year  earlier  find:PFV-1PL-3MSG.OBJ

k’äss  tä-bl-o  bä-zämääd
slow:IDEO  PASS-say:CVB-3MSG.GEN  via-relative

bäkkul  tä-hed-o  bä-mäkära
way  PASS-go:CVB-3MSG.GEN  with-hardship

nä-w  jä-tä-gänän-ä-w
COP:NPIST-3MSG.OBJ  COMP-PASS-find:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘We found that soldier of the farmer association about three or four years ago. He was found quietly/slowly via (his) relatives and with great hardship.’\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{132}ww.addisadmassnews.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=13791:ኢንተርቪው-ከዶክተር-ሙሉጌታ-በቀለ-ጋር&Itemid=209
4.3.2.3. TAM

We have seen in the previous chapter that converbs that mark the inceptive phase are not restricted to appearing in a single TAM form. The reference verb could also be drawn from dependent or independent forms. This seems to be the case with converbs used in a variety of functions. Such a case is illustrated below, where a lexicalized adverb is shown to take perfective and imperfective aspect forms in examples 4:21a and a’ in Zay. The reference verb could be independent, as in 4:21b, or dependent, as in 4:21b’. There could also be a mismatch between the converb and the reference verb. The converbs with source (4:21c) and cause/reason (4:21c’) adpositional uses in the perfective appear with an infinitive and imperfective reference verbs in Selt’i, respectively. And finally, examples 4:21d and d’ show that a converb that is used in the formation of lexical juxtaposition can appear with dependent and independent reference verbs in Amharic.

Zay: adverb

Lexicalized adverb: Perfective

(4:21a)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adare</th>
<th>Selt’i</th>
<th>ju-bi-im-ij-al-ej</th>
<th>k’ädäm-ä-nim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nar</td>
<td>PST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Were those that are called the Harari and the Selt’i (there) early?’ (record)

Lexicalized adverb: imperfective

(a’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>l-aaddimni</th>
<th>t-aa-tiid</th>
<th>ti-k’ädim-im</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to-anyone</td>
<td>CONJ-NEG-tell:IPFV</td>
<td>3FSG-be.first:IPFV-CVBI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>l-aabbaa-ni=waa</th>
<th>l-aajeetä-ni</th>
<th>Ø-tiid-aat-u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to-father-3FSG.POSS=and</td>
<td>to-mother-3FSG.POSS</td>
<td>3FSG-tell:IPFV-PST.3FSG-DCM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Before anyone else, she tells to her father and mother first.’ (record)
Zay: adverb
Reference verb: perfective (dependent)

(b) bä-izijaabheer fák’aad sim bool-u-m asuumod-u-m
by-God will quite:IDEO say:PFV-3PL-CVBI travel:PFV-3PL-CVBI

addisaabä jiij-u
Addis Ababa arrive:PFV-3PL
‘By God’s will, they simply traveled and arrived Addis Ababa.’ (record)

Reference verb: imperative (independent)

(b’) jik’ bäl-Ø-im hidi
slow:IDEO say:IMP-2MSG-CVBI go:IMP.2MSG
‘Go slowly.’ (Leslau 1999:82)

Selt’i – adposition
Perfactive – verbal noun/infinitive (dependent)

(c) aku-nga dämo tā-fāja gojo nāk’-ān-an jāore
now-also also from-nice cottage get.up:PFV-1PL-CVBI big

gar lä-mm-ot alon
house to-build-NMLZ Isn’t it

‘And now, (the reason that we continue to make effort) isn’t it to build a big house from the nice cottage (that we already possess)?’ (record)

Selt’i – adposition
Perfactive – imperfective (independent)

(c’) b-uha nāk’-Ø-on ji-fenan-on
because-3MSG get.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBI 3-fight:PFV-AUX

‘They fight because of it/this.’ (record)

133 Báizijaabheer is corrected as biigzeer.
134 Dämo is an Amharic word. Its equivalent in Selt’i is expressed by -nga, as in ʔumat-ji-nga ‘also the people’, or by gandä, as in miʃt-im-ten gandä ‘and the woman also’. Gutt (1997:956) identifies the meaning of -nga as ‘additive’.
Amharic: lexical juxtaposition
Converb – verbal noun/infinitive (dependent)
(d) jih-inn-in ijj-amäkaññ-ä jä-säw gänzäb
this-ACC-FOC CONJ-excuse:PFV-3MSG POSS-person money

affagr-o m-ajät-u mindin nä-w
across:CVB-3MSG.GEN NMLZ-see-3MSG.POSS what COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ
‘Why is he envying people’s money by using this as an excuse?’ (Zenneb 1857E.C: 21)

Amharic: lexical juxtaposition
Converb – imperfective (independent)
(d”) iwnät-ajña fik’ir firhat-in a-wt’it-o
truth-ADVZR love fear-ACC CAUS-go.out:CVB-3MSG.GEN

ji-t’il-all
3MSG-throw:IPFV-NPST
‘True love gets rid of fear.’
(Sheger Radio, Zema Fikir, April 04, 2013 Part Two)

4.3.2.4. Negation
Converbs used as conjunctions are interpreted as being outside the scope of negation or have to take up their basic meaning (cf. ajhunima, as in 4:22a’). However, they may occur in a negated clause (cf. elää ‘there isn’t’ in 4:22b). Converbs with adpositional and causative functions vary in their restrictions on negation (cf. examples 4:22c and c’ show that the causative in Harari cannot be negated). Adverbs generally can be negated, but exceptions exist, as in 4:22d”’. The negation marker is on the main verb in 4:22d, d’’, and d”’, but may also be on the converb, as in 4:22d’’.

Conjunction
Harari – conjunction
(4:22a) jä-hni-ma dilagä-zo dilag-a baj-a-ñ
3-become:IPFV-CVB work-3MSG work:IMP-3MSG say:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ
baj-a-ma
say:PFV-3MSG-CVB
‘Nevertheless, he told me to work.’ (record)
(a')  **a-j-huni-ma** dilagä-zo dilag-a  
**NEG-3-become:IPFV-CVB**  **work-3MSG.POSS**  **work:IMP-2MSG**

baj-a-n  baj-a-ma  
say:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ say:PFV-3MSG-CVB  
‘That never occurring, he told me to work.’ (elic.)

Selt’i – conjunction  
negation – main verb  
(b)  silat tää-Ø-säägad-ä  **näk’ääl-ä-Ø** injë-k  
salat CONJ-PASS-bow:PFV-3MSG pick.up:PFV-3MSG-CVBI hand-3MSG.POSS  

nääc-i-j-en  gis  eelä  
touch:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ-AUX thing there.is.not  
‘Since (time) Salat is practiced, there is nothing that he gets his hands on.’(record)

Causative  
Harari – causative  
(c)  *näfsi-zo-w  mut’i lähad-a-ma a-let’-a-m  
soul-3MSG.POSS-ACC only grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVB NEG-go:PFV-3MSG-NCM  
‘He didn’t only take his soul (himself) (to Harar).’ (elic.)

(c’)  *näfsi-zo-w  mut’i z-āl-lähad-a-be let’-a  
soul-3MSG.POSS-ACC only REL-NEG-grasp:PFV-3MSG-while go:PFV-3MSG  
‘He went (to Harar) without only grasping/holding his soul (himself).’ (elic.)

Adverb  
Amharic – adverb  
(d)  nägärgin  **c’ärriś-ān** a-nni-t’la-w  
but complete:CVB-1PL.GEN NEG-1PL-hate:JUS-3MSG.OBJ  
‘But let’s not hate him completely.’ (Zenneb 1857:35)

Zay – adverb  
(d’)  banaa-mi ji-t’oor-ii  gizee sim  
coffee-also 3MSG-call:PFV.PASS-3MSG time be.quite:IDEO  

**a-j-bil-im**  **a-j-tiguub-u**  
**NEG-3-say:PFV-CVBI**  **NEG-3-sit:PFV-3PL**  
‘When one is invited for coffee, one does not simply sit (i.e. one also simultaneously work).’ (record)
Selt’i – adverb
(d’’’) uhä hullimgiz føje-Ø al-säbär-ä
he everything finish:PFV-3MSG-CVB1 NEG-break:PFV-3MSG
‘He did not break everything completely [= finishing].’ (elic.)

Selt’i – adverb
(d’’’) *tädäbäl-one al-afenn-o-t-an
join:3PL-CVBII NEG-accompany-3PL-3MSG.OBJ-AUX
‘They have not accompanied him together.’ (elic.)

4.3.3. Verb form/type

4.3.3.1. Long/short conversbs

We have seen that short and long conversbs are distinguished in the inceptive construction in Zay and Selt’i. This is also the case in other uses of conversbs. Here are examples from Zay (cf. 4:23a, a’) and Selt’i (cf. 4:23b, b’), where the two conversb types function as adverbs and conjunctions, respectively.

Zay: adverb – short conversb (-m)
(4:23a) innaa uhnä-tä j-aaboz-ii-m j-oors-ii-m
and it-FOC 3-increase:IPFV-IMPRS-CVB1 3-plough:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS-CVB1

bä-täguugu ji-hott-ii-l135136
in-tegugu 3-sit:IPFV.PASS-IMPRS-AUX
‘So, it is ploughed (i.e. produced) in abundance and put in the tegugu.’
(record)

Zay: adverb – long conversb (-nim)
(a’) lä-miic’ii-t-mi t-aagragbi-nim utnä-m
CONJ-wash:PFV-3FSG-also 3FSG-return:IPFV-CVBII it-FOC

ti-läbis-aat
3FSG-wear:IPFV-AUX
‘If she washes (a cloth), she wears it again (i.e. she doesn’t wear another cloth).’ (record)

135 *innaa
Amharic: (i)naa ‘and’
136 täguugu ‘big container to keep grain’
Selt’i: conjunction – short converb (-a/-a realized as zero morpheme)

(b) aku johan bi-l-tsäʔɨl gin täk’ebäl-o-t-ān
now behold CONJ-1SG-ask:IPFV time accept:PFV-3PL-3FSG.OBJ-AUX

täk’ebäl-o-t-ān bāl-o-Ø eewad-u
accept:PFV-3PL-3FSG.OBJ-AUX say:PFV-3PL-CVBI tell:PFV-3PL
‘Now behold when I ask they, told me that they, have accepted her.’ (record)

Selt’i: conjunction – long converb (-ane)

(b’) baadi tidzaadz-aan bā-gogoʃa-j jā-nāk’-ā
country 3MSG:fight-AUX because-hide-DEF CONJ-get.up:PFV-3MSG

baal-ane j-awaalk-an silt’e
say:3MSG-CVBI 3MSG-tell-AUX Silt’e
‘Selt’i tells that the people fought because of the hide.’ (Short stories)

4.3.3.2. Verbs with coordination/iterative (while)

Regarding the form of the light verb in the inceptive construction in Amharic, we have seen that it is not restricted to appearing only with the converb forms. Some other uses also share this feature. So, it is permissible to combine a verb with the causative and conjunction functions with the reference verb using the coordinating conjunction =nna ‘and’ (cf. the conjunction alunna in 4:24a). However, as pointed out in Motomichi (2001), this use is dispreferred with converses in adverb (or circumstantial) use (cf. the absence of the lexicalized adverbial meaning ‘together’ in 4:24b).
Occurring with the iterative marker, and thus a different verbal form, is not restricted to verbs in the inceptive use. In example 4:25a, for instance, the causative jazä ‘grasp’ occurs with the iterative marker ijjä- in the perfective form. Consider also example 2:48, repeated below as 4:25b, which shows the ‘double introduction’ of speech by two verbs (or complementizers), one of which is in the imperfective form with an iterative marker s- ‘while’.
Amharic – causative/transitivizer (iterative)

(4:25a) kä-nnärsu-m ijjandandu bā-amāt-u bā-amāt-u
among-they-also everyone by-year-DEF by-year-DEF

gās’s’ābārākāt-u-n jā-birr=nnā jā-wārk’ ik’a
present-DEF-ACC GEN-silver=and GEN-gold vessel

libs=innā jā-t’or māssarija jītu-m fārās-occ=inna
cloth=and GEN-war tool perfume-also horse-PL=and

bāk’lo-wocc ijjā-jaz-ā jī-māt’ā näbbār
mule-PL ITER-grasp:PFV-3MSG 3MSG-come:PFV PST

‘And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of
gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year
by year.’  (1 Kings 10:25)

Amharic – complementizer (iterative)

(b) wāld fit’ur bil-o s-i-l al-ā
son creature say:CVB-3MSG.GEN CONJ-3MSG-say:IPFV say:PFV-3MSG

‘He said that the son was created.’  (Appleyard 2003:116-117)

In the other languages, the coordinating conjunctions cannot be used as an
alternative to converses with various uses. Except in the case of converses
with an adverbial function in Harari, as in 4:26a’, it is less acceptable to re-
place converses with other functions by the iterative or ‘while’, as in the
Selt’ti example of a conjunction in 4:26b’. However, other alternatives can be
employed, as in the Zay converge heading a subordinate clause in 4:26c’ and
c’’, i.e. using words like bisāgaaajs ‘everyday’ or/and reduplication jaabiic
jaabiicim. Compare this with the regular iterative sentence in 4:26d.

Harari – adverb

(4:26a) an wālakin fit’nāt-be haf ba-hu-ma bārār-hu-ma
I but speed-with get.up:IDEO say:PFV-1SG-CVB fly:PFV-1SG-CVB

azode har-hu
there go:PFV-1SG
‘But I quickly got up and quickly (i.e. while flying) went there.’  (record)

(a’) an wālakin fit’nāt-be haf ba-hu-ma
I but speed-with get.up:IDEO say:PFV-1SG-CVB

kil-bārār-hu-p azode har-hu
while-fly:PFV-1SG-1SG.OBJ there go:PFV-1SG
‘But I quickly got up and quickly (i.e. while flying) went there.’  (elic.)
Selt’i – conjunction

(b) baadi tidzaadz-aan bä-gogoʃa-j jä-näk’-ä
country 3MSG:fight-AUX because-hide-DEF CONJ-get.up:PFV-3MSG

baal-ane j-awaalk-an silt’e
say:PFV-3MSG-CVBI 3MSG-tell:IPFV-AUX Silt’e
‘Selt’i tells that the people fought because of the hide.’ (short stories)

(b’) *baadi tidzaadz-aan bä-gogoʃa-j jä-näk’-ä
country 3MSG:fight-AUX because-hide-DEF CONJ-get.up:PFV-3MSG

ti-bl j-awaalk-an silt’e
while/when-3MSG:say 3MSG-tell:IPFV-AUX Silt’e
‘Selt’i tells that the people fought because of the hide.’ (elic.)

Zay – subordinate clause

(c) bil-e ac’iräk’-ä-m ji-hid-äl
work-DEF finish:PFV-3MSG-CVBI 3MSG-go:IPFV-PRS
‘He will leave, having finished the work.’ (Leslau 1999:82)

(c’) bisägaajs bil-äni j-aabiici-m ji-hiid-äl
everyday work-3MSG.POSS 3MSG-finish:IPFV-CVBI 3MSG-go:IPFV-TNS
‘Everyday, he goes, having finished his work.’ (elic.)

(c’’) bisägaajs bil-äni j-aabiic j-aabiici-m
everyday work-3MSG.POSS ITER ~ 3MSG-finish:IPFV-CVBI

ji-hiid-äl
3MSG-go-TNS
‘Everyday, he goes while finishing his work.’ (elic.)

Cf.

(d) t’urumbä t-iinäfi mät’
trumpet while-3MSG-play:IPFV come:PFV-3MSG
‘He came while playing trumpet.’ (elic.)

4.3.3.3. Phonological processes
As noted in the discussion in the earlier chapter, no phonological process has been observed on the converbs functioning as inceptive markers setting them apart from their (major) function as head of a dependent clause in Amharic. However, other converbs show such features. For instance, the adverb abr-äin ‘together’/’along with’ in 4:24b above has undergone deletion. It is a reduced form of the full verb abbirän ‘join up’ (*abbirän ‘together’). Similarly, dägmo can take the form dämmo in its adverbial and conjunctional
uses, where /g/ assimilates to /ml/. Consider examples 4:27a and b (see also Leslau 1969:185).

Amharic – conjunction

(4:27a) **dägm-o**  
irs\( ^w \_ \) wäjm lela säw  
repeat:CVB- 3MSG.GEN you(HON) or another person

j-as-attäm-ää-w jä-giʔiz k’wank’wä  
REL-CAUS-publish:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ POSS- Ge’ez language

säwasäw bi-j-agäɲn-u ind-i-lik-u-li-jn  
grammar CONJ-3-find:IPFV- 3PL COMP-3-send:IPFV-APPL-1SG.OBJ

i-lämmin-all-ähu  
1-beg:IPFV-NPST-1SG

‘And again I request you to send to me if you find a Ge’ez grammar which either you or someone else has published.’ (Ullendorff 1972:242-243)

(b) **dämm-o**  
bä-bäga issaccäw ji-mät’-all-u  
repeat:CVB- 3MSG.GEN in-summer he(HON) 3-come:IPFV-NPST-3.HON

särawit c’in-äw  
army load:CVB-3.HON.GEN

‘Once more he comes in the summer with loads of army.’ (record)

More generally, frequently occurring verbs are shown to undergo phonological processes in their converb and also non-converb forms. The converb jiz-o or the perfective jaz-ä ‘grasp’ have undergone phonological processes. Recall that the converb jiz-o is a reduced form of ihizo. It is further pointed out in Leslau (1969:188-189) that the frequently occurring verb adärrägä ‘make, do’ loses the consonant \(d\) in various verb forms, including the converb. Thus, it may appear in its full converb form adrigo or in its reduced form argo ‘he making’. Similarly, the verb bhl ‘to say’ has acquired various reduced perfect forms in a number of languages. For instance, it becomes baaja ‘he said’ in Harari, alä in Amharic, and balä in Wolane.

4.3.4. Distribution

4.3.4.1. Co-occurrence

A. Causative

The converb jiz- ‘grasp’ in Amharic with a causative function generally occurs with intransitive verbs of motion like wät ’t’a ‘exit’, k’ärräbä ‘ap-
proach’, and hedä ‘go’ (e.g. jizo wöt’ä ‘he took out (s.th)’) (note that the
converb is not used with intransitive verbs in the inceptive construction). It
can be regarded as forming a periphrastic causative construction. The causer
is directly involved in the event by taking out, presenting, or bringing the
causee, which makes jiz- ‘grasp’ more like the causative a- (recall the dis-
cussion on Amharic causatives in Section 4.2.4). The causee may also take
an accusative marker. Consider the accusative -n on the noun gäs’s’äbärākātu in 4:25a, repeated below as 4:28a. Other instances of the
causative use from Zay and Selt’i are given in 4:28b and 4:28c, respectively.

Amharic – causative (come)
(4:28a) kä-nnärsu-m iijandandu bā-amāt-u bā-amāt-u
among-they-also everyone in-year-DEF in-year-DEF

gäs’s’äbärākātu-n jā-birr=nnä jā-wäärk’ ik’a
present-DEF-ACC GEN-silver=and GEN-gold vessel

libs=inna jā-t’or māssarija jītu-m fārās-occ=inna
cloth=and GEN-war tool perfume-also horse-PL=and

bāk’lo-wocc ijjā-jaz-ā ji-mät’a näbbär
mule-PL ITER-grasp:PFV-3MSG 3MSG-come:IPFV PST
‘And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of
gold, and garments, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year
by year.’ (1 Kings 10:25)

Zay – causative (enter)
(b) b-ejaa-tä idmi albeen maac’id iinzu-hu-m
in-I-FOC age alben sickle grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVBI

gābaa-hu-m zaj’137
enter:PFV-3MSG-CVBI zay
‘In my prime, I brought alben sickle to zay and …’
(i.e. I am the one who first introduced it to Zay people.)
(record)

Selt’i – causative (go)
(c) bāā-rot jenz-ä-Ø j-od-ān
in-evening grasp:PFV-3MSG-CVBI 3MSG-go:IPFV-AUX
‘He takes her in the evening (i.e. the bridegroom takes the bride to his
house).’ (record)

137 Mac’id ‘sickle’ is considered an Amharic word. Corrected as zärzärä.
Occurring with intransitive verbs of motion is a feature that is mostly observed in converbs with causative function. However, it does not follow that any converb that precedes an intransitive verb of motion has a causative/transitivizer role. Converbs with other functions may happen to co-occur with an intransitive motion verb. Lexicalized adverbs, for instance, may modify the manner of the action of an intransitive motion verb (4:29a), or any intransitive verb for that matter (4:29b).

Selt’i – adverb
(4:29a) 
\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{gar} & \text{t-i-naad} & \cdots & \text{nabs-e} \\
\text{bet} & \text{CONJ-3MSG-burn:PFV} & \cdots & \text{abäk’ä-ho-Ø}
\end{array}
\]
\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{gabo-ho-Ø} & \text{at’ä-ho} & \text{nabs-e} & \text{abäk’ä-ho-Ø}
\end{array}
\]
enter:PFV-1SG-CVBI take.out:PFV-1SG soul-1SG.POSS leave:PFV-1SG-CVBI

‘When the house burnt, I bravely entered and took (children, cattle) out.’ (record)

Selt’i – adverb
(4:29b) 
\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{tädäbäl-one} & \text{in-u} & \cdots & \text{nabs-e} \\
\end{array}
\]
join:PFV-3PL-CVBI sleep:PFV-3PL

‘They slept together.’ (elic.)

B. Adpositions

In Amharic the converbs used as adpositions form a circumpositional construction with a preceding preposition (cf. kä-...jizo in kä-zih kä-gimja bet dinbär jizo in 4:30a; see also Meyer [2012:179]). They mimic the canonical postpositions, which are unbound and usually appear with a preposition (cf. gar in kä-polis gar in 4:30b) (recall the discussion on Amharic adpositions in Section 4.2.3).

Amharic – circumposition (kä-...grasp)
(4:30a) 
\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{zena} & \text{jihä} & \text{mänk’orär} & \text{kä-zih} \\
\text{kä-gimja} & \text{bet} & \text{dinbär}
\end{array}
\]

Zena this Menkorer from-this from-Gimja Bet border

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{jiz-o} & \text{betäkiristijan-u} & \text{j-all-ä-bb-ät} & \cdots
\end{array}
\]
grasp:CVB-3MSG.GEN church-DEF REL-exist:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ

bätämängist-u j-all-ä-bb-ät nä-w

palace-DEF REL-exist:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3MSG.OBJ COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ

‘Zena, this Menkorer from the border of the Gimja Bet border to where the church is, is where his palace was.’ (record)
Amharic – circumposition (kä-...pick up)
(a’) kä-tacc kä-stadijäm ansit-ān bä-gr-accin
from-below from-stadium pick.up:CVB-1PL GEN ON-leg-3PL POSS

cārcil godana-n ak’ābāt-u-n hed-ān…
Churchill street-ACC hill-DEF-ACC go:PFV-3PL GEN
‘…We, having gone on foot from down the stadium through the hill of Churchill Street and…”138

Cf.
Amharic – circumposition (kä-...gar)
(b) kä-polis gar kä-mā-ggac’e’āt-im alf-āw
with-police with from-NMLZ-CLASH-FOC go.beyond:CVB-3PL GEN

tārf-āw
be.in.excess:CVB-3PL GEN
‘Above and beyond clashing with the police, they…”
(Addis Neger, Nov. 2005 E.C, vol. 6, no. 139, p. 23)

Amharic – circumposition (kā-...at’āgāb)
(b’) wānbār-u kä-t’ārāp’eza-w at’āgāb nā-w
chair-DEF from-table-DEF beside COP:Npst-3msg OBJ
‘The chair is beside the table.’ (Baye 2008:285)

This feature is also observed in the other languages, as exemplified in 4:31a and b from Selt’i and Zay, respectively. In 4:31a, for instance, the preposition tä- and the verb aläftaane circumpose balik’ināt.

Selt’i – circumposition (tā-...aläftaane)
(4:31a) tä-balik’-ināt alāf-t-aane bokboko
from-old.woman-ness exceed-3FSG-CVB II very.talkative

hon-t-at baj-āt-in
become:PFV-3FSG-COP F say:PFV-NMLZ-COP
‘It means she has become very talkative beyond being an old woman.’
(Short stories)


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Zay – circumposition (j-...bijjee)

(b) j-aaf bijj-ee mät’t’aa-hu\(^{139}\)
   for-you(f) say:CVB-1SG.GEN come:PFV-1SG
   ‘I came for you.’ (record)

C. Complementizers
Other converbs do not necessarily follow a prepositional phrase. For instance, what precedes the converb for ‘say’, in its use as a complementizer, is the complement, which may not be restricted to a specific category. In 4:32a, it is a proposition/sentence (cf. säjt’anmi bāmaj afaf alämäl), and in 4:32b, a noun phrase (cf. mifin) in Zay and Amharic, respectively. As mentioned in Section 2.1.3, grammaticalization of ‘say’ into a complementizer is a common phenomenon in languages.

Zay – complementizer
(4:32a) säjt’an-mi bā-maj afaf al-ā-māl
   devil-also by-water along exist:PFV-3MSG-FOC-AUX
   ju-bli-nim ji-fori nar-o
   3MSG-say.PASS:IPFV-CVB 3MSG-fear.PASS:IPFV PST-3MSG
   ‘It used to be feared that the devil lives along the sea.’ (record)

Amharic – complementizer
(b) mifin bil-ān mi-nn-il-āw ahun bek’lo
   Mission say:CVB-1PL.GEN REL-1PL-say:IPFV-3MSG.OBJ now mule
   bet ga j-all-ā-w
   house in REL-exist:PFV-3MSG-DEF
   ‘What we call “mission” is what now is located in Bäk’lo Bet…’
   (YouTube)\(^{140}\)

4.3.4.2. Degree of integration
Converbs used in lexical juxtaposition, like 4:33a and c below, are usually adjacent to or have a high degree of integration with the reference verb, as remarked upon in Meyer (2012) for Amharic (hence the term ‘juxtaposition’). It is rare to find instances to the contrary, such as 4:33b. This particular example will still be labeled ‘lexical juxtaposition’ because, as pointed out in the introduction, the term ‘lexical juxtaposition’ is used for verbs involved in the formation of lexicalized verbal compounds whose meaning cannot always be known from their parts.

\(^{139}\) Bijj-ee is obviously from the Amharic word bijjä.

\(^{140}\) A YouTube upload (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-KvAfOBwgI) of an interview with the singer Alemayehu Eshete on ETV.
Amharic – lexical juxtaposition
(4:33a) as-allif-o sätt’-ä
CAUS-pass:PFV-3MSG.GEN give:PFV-3MSG
‘betray, deliver (hand over), extradite’ (Leslau 1993:122)

Amharic – lexical juxtaposition
(b) ahizab-in-im as-allif-o bā-fit-u
unbelievers-ACC-also CAUS-pass:CVB-3MSG.GEN in-face-3MSG.POSS
sätt’-ä-w
give:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
‘Gave the nations before him.’ (Isaiah 41:2)

Zay – lexical juxtaposition
(c) ine-j sinaant j-aatiilif-im j-iida-al säb
this-DEF thing 3MSG-let.pass:IPFV-CVB 3MSG-tell:IPFV-AUX person
ut l-aaqjiim ji-grägib-äl
he from-there 3MSG-return:IPFV-AUX
‘The person who passes along/communicates/ this thing returns from there.’ (record)

We should bear in mind that converbs with functions other than forming a lexical verb, like the Selt’i converb with conjunction function in 4:34, may show a high degree of integration with their reference verbs.

Selt’i – conjunction
(4:34) hoʃt-im jā-mät’-än bāl-na-Ø k’er-n-an
two-also 3MSG-come:PFV-AUX say:PFV-1PL-CVB expect:PFV-1PL-AUX
‘We expect that the two (private school children) would come.’ (record)

4.3.4.3. Iconicity \textsuperscript{141}

The converb in Amharic normally precedes the reference verb (Leslau 1995:310). Accordingly, converbs in the inceptive construction precede the reference verb. However, there are instances in which converbs that have other functions are shown to take the last position. In example 4:35d, for instance, the converb with conjunction use dāmmo comes after the reference verb likäwall (cf. the canonical conjunction gin coming after tinorijalläf in 4:35e).

\textsuperscript{141} See Section 3.3. on parallel iconicity with the terminative construction.
Amharic – Subordinate clause
(4:35a) hulätt wäld-all-äcc agib-ta
two bear:PFV-NPST-3SG marry:CVB-3SG.GEN
‘She gave birth to two (children), after having got married.’
‘She got married and gave birth to two (children).’ (record)

Amharic – causative
(b) mata lat’t’ jiz-w-at
night run.off:IDEO grasp:CVB-3SG.GEN-3SG.OBJ

gäbt-o-h-all jiz-w-at
understand:CVB-3SG.GEN-2SG.OBJ-NPST grasp:CVB-3SG.GEN-3SG.OBJ

häd-ä
go:PFV-3MSG
‘He took her at night! Do you understand? He took her!’ (record)

Amharic – adverb
(c) na-Ø inn-ijj-äw abr-äń
come:IMP-2MSG 1PL-see:IPFV-3SG.OBJ accompany:PFV-1PL.GEN

‘Come, let’s see it together.’ (record)

Amharic – Conjunction
(d) assir hon-än in-mät’-all-än bil-äw
ten become:PFV-3SG.GEN 3PL-come:IPFV-NPST-1PL say:CVB-3SG.GEN

lik-äw-all dämm-o
send:CVB-3SG.GEN-NPST repeat:CVB-3MSG.GEN

‘Also, they send (a message) saying, “We will come in a group of ten.”’ (record)

Cf.
Amharic – conjunction – gin
(e) jih-än tit-äf ti-nor-i-jall-äf gin
this-ACC abandon:CVB-2SG.GEN 2-live:IPFV-2SG-PRS-2SG but

al-ä-n
say:PFV-3SG-1SG.OBJ

‘He said to me, “But do you live without this?”’ (record)

The other languages show variation in this regard. For instance, in Selt’i it is preferred for conversbs that head a dependent clause and also that have an adverbial and conjunctional function to precede their reference verb (cf. conjunction 4:36a), whereas in Harari it is okay for conversbs with adverbial
and causative functions, but not conjunctions, to follow the reference verb (cf. causative in 4:36b, b’).

Selt’i – conjunction

(4:36a) i-\textipa{k’adm-aane} ataakilt i-kaʃ-anegortanna
3MSG-be.first:IPFV-CVBII eucalyptus 3MSG-seek:IPFV-CVBII boards

i-falt’-aan
3MSG-split:IPFV-AUX
‘First, he seeks eucalyptus and splits boards.’ (Gutt 1987:223)

(a’) *ataakilt i-kaʃ-anegortanna i-falt’-aan
eucalyptus 3MSG-seek:IPFV-CVBII boards 3MSG-split:IPFV-AUX

i-\textipa{k’adm-aane}
3MSG-be.first:IPFV-CVBII
‘First, he seeks eucalyptus and splits boards.’ (elic.)

Harari – causative

(b) i \textipa{lahad-hi-ma} k’ac’let’-h
yes grasp:PFV-2MSG-CVB abroad go:PFV-2MSG
‘Yes, you brought it (x-ray results) abroad.’ (record)

(b’) i k’ac’let’-h \textipa{lahad-hi-ma}
yes abroad go:PFV-2MSG grasp:PFV-2MSG-CVB
‘Yes, you brought it (x-ray results) abroad.’ (elic.)

4.4. Conclusion

Converbs in TSE languages have a variety of uses, including functioning as adverb, adposition (i.e. circumposition), causative, conjunction, part of a lexical juxtaposition, and marking the inceptive phase. There are features that strongly correlate with each converb specialized in each function. So, for instance, one can say that those with adposition function co-occur with a preposition, parts of a lexical juxtaposition have a high degree of integration with their reference verb, inceptive markers are iconic in that they always precede the reference verb, etc. However, it is also the case that there is no absolute demarcation between the converbs. A number of morphological and syntactic features, like agreement and TAM, alternate between them. This makes sense if we understand the data as showing a synchronic state of a continuing diachronic process where converbs are being recruited for various functional ends (cf. Dahl 2001b:1468).
V. The conjunction =nna ‘and’ in Amharic

It was stated in chapter three that an alternative construction of the inceptive construction in Amharic and Argobba is the use of =nna ‘and’ to link the light verb with the reference verb. The fact that a semantically bleached as well as functionally modifying word can be combined with a modified word that has full semantic meaning is interesting. It also leads us to ponder the very nature and overall function of =nna ‘and’ as a coordinator.

This chapter takes a closer look at this case in Amharic. Section 5.1 provides some characteristics of the conjunction =nna ‘and’, Section 5.2 focuses on the entities that =nna ‘and’ conjoins, Section 5.3 is a discussion on other ‘non-canonical’ cause/purpose and conditional conjunctions and the possible reason for the interpretations, Section 5.4 gives a quick evaluation of the subordinator and/or coordinator status of =nna ‘and’, and Section 5.5 provides final concluding remarks.

5.1. Introduction

According to Haspelmath (2007:1), coordination “refers to syntactic constructions in which two or more units of the same type are combined into a larger unit and still have the same semantic relations with other surrounding elements”. There are different types of coordination, i.e. conjunctive, disjunctive, adversative, and causative. In English, these are expressed by the linkers and, or, but, and for, respectively.

For conjunction, Amharic has a postpositive coordinator =nna ‘and’ with a basic pattern A-CONJ B (A B…M-CONJ N).\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{142} Amharic being a verb-final language, this is in line with Stassen’s (2000) generalization that languages with a postpositive coordinator tend to have verb-final word order. However, see Haspelmath (2007:9), who notes that while such generalizations hold for conjunctive coordinators, they do not necessarily do so for disjunctive coordinators.
Amharic

(5:1) c‘aw bärbärre=nna k‘ibe amät’t’-awh
salt pepper=and butter bring:PFV-1SG
‘I brought salt, pepper, and butter.’ (Haspelmath 2007:12)

However, sometimes two or more instances of =nna ‘and’ may come in sequence, as exemplified below.

(5:2) gäbba-Ø=nna jihä c’amma-w-in wullik’
enter:PFV-3MSG=and this shoes-3MSG.POSS-ACC take.off:IDEO

wullik’ aräg-ä=nna h-alga-w látt’
take.off:IDEO do:PFV-3MSG=and in-bed-DEF sleep:IDEO
‘He entered, took off his shoes, and slept in the bed.’ (record)

It is also interesting to see that the conjunction can harbor various grammatical markers. In the following examples, it takes contrastive topic markers (Girma & Meyer 2007) or the ‘particles of concatenation’ (Kapeliuk 1978) -ss and -mma in 5:3a and b. In 5:3c, an agreement marker attaches to =nna ‘and’ at the beginning of a sentence identifying the addressee -llaccihu ‘to you (pl)’.

(5:3a) ajj-än-äw=innà-ss fiiiic’ arg-än afwac’c’-änä
see:PFV-1PL-3MSG.OBJ=AND-ss whistle:IDEO do:CVB-1PL.GEN whistle:PFV-1PL
‘We saw him and whistled ‘fiiiic’.’ (record)

(b) inna-mma
and-TOP
‘and…’

(c) inna-ll-accihu
and-APPL-3PL.OBJ
‘and…’

This feature does not seem to be typical of =nna ‘and’, as other elements with the conjunction function, like the converb dägmo in 5:4a and häza in 5:4b, also exhibit it.

143 -llaccihu is also related to what Leslau (1995:428) observes regarding the ‘prepositional suffixes’ -ll- and -bb- in that in some of their occurrences they do not have the expected meaning, i.e. ‘to the advantage of’ and ‘to the disadvantage of’, respectively.
5.2. What can be combined?

The category of the units coordinated by =nna ‘and’ is not restricted to nouns and verbs, as in examples 5:1 and 5:2, but encompasses other categories. In fact, parallel to what Schiffrin (2006) has revealed about English and, Amharic =nna ‘and’ may link ideas (e.g. propositions), turns (e.g. question-answer exchanges), or speech acts (e.g. questions) in discourse. In 5:5a, it seems to be used to link turns taken by the interviewer and the interviewee. In 5:5b, it is simply used to continue ‘ideas’ (or a bunch of expressions) that are viewed as related. And in 5:5c, it comes at the beginning of a sentence, linking it with a previous utterance (cf. also 5:3b and c). This clearly shows that the use of =nna ‘and’ extends beyond the sentence level.

(5:5a) kä-mäls-u gar täk’ärarabi t’ijjak’e inn-ansa=nna
to-answer-DEF to related question 1PL-pick.up;JUS=and

habit-accin zinn-accin bā-c’āmmār-ā k’ut’ir\[144]
wealth-1PL.POSS fame-1PL.POSS CONJ-increase;PFV-3MSG as

däst-accin ijjā-c’āmmār-ā s-a-j-hon
happiness-1PL.POSS CONJ-increase;PFV-3MSG CONJ-NEG-3MSG-become;IPFV

ijjā-k’ānnās-ā nā-w jām-i-hed-āw…
CONJ-decrease;PFV-3MSG COP-3MSG.OBJ REL-3MSG-go;IPFV-3MSG.CO

‘And, let us raise a question related to the answer. As our wealth and fame increase, our happiness keeps on decreasing, not increasing…’ (Tewodros 2012:35-36)

\[144\] Lit. ‘number’
Regarding education, it was Indians who first taught us. And um especially, one of them is called Doctor Gubta. He was a real orator…

(Radio Fana, January 12, 2013, discussion with Ato Shiferaw)

As Haspelmath (2007) himself notes, the characterization of the units that are combined by conjunction as ‘same type’ does not always hold. There are some instances where =nna ‘and’ is found linking two units that do not seem to go along together. In 5:6a, a perfective verb is conjoined with a converb, and in 5:6b a (verbal) noun/infinitive with an adpositional phrase/purposive clause.

‘They came and crushed (people’s) morale.’ (record)
(b) jih kiflä ahigur-awi t’imrät bä-kiilí-u
this inter continent-wise coalition in-area-DEF

jämm-i-gäɲɲ-u jä-biznäs ciggir-occ-in mä-k’räf-inna
REL-3-find:IPFV-3PL POSS-business problem-PL-ACC NMLZ-avoid=and

jä-täʃal-ä assärar-in lä-mä-ft’är
REL-better:PFV-3MSG manner.of.doing-ACC to-NMLZ-create

nä-w tä-bl-w-all
COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ PASS-say:CVB-3MSG.GEN-NPST

‘It is said that this intercontinental coalition is to avoid business problems in
the area and to create a better way of conduct.’

(Sheger Radio, News, June 03, 2013)

Example 5:6b, in particular, shows a case where the coordinands belong to
two different categories, i.e. a verbal noun/infinite (mäk ’räf) and a preposi-
tional phrase (lämäft’är). Related instances, such as 5:7 below, are also ob-
served in Haspelmath (2007). Consider the noun phrase and the sentence
enclosed in brackets.

(5:7) [His kindness]ap and [that he was willing to write letters to me]s amazed me.
(Haspelmath 2007:19)

Haspelmath (2007:19) states that “coordination of different phrasal catego-
ries is often possible when both have the same semantic role”. This shows
that coordination is not only a syntactic construction, but it is also a matter of
semantics. This could explain 5:6b, where both the constituents are listed as
‘purposes or reasons’ for the intercontinental coalition. Also, the coordi-
nands in 6a are both verbs with ‘same’ predicative function.

Johannessen (1998:34) labels example 5:8a ‘unbalanced coordination’. One
of the units lacks some formal features. That is, the first conjunct jirimmaád
lacks a tense marker. Consider also the related example 5:8b, in which a
converb is conjoined with a main verb with imperfective aspect, which, for
me, is ill-formed (see also Meyer 2012).

(5:8a) jirrammad=inna jir-rót’-all
3MSG-walk:IPFV=and 3MSG-run:IPFV-NPST
‘He walks and (then) runs/will run.’ (Johannessen 1998:34)
This ‘unbalanced coordination’ in a way contrasts with the ‘pseudo-coordination’ we discussed in the previous chapter. The units in example 5:8 are of the same type in semantics, but of a different form type in syntax, as shown in the gloss, whereas the units in the inceptive construction (cf. 5:9a) and in the construction where the first conjunct grammaticalizes as a complementizer (cf. example 4:24a repeated below as 5:9b) are basically the same form type in syntax, but a different type in semantics/function.

Inceptive
(5:9a) jaz-di=inna bā-t’iffi māt-acc-iw
   grasp:PFV-3FSG=and by-slap hit:PFV-3FSG-3MSG.OBJ
   ‘She slapped him’ (elic.)

Conjunction
(b) igzer j-as-ajj-iwo já-näbbär-á-w nàft’-inna
   God 3MSG-CAUS-see:IPFV-3.HON REL-exist:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ rifle=AND

   gänzāb and s-a-j-amālt’ kā-jj-iwo
   money one CONJ-NEG-3MSG-escape:IPFV in-hand-3.HON-POSS

   gäbba-∅ lela min all-á-w al-u=inna
   enter:PFV-3MSG another what exist:PFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ say:PFV-3PL=AND

   tänaggär-u
   speak:PFV-3PL
   ‘He spoke, “Behold, every one of the rifles and the money I had is in your hand. What else do I have (to give)?”’ (Tesfaye 2004E.C:142)

The latter case can easily be understood if one considers the fact that there is a change in progress. The inceptive markers and the complementizers start out as full lexical verbs, but are on their way to taking on a more functional role.
5.3. Cause (purpose) and conditional coordination

Apart from the inceptive marker, there are other conjuncts whose relationship with the second conjunct is of a modifier-modified one. In examples 5:10a and b, for instance, the conjunct to which =nna ‘and’ attaches, indicated with bold lettering, is interpreted as a cause (purpose). Note that, as shown in 5:10b, the conjunct/clause can take the last position (B A-co).

(5:10a)  ahun-im  däbbäb  mit’iwa  wust’  nä-w
         now-FOC Däbbäb Massawa at COP:Npst-3msg.obj

        jä-all-ä-inna  indä-rk’-accin  indä-fik’r-accin
        REL-exist:pfv-3msg=and  as-treaty-3pl.poss  as-love-3pl.poss

däbbäb-in  ind-it-jiz  ji-hun
Däbbäb-ACC COMP-3msg-seize:IPFV  3msg-become:jus

‘And now since Debbeb is at Massawa, let it be that you seize him in accordance with our treaty and our friendship.’ (Ullendorff 1972:250-251)

(b)  mek’abir  mälkam  gota  nä-w  bisl-u-n=inna
grave nice granary COP:Npst-3msg.obj ripe-def-acc

        t’ire-w-in  ji-kätt-all=inna
unripe-def-acc  3msg-bring.together:IPFV-Npst=and

‘Grave is a good granary as it brings together the ripe and the unripe.’ (Zenneb 1957 E.C:2)

This is well known in Amharic literature (see Hailu 1980; Getatchew 1983a; Leslau 1995:273, 345, 390, 837). Leslau (1970c:167) also points out that the copula inta ‘it is, he is’ followed by -ma has the meaning ‘since, because’ in Harari (cf. as is the case in Amharic, too, as shown in 5:11b).

Harari

(5:11a)  kuʃaa-m  ji-mälhi-baa-zal  attaj  intaa-ma
        fiancé-DISC? 3msg-choose:IPFV-APPL-3PL.REL place it.is-CVB

        wähaa-aac  ji-ʃʃilaaläm-u-ma  ji-diʃ-al-u
girl-PL 3-beautify:IPFV-3PL-CVB 3-come:IPFV-AUX-3PL

‘Since it is the place in which he (the boy) chooses a fiancée, the girls come beautifying themselves.’ (Leslau 1970c:167)
Cf. Amharic

(b) tämarnä j-at’än-all
   student COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ=and 3MSG-study:IPFV-NPST
   ‘He studies, for he is a student.’ (Hailu 1980:91, ft3)

Note that for such an interpretation to arise, =nna ‘and’ basically must attach to a copula or an auxiliary, particularly a tense marker like -all, as in 5:10b, a negative clause marker -m, and a perfective verb form. Consider 5:12a, where =nna ‘and’ attaches to the negative clause marker -m and its accepted paraphrase in a ‘regular’ construction with the subordinator silä-.

(5:12a) kasa a-j-mät’a-m=inna inni-hid
   Kasa NEG-3MSG-come:IPFV-NCM=and 1PL-go:JUS
   ‘Since Kasa won’t come let us go.’ (Hailu 1980:90)

Cf.

(b) kasa silä-m-a-j-mät’a inni-hid
   Kasa CONJ-CORJ-NEG-3MSG-come:IPFV 1PL-go:JUS
   ‘Since Kasa won’t come let us go.’ (elic.)

When the first conjunct is a verb mainly in the imperative/jussive form (but also in the imperfective), it is interpreted as the protasis (if-clause) of a conditional clause. In examples 5:13a and b, it is a potential conditional clause, whereas in 5:13c it is a counterfactual.

---

145 The imperative/jussive do not take both the tense marker -all and the negative clause marker -m.

146 There is also the role of ‘irony’, which changes a combination of a negative (cf. attisran-na) and a positive (cf. täc’awät) imperative into (suggestive) alternatives, as demonstrated below (see Dixon [2009:30-31] for alternative clause linking)

(i) jä-bet sira a-tti-sra=nna wuc’e’ k’as täc’awät-Ø
   POSS-house work NEG-2-work:JUS=and out(side) foot ball play:IMP-2MSG
   ‘Rather than doing homework you are playing football outside.’
   Or ‘You better stop playing football outside and do your homework.’
   Lit. ‘Don’t do your homework and play football outside.’ (elic.)

NB: The negative imperative is expressed by the negative jussive (Leslau 1995:353)
(5:13a) sima bā-arsrammist dāk’ik’a wist’ a-ji-drās=inn

listen:IMP in-fifteen minute within NEG-3MSG-be.ready:JUS=and

hulättānna ajn-e-n at-t-aj-imm iʃʃi
second eye-1SG.POSS-ACC NEG-2MSG-see:IPFV-NCM ok

‘Listen, if it is not ready within fifteen minutes, you won’t see my face again, ok?!’ (YouTube)\(^{147}\)

(b) fātāna-w-in ti-wādk’-i=nn

exam-DEF-ACC 2-fail:IPFV-2SG=and finish:IPFV-3MSG-APPL-2SG.OBJ

‘If you fail the exam, (then) you are finished!’ (elic.)

(c) jā-zare-n a-jarg-āw=inn

POSS-today-ACC NEG-3MSG-do:JUS-3MSG.OBJ=and by-this like now

b-al-ku-h mitt asrahulät at’t’int näbbär
by-say:PFV-1SG-2MSG.OBJ kick twelve bone PST

jäm-Ø-addāk’-āw
REL-1SG-pulverizeh:IPFV-3MSG.CO

‘Let He (God) make it not today, I used to pulverize 12 bones by this kind of kick I told you just now (but since now it is today, I am no longer pulverizing bones).’ (YouTube)\(^{148}\)

Consider also 5:14a, which is a ‘regular’ conditional construction with the marker kā-. The conditional with the conjunction =nn ‘and’ is preferred more in giving warnings with great emotion. The regular version is preferred in neutral contexts, such as 5:14a’, which is in a way contrary to what Longacre (2007:408) reports for English, where 5:14b is a non-emphatic way of saying 5:14b’.

(5:14a) sima bā-arsrammist dāk’ik’a wist’ k-al-dārrās-ā

listen:IMP in-fifteen minute within CONJ-NEG-be.ready:PFV-3MSG

hulättānna ajn-e-n at-t-aj-imm iʃʃi
second eye-1SG.POSS-ACC NEG-2MSG-see:IPFV-NCM ok

‘Listen, if it is not ready within fifteen minutes, you won’t see my face again, ok?!’ (elic.)

\(^{147}\) Gorebetamochu ‘the neighbors’.
\(^{148}\) Gorebetamochu ‘the neighbors’.
(a’)  fätäna-w-in    kä-wäddäk’-ʃ  indägäna
exam-DEF-ACC  CONJ-fail:PFV-2FSG  again

ti-fättäɲ-all-äʃ
take.exam:IPFV-NPST-2FSG.OBJ
‘If you fail the exam, (then) you take a re-exam.’  (elic.)

(b)  I will go and they will be cross with me.
(b’)  If I go, they will be cross with me.  (Longacre 2007:408)

Such meanings of =nna ‘and’ or the subordinate – matrix clause interpretation seem to originate from the underlying relationship expressed in asymmetric conjunctions (see Bjorkman 2010:1). In asymmetric conjunctions of the sort found in 5:15b, the event of the second clause follows upon the event of the first clause, and when the clauses are reversed, so is the order of events. The relationship that holds between the conjuncts could be sequence, cause, or background.149

(5:15a)  Water freezes at 0°C, and ethanol freezes at -114°C. (Symmetric)
(b)  The sniper shot him and he died.  (Asymmetric)
     (Bjorkman 2010:1)

Sequence is what is presumably manifested among the units in the inceptive construction. Cause and background relationships could be said to be responsible for the causal and conditional coordination, respectively.

More specifically, the stronger tendency for imperatives and jussives compared to other verb forms to function as protases in Amharic is well motivated since they both have a commonality. That is, as stated in Timberlake (2007:319, 322), both imperatives (~ jussives) and conditional constructions have a high level of irreality or uncertainty (i.e. “whatever is ordered is not yet actual.” … “the condition is in some way tentative, uncertain, hypothetical”). The Amharic imperfective encodes non-past (present and future). Thus, it can be said that the imperfective also shares this irreality feature to some extent, which explains its use as protasis.

The presence of a causal (purposive) interpretation in the perfective, tense auxiliary, copula, and the negative clause marker is less clear. A possible explanation regarding the ‘perfective’ may be linked to Timberlake’s (2007:319, 322) observation on ‘perfects’. Perfects are considered to have an overtone of evidentiality: “Perfects report that a result has been achieved in

149 See Dixon (2009) for a detailed discussion of semantic relations between clauses.
some entity or in the world at large. Accordingly, from the result the event itself is inferred” (Timberlake 2007:318) (see also DeLancey 1982:175). This statement can be extended to apply to the Amharic perfective as well, hence their function as cause(purpose).  

In the causal or conditional coordination, there is often a mismatch in verb form between the first and the second conjunct. In example 5:16a, the first conjunct *jibla* is in the jussive, whereas the second *jitäɲɲall* is in the imperfective.

(5:16a)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{rat} & \quad \textit{ji bla=nna} & \quad \textit{ji täpp all} \\
\text{supper} & \quad \textit{2MSG-eat:JUS=and} & \quad \textit{2MSG-sleep:IPFV-NPST}
\end{align*}
\]

‘He sleeps/will sleep if/when he eats supper.’  

(a’)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{rat} & \quad \textit{ji bla=nna} & \quad \textit{ji täppa} \\
\text{supper} & \quad \textit{2MSG-eat:JUS=and} & \quad \textit{2MSG-sleep:JUS}
\end{align*}
\]

‘Let him eat supper and sleep.’

---

150 At first glance, the following archaic example (i) mentioned in Getatchew (1983a:166) seems to provide an exception to the above general account, where a conditional interpretation (i.e. if) is available in the perfective verb form, i.e. *alhänp*.

(i)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bägo} & \quad \textit{jih-in-iss} & \quad \textit{al-h äpp inna} & \quad \textit{lä-man} \\
\text{well} & \quad \textit{this-ACC-FOC-TOP} & \quad \textit{say:IPFV-2MSG-1SG.OBJ=and} & \quad \textit{to-who}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{i-sägd-all-Ähu} & \quad \textit{ti-l-all-äh} \\
\text{1SG-worship:IPFV-NPST-1SG} & \quad \textit{2-say:IPFV-NPST-2MSG}
\end{align*}
\]

‘Well, if you say this to me, who do you say you (lit. “I”) worship?’

However, ‘if’ here does not express a condition, but rather causality (i.e. the act of saying is already done). Appleyard (2003:121) translates a parallel text with the meaning ‘since’. It is read like this in the context:

They asked him what scripture he had. He said, ‘The Book of Solomon: “Wisdon saith, He created me before the world.” That which is called wisdom is indeed Christ. What (other) witness do I need?’ (They said,) ‘Well, since you have said of the Son that He was created, who, then, created us?’ (He replied,) ‘God the son.’ ‘Whom should we worship?’ [they asked] ‘the Father.’…

151 See Dixon (2009:14, 42) for the close relation between (‘when’) temporal and conditional. Interestingly, Getatchew (2011:73) mentions a case in Amharic where the particle *b-* ‘if, in case’ has the meaning ‘when’ in an old Amharic text copied in 1676/77 AD.
(b) sira-w- in c’ärris- Ø= inna gänzäb-h- in
job-DEF-ACC finish:IMP-2MSG=and money-2MSG.POSS-ACC

i-sät’-h-all-ähu
1SG-GIVE:IPFV-2MSG.OBJ-NPST-1SG
‘I give you the money when/ if you finish the job.’

(b’) sira-w- in c’ärris- Ø= inna gänzäb-h- in wisäd- Ø
job-DEF-ACC finish:IMP-2MSG=and money-2MSG.POSS-ACC take:IMP-2MSG
‘Finish the job and take the money.’

The mismatch between the verbs of the two conjuncts is seen to mirror canonical subordinate-matrix clause constructions, as it is the second conjunct that determines the feature of the coordinate complex (in example 5:16a, for instance, the coordinate complex has an imperfect reading).

5.4. Coordinator or subordinator?

The above discussion on causal and conditional coordination appears to treat the interaction of the conjuncts as a sole source for the interpretation. However, we do not know whether the two functions of =nna ‘and’ – as a subordinator and as a canonical coordinator – should be seen as homonyms or synonyms. Girma (2012:148) is of the opinion that there are different but historically related kinds of =nna, i.e. ‘because’ (‘coordinate conjunction’) and ‘and’ (‘conjunction’) =nna. There is indirect evidence to support this analysis. First, the conjunct can take variable positions, as shown in 5:10b above. This is one characteristic of subordinate clauses, hence =nna ‘and’ acts as a true subordinator in such contexts (see Haspelmath 2007)152. Second, there could be loss of tense iconicity between the two conjuncts. Basically, the clause with =nna ‘and’ encodes an event that happened earlier than the event encoded by the second clause. Example 5:17 is yet another archaic instance from Getatchew (1983a:166). The action of tinägryññ ‘tell’ takes place after the action of diräsubbìññ ‘arrive’. Note that these two features cannot be said to characterize the =nna ‘and’ used in the inceptive construction.

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152 Goldenberg (1977:489) states that clauses coordinated with =nna ‘and’ can take variable position. However, he doesn’t provide an example, and it is not clear which type of coordination he is referring to.
The use of a coordinating conjunction as a subordinating conjunction is also diachronically plausible. Recall that the converb marker -m(a) in Zay and Harari is assumed to have started out as a coordinating conjunction. Although =nna ‘and’ has a relatively recent origin in Amharic, as evidenced in its rare occurrence in a manuscript studied by Cowley (1974), it already fossilizes and forms a word with a preceding verb, as exemplified below (5:18).\(^\text{153}\)

(5:18a)  ji-hun=inna  
3MSG-become:JUS=and

‘nevertheless’ (at head of phrase)

(b)  jä-hon-ä-ss  
REL:become:PFV-3MSG-TOP  
become:PFV-3MSG=nna

‘By the way, be that as it may.’  (Kane 1990:20, 22)

Finally, it is important to point out that =nna can be used for still other functions. Example 5:19a is taken from Girma (2012), which he calls a ‘request-for-affirmation interrogative clause’. Example 5:19b is called a ‘question-exclamation sentence’ in Leslau (1995:314) (he regards =nna as an equivalent to the auxiliary -all). Example 5:19c is instead used to express annoyance. Such examples show the homonymic use of =nna.

(5:19a)  leba  n-äh=inna
thief  COP-2MSG=nna

‘(I did not know that) you are a thief! (are you?)’  (Girma 2012:148)

\(^{153}\) “[Of] the coordinating conjunctions, -inna only occurs twice, linking nouns (6 v 2, 8 r l); but -mm is very frequent, and seems often to stand where MA [Modern Amharic] would have -inna”  (Cowley 1974:606).
This chapter has attempted to answer why a coordinating conjunction can be used to link two units in the inceptive construction in Amharic that are not the ‘same type’, i.e. one has undergone semantic bleaching and has a modifying function, whereas the other is a lexical verb that takes the role of the modified. The discussion shows that they in fact can be considered the ‘same type’ as they basically share the same verb form. In addition, this could be taken as showing the level of grammaticalization of the inceptive marker, as it is not totally bleached.

Interestingly, the conjunction is also used to link verbs with other types of modifier-modified relationships, i.e. causal(purposive) and conditional. However, the conjunction in such uses exhibits features like loss of iconicity and taking variable positions. This urges us to consider $nna$ ‘and’ as ‘polysemous’, i.e. the $=nna$ ‘and’ in the ‘canonical’ and inceptive uses, on the one hand, and the $=nna$ ‘and’ in the causal and conditional clauses, on the other hand. There is also perhaps a case of homonymy in which $=nna$ takes a non-conjunctonal function as an emphatic marker.

5.5. Conclusion
VI. Insubordination of Converbs in Amharic

This chapter presents a side issue to the topic of the inceptive construction. The converb is the principal form of the verb employed in inceptive constructions. However, as noted in Section 2.1.2, this verb form sometimes exhibits a less converb-like characteristic in other contexts in Amharic (also in other languages such as Tigrinya), i.e. it is used as a main verb. This raises the legitimate question as to whether using the cover term ‘converb’ is appropriate.

The following sections re-introduce the problem and identify the functions the converb has as a main verb (Section 6.1), provide a diachronic explanation of the phenomenon (Section 6.2), point to similar cases of other verb forms (Section 6.3), and conclude the chapter (Section 6.4).

6.1. Introduction

As we saw in 2.1.1, Haspelmath (1995:3) generally defines a converb as a ‘nonfinite verb form whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination’. The converb in Amharic is also normally understood as a dependent verb form, as the ungrammaticality of example 6:1a indicates. Compare 6:1a with the perfective in 6:1b.

(6:1a) *kasa ɨnc‘ät  fält‘-o
Kassa  wood  chop:CVB-3MSG.GEN
‘Having chopped wood, Kasa…’

Cf. perfective

(b)  kasa  anbässa  gäddäl-ä
Kassa  lion  kill:PFV-3MSG
‘Kasa killed a lion.’ (Baye 2008:141,142)

Converbs that are used, as in 6:1a, need either a main verb (cf. 6:2a) or an auxiliary (-all, näbbäär, jihon) (cf. 6:2b) to follow them (Baye 2008:140-144; Habte-Mariam 1973:115).
(6:2a) kasa ine’ät fält’-o hed-ā
Kassa wood chop:CVB-3MSG.GEN go:PFV-3MSG
‘Having chopped wood, Kasa went.’

(b) ine anbäsса gädijj-Ø-all-āhu
I lion kill:CVB-1SG.GEN-NPST-1SG
‘I have killed a lion.’ (Baye 2008:141,143)

However, Habte-Mariam (1973) and Leslau (1995:363-64) point out that sometimes converbs alone can function as finite verbs, i.e. they function as main verbs.154 Consider the main verb use of the converbs täzärgɨto, blāh, and māt’ɨto in examples 6:3a, b, and c.

(6:3a) abel ajäwa-w laj täzärgɨt-o abel ajäwa-w laj
Abel sand-DEF on lay:CVB-3MSG.GEN Abel sand-DEF on

täzärgɨt-o ajäwa-w laj
lay:CVB-3MSG.GEN sand-DEF on
‘Abel laying on the sand! Abel laying on the sand! On the sand!’

(b) indijaw-s issaccāw rasaccāw t’āj
for.that.matter-TOP they.HON themselves.HON mead

ji-t’il-all-u blāh
3-brew:IPFV-NPST-3.HON say:CVB-2MSG.GEN
‘For that matter, do you think she herself brews mead?’

154 Bear in mind that functioning as a main verb does not necessarily mean taking final position. As stated earlier, converbs that head a dependent clause may follow the reference verb. In example i, the convorb clause antäss awuttāh takes the final position.

(i) a-Ø-jìl’-im näbbār antä-ss a-wutt-âh
NEG-2MSG-sell:IPFV-NCM PST 2MSG-TOP CAUS-go.out:CVB-2MSG.GEN

‘Couldn’t you have sold (it) having taken (it) out?’
‘You could have taken (it) out and sold (it).’ (record)
Meyer (2012:169-170, fn9) remarks that this construction is not yet well understood. Since converbs are the principal forms of the verb used in the inceptive construction, it would be interesting to try and describe this use and explain the possible reason behind it.

In their use as main verbs, converbs in Amharic are basically used in the expression of surprise/exclamation, interrogation, rhetorical question, and wishing. Examples are given below (6:4) for each category, (NB: It also has a resultative/perfective reading, as will be discussed later.)

A. Exclamation

(6:4a) mirrirmirr iritate:IDEO do:CVB-3MSG.GEN-3MSG.OBJ

‘He made him irritated!’

(a’) hid-äh s-a-t-aj-at go:CVB-2MSG.GEN CONJ-NEG-2MSG-seec:IPFV-3FSG.OBJ

bijj-e-w wäk’iff-e-w say:CVB-1SG.GEN-3MSG.OBJ reproach:CVB-1SG.GEN-3MSG.OBJ

‘I (actually) asked him why he didn’t go and visit her; I reproached him!’ (record)

B. interrogation

(b) jih-e pant mäslo-p this:PART panty resemble:CVB-3MSG.GEN-1SG.OBJ

‘Isn't this a panty?’
(b’) indet arg-āh agāñp-āh-at how do:CVB-2MSG.GEN find:PFV-2MSG-3FSG.OBJ

s-a-ti-t’il-at k’ojt-āh CONJ-NEG-2MSG-drop:IPFV-3FSG.OBJ remain:CVB-2MSG.GEN

‘How did you find it? Or have you not lost it (in the first place)?’ (record)

C. Rhetorical question
(c) māc awuk’k’-e ine when know:CVB-1SG.GEN I ‘When have I known (about it)?’ (I didn’t know (about it).)

(c’) min bālt-āw what eat:CVB-3PL.GEN

‘What have they eaten?’ (they have eaten nothing.) (record)

D. Wish (Leslau 1995:363)
(d) jih miskin (minnāw) bādānb bālt-o this poor (why) well eat:CVB-3MSG.GEN

ajicc-ā-w see:CVB-1SG.GEN-3MSG.OBJ

‘Poor fellow! I wish I could see him well nourished.’

(d’) gānzāb agnicc-e bicca money get:CVB-1SG.GEN just

‘Let me just have my hand on some money!’

The phenomenon is not unique to Amharic, as shown by the following Zay examples (cf. nagaguh naaguhum and tinekim in 6:5a and b, respectively).

Zay: exclamation
(6:5a) zerzeraj nāk’ālu-hu-m nagagu-h naagu-hu-m sickle-DEF take:PFV-1SG-CVBIC mow:PFV-1SG mow:PFV-1SG-CVBIC

‘I took the sickle and mowed and mowed! (i.e. small millet)’
Zay: Warning

(b)  ihi-ne-j  aysork’uunj  ti-nek-i-m\textsuperscript{155}

\begin{flushleft}
this-ACC-DEF  aysorkugn  2FSG-touch:IPFV-2FSG-CVBI
\end{flushleft}

‘You touching this aysorkugn’ (i.e. ‘don’t touch this aysorkugn!’)

(record)

I consider this to be cases of what Evans calls ‘insubordination’, defined as “the conventionalized main-clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses” (Evans, 2007:367; 2009:2).\textsuperscript{156} Evans lists various functions of insubordinated clauses such as modal (e.g. deontic, exclamation), signaling presupposed material (e.g. negation, reiteration), and indirection and interpersonal control (e.g. commands, hints). It is obvious that the functions of Amharic insubordinated converbs exemplified above fall under this categorization.

Insubordinated verbs/clauses of this kind are also related to what König and Siemund (2007:281, fn5) observe about independent or non-embedded clauses, but which are formally dependent. Dealing with the paradigmatic opposition between basic sentence types (declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives) with embedded sentences (expressed by the presence/absence of certain complementizers in European languages), they notice that some languages, such as German, employ complementizers in non-embedded clauses for the characterization of minor sentence types (like exclamation). Here are examples from English (cf. \textit{that} in 6:6a) and German (cf. \textit{ob} in 6:6b’).

English

(6:6a)  That I should live to see this!

German

(b)  Sp. A:  A: bist du müde

\begin{flushleft}
are you tired
\end{flushleft}

‘Are you tired?’

(b’)  Sp. B:  und ob (ich müde bin)

\begin{flushleft}
and whether I tired am
\end{flushleft}

‘Am I ever!?’ (König & Siemund 2007:281)

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{ajsork’uunj}: ‘cover for a container used to keep grain.

\textsuperscript{156} It should be noted that Azeb (2006:432) and Evans (2007:409-410) have already suggested that such phenomenon in Amharic converbs might belong to ‘insubordination’. The present work provides new data and supports their suggestion.
Diachronic processes are surely involved in the conventionalization of subordinate clauses/verbs into main clauses/verbs. In Section 6.2, an attempt will be made to give a diachronic explanation of how this use of converbs developed in Amharic.

6.2. Historical account

Scholars disagree on the origin of the converb in Amharic and in other Ethiopian Semitic languages (Ge’ez, Tigrinya, and Argobba). Kapeliuk (1997:493), Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:409-410, 422), and Meyer (2011d:1267) generally agree with Hetzron (1972) that the presence of converbs in Ethio-Semitic languages is an areal phenomenon resulting from the influence of Cushitic (and/or Omotic) languages. Kapeliuk points out that “in several Cushitic languages spoken in the area there exists a special subordinate verbal form corresponding in its function and syntactical behavior to the Ethio-Semitic gerund”. The supporting evidence for the argument is the absence of converbs in other Semitic languages of the Middle East. However, Meyer (2012:183) cites Zaborski (2005), who instead proposes a ‘proto-gerund’ in proto-Semitic as a converb formed from a verbal noun/infinite with possessive subject agreement is found in Neo-Aramaic, Sabaen, and Egyptian.

Hetzron (1972:100), citing Castellino (1960:88-89), hypothesizes that the converbs in these languages are etymologically related to the Akkadian permissive. However, referring to the work of Cohen D. (1984:49-50, 108-110), Kapeliuk (1997:493) rejects this claim and argues it is derived from the Ge’ez infinitive. Hudson (1983:236) considers the Amharic converb to be very recent in origin and claims it is of nominal origin, and Leslau (1995) agrees with him. Baye (2006:197), for his part, regards the Amharic converb (or the complete aspect form) as being derived from the canonical imperfective aspect stem. For Kapeliuk (1997:493), the (bare) imperfect is itself a subordinate verbal form whose existence in Ethio-Semitic is attributed to the influence of Cushitic. Finally, Polotsky (1983:297) claims that the Amharic converb is a ‘conversion’ (transposition) from a finite verb (with special personal endings).

Nevertheless, it seems to be the case that the Amharic converb started out as a subordinate verb. As stated in Richter (1997:543), in the oldest written documents in Amharic, i.e. the 11 royal songs dated between the 14th and the 16th centuries, the most frequently used verbal forms are perfect(ive), imperfect(ive), and jussive. Although the converb (and the infinitive) was used, there is no example of the compound converb with allā/all in the texts (Richter 1997:550). Consider the following, in which the converb is immediately
followed by the main verb wärrädı́bbaccäw in 6:7a and a past tense marker näbbär in 6:7b.

Atse Dawit (1373-1402)

(6:7a) därs-o wärrädı́-ä- bbaccäw jä-sef mäʔat
arrive:CVB-3MSG.GEN unload:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3PL.OBJ POSS-sword storm
‘He arrived and loaded them down with swords.’ (i.e. put to the sword)

Atse Gälawdewos (1540-1559)

(b) g(i)ran bā- itjop’ja nāgs-o näbbär
Gragn in-Ethiopia reign:CVB-3MSG.GEN PST
‘Giragn had reigned in Ethiopia.’ (Gezahegn 2006:122, 129)

In later times, the converb seems to have grown in importance. So, Appleyard (2003) observes that the archaic and modern forms of the compound converb were alternatively used in S’älotä hajmanot ‘prayer of the faith?’ (‘An old Amharic commentary on the Nicene Creed’).

Archaic forms

(6:8a) tī-bihl-äw all-u
PASS-call:CVB-3PL.GEN exist:PFV-3PL

(b) tā-bihl-äw-all
PASS-call:CVB-3PL.GEN-NPST

Modern form

(c) tā-bl-äw-all
PASS-call:CVB-3PL.GEN-NPST
‘They are called.’ (Appleyard 2003:112)

In an old Amharic manuscript from Wollo (EMML 7007) (fol 84r) believed to be copied between 1730 and 1755, Getatchew (1983a:165-166) finds instances of a converb being used in a main clause, e.g. s ’änto in 6:9.157

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157 Getatchew (1983a) notices that the old features found in this manuscript are also found in manuscripts from other parts of the country. He suspects that this manuscript could have been copied from an older manuscript found in the Gojjam-Gondar region.
(6:9) jä-nnat-u süw-acci zämäd-occ-u bà-k’ìn?at
POSS-mother-3MSG.POSS man-PL relative-PL-3MSG.POSS in-jealousy

säɲɲo mäkkär-u tä-fätta-Ø-bb-accäw maksäɲɲo
monday conspire:PFV-3PL PASS-foil:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3PL.OBJ tuesday

mäkkär-u tä-fätta-Ø-bb-accäw räbuʔ
conspire:PFV-3PL PASS-foil:PFV-3MSG-APPL-3PL.OBJ wednesday

mäkkär-u s’änt-o
conspire:PFV-3PL hold:CVB-3MSG.GEN

‘His [Christ’s] mother's people, his relatives, conspired in jealousy on Monday; (their conspiracy) was foiled. They conspired on Tuesday; it was (again) foiled. They conspired on Wednesday; (this time) it held.’

No overt explanation is offered in Getatchew (1983a) for the function of the converb in 6:9. It does not seem to express an exclamation, interrogation, rhetorical question, or wish (or warning). The declarative sentence in the past tense indicated in the gloss suggests it is instead being used as a perfective verb. This example supports Habte-Mariam’s (1973) observation that insubordinated converbs are interchangeable with the perfective.

Here is also another exemplar from the 19th century (1857E.C.) used in the expression of exclamation.

(6:10) mäŋa fâri bâ-sämaj tä-säbsib-o
herd coward in-heaven ANTI gather:CVB-3MSG.GEN

‘A herd of cowards gather in heaven!’ (Zännäb 1857E.C:28)

It is safe to say that the Amharic converb is continuing the process of becoming a main verb. In fact, there are some pieces of evidence for this. Kapeliuk (1997:496), for instance, mentions a case in contemporary Amharic (mainly the written language) in which there is a sharp decline in the use of the converb as a subordinate verb form. It is being replaced by the preposition bà- prefixed to the infinitive (or the verbal noun [Meyer 2012]), as in bämajâtu in 6:11a (cf. the converb ajto in 14b).

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158 OA: -acci = MA: -occ ‘PL’
The other evidence concerns negation. As pointed out earlier, the Amharic converb does not have a negative form, except in the dialect of Gojjam (see Habte-Mariam 1973:115; Leslau 1995:357; Baye 2012:13, ft5). Consider 6:12 from Gojjam where the converb is used as a main verb with (more of) a resultative reading and takes a negation marker.

Negation is a feature of converbs functioning mainly as main verbs (cf. 6:13a with an auxiliary ji honall a), but also as verbs heading a subordinate clause (cf. alt ‘āt ‘ita in 6:13a’). However, it is not a feature of converbs with a lexicalized adverbial meaning (cf. zimm albilo in 6:13b’ is ill-formed).

‘It could be that he thought he didn’t drink (local beer), since he was drinking looking at her eyes.’  (record)
The last piece of evidence concerns the use of a relativizer, which is also typical of the Gojjam dialect (cf. the jä- of jätk’ämɨc’e in 6:14) (see also Habte-Mariam 1973:115). This is an indication that the converb is acquiring full features of a main verb (i.e. being reanalyzed as a main verb) and that the Gojjam dialect is in the forefront in representing this latest diachronic development.\textsuperscript{159}

\begin{verbatim}
(6:14) bā-dāngaj nā-w jä-tāk’āmic’-e
    on-stone COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ REL:sit:CVB-1SG.GEN
    ‘It is on stone that I have sat.’ (record)
\end{verbatim}

The above discussion on the historical development of the converb helps to refine our understanding of the process of insubordination itself. According to Evans (2007:370; 2009:4), a subordinate verb follows the stages (trajectory) shown below in its transformation from a dependent to independent status (i.e. C and D).

\textsuperscript{159} Leslau (1970:27) states that the converb in Tigrinya can actually be used for both main and subordinate clauses. As stated in Evans (2007:409), quoting Leslau (1941:85) and Kogan (1997:439), it expresses a result state in its independent use. Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:432), quoting Azeb (2001), report a main verb use of the converb in the Omotic language Maale. See also Pellard (2012) on ‘desubordination’, i.e. the use of converbs as the predicate of an independent clause (= insubordination) in Ōgami Ryukyuan.

\textsuperscript{160} See Polotsky (1983:302) for the treatment of jä- as a converter of a finite verb-form into a noun.
A. Subordination: subordinate construction
B. Ellipsis: ellipsis of main clause
C. Conventionalized ellipsis: restriction of interpretation of ellipsed material.
D. Reanalysis as main clause structure: conventionalized main clause use of formally subordinate clause.
   – “The construction now has a specific meaning of its own, and it may not be possible to restore any ellipsed material”

Thus, an insubordinated verb begins its journey as a subordinate verb. Then ellipsis of a main verb/clause, of the sort exemplified below, follows as indicated in brackets in the translation.\footnote{A similar observation is made by Polotsky (1951:44-45) for some Chaha imperative converbs (imperative (F.SG) plus -m tanä) such as the following.}

\begin{verbatim}
(6:15) jih hullu gänzäb min ji-hon-ā-t
this all money what 3-become:IPFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ

bil-āw kā-amba anor-u-t
say:CVB-3PL.HON.GEN in-village keep:PFV-3PL.HON-3MSG.OBJ

al-waccāw dājace wube-m lä-kifū k’ān
say:PFV-3.HON-3PL.OBJ Dejjach Wube-FOC for-bad day

ji-hon-all bijj-ā all-u
3MSG-become:IPFV-NPST say:CVB-1SG.GEN say:PFV-3.HON

“He asked him, “Why do you keep all this money in the village?””

Dejjach Wube replied, “(\textbf{I keep all this money in the village}) thinking that it might be of use in time of hardship.”’ (Fasela 1959:11-12 in Girma 2014:319)
\end{verbatim}

However, as described earlier, the Amharic converb is equally dependent on auxiliaries like the tense marker \textit{-all}, just as it is on main verbs/clauses (Meyer 2012:182). So, it is plausible that auxiliaries also undergo ellipsis. There are two lines of arguments for this. First, König and Siemund (2007:281-286) state that declaratives are the unmarked sentence types cross-linguistically and are typically used to perform ‘representative (de-
scriptive) speech acts’ (like assertion, report, prediction). Commonly, they are characterized by the presence of specific finite verb forms. Other sentence types can be seen as modifications of declaratives. The devices include intonation, word order, inflectional affixes (addition or omission of inflectional affixes), and addition, omission, or substitution of constituents. So, utilizing the omission of auxiliaries (and also intonation) as a device, Amharic is using converbs in the formation of certain sentence types (or speech acts).

Another line of argument concerns the use of insubordinated converbs with a resultative/perfective reading, as in examples 6:12, 6:13a, and 6:14 in the Gojjam dialect. This makes perfect sense if we assume ellipsis of an auxiliary, since ‘compound converbs’ give resultative readings. The perfective results from a drift on the trajectory, perhaps, resultative > anterior > perfective/past. It is worth noting that the drift is probably complete in Peripheral Western Gurage and Muher (tt-group): The construction PFV-\text{ma} is converbial in Harari, present perfect in Kistane/Soddo (n-group), Dobbi/Gog(g)ot (n-group), and Mäsqan, and the unmarked exponent of the past in Peripheral Western Gurage and Muher (cf. Pellard 2012, where the converbs in Ŭgami Ryukyuan are shown to be used as independent past tense forms.).

The fact that in examples like 6:12 above the interpretation is not derived synchronically from ellipsis and the fact that the converb can take a negation marker and a relativizer in the Gojjam variety proves that Amharic converbs are reanalyzed as main verbs, i.e. having already reached the last stage (D).

Note, however, that although there is strong tendency for converbs to behave as main verbs, there is also a very rare case in which the converb together with the auxiliary functions as a dependent verb form (cf. täppni\text{\textw'all} in 6:16), contra Girma (2014:129, fn110) that “embedded and negative clauses do not take tense markers in Ethio-Semitic languages in general”, i.e. except the past tense.

162 I thank Ambjörn Sjörs for pointing this out to me.
163 Pellard (2012:110-11) argues that discourse patterns and the use of long clause chains are responsible for this development. More specifically, he argues that it is ‘premature interruption’ of a clause chain (for reasons of hesitation, sudden change of topic, or someone else cutting in) that causes the reinterpretation of the narrative converb as an independent past tense form. This account cannot be applied to the Amharic case as it doesn’t fully explain the occurrence of various uses of insubordinated converbs.
(6:16) issʷa dāmmo indih si-j-aj ajn-u-n
    she also like this CONJ-3MSG-see:IPFV eye-3MSG.POSS-ACC

fàffɨn-o tàppitʷ-ø-all
    cover:CVB-3MSG.GEN sleep:CVB-3MSG.GEN-NPST

mäslʷ-ø-at…
    resemble:CVB-3MSG.GEN-3FSG.OBJ

‘When he (King Solomon) sees like this (closing his eyes), thinking that he is asleep, she (Queen of Sheba)…’ (record)

Finally, it is important to underscore the idea that the function of converbs as a main verb cannot be taken as a violation of the general definition of converbs (Haspelmath 1995) or the characterization of such verb forms as converbs in Amharic, since it is an independent diachronic process that requires an explanation of its own. In addition, the process of insubordination is not peculiar to converbs, but encompasses other verb forms as well.

### 6.3. A glimpse of other verb forms

As Evans (2007:377; 2009:2) points out, and as we have seen examples of in 6:6 earlier for German and English, any structural feature associated with subordinate verbs/clauses (i.e. subordination through verbal morphology, conjunctions, cases, and word order, logophoric pronouns and long distance reflexives, switch-reference markers) can be insubordinated. In Amharic, subordinate verb forms other than converbs also function as main verbs.

The case with the bare imperfect is tricky. Girma (2014:129) states that the interchange between the bare imperfect and the imperfect with a tense marker to express the ‘non-past’ is free in old Amharic, the latter marking the latest stage, i.e. toward a compound imperfect (see also Goldenberg 1977:495). Both are attested in the ‘royal songs’, although the compound imperfect (e.g. tilälläc ‘she speaks’) is extremely rare compared to the ‘simple imperfect’ (e.g. jimäsɨl ‘he resembles’) in main affirmative clauses (Bulakh & Kogan 2014:605 & fn6). Even in later texts the bare imperfect is not completely absent. Getatchew (1980), for instance, gives an example where the imperfect is used as a main verb (without any auxiliary) in an old text called timhirtä hajmanot ‘teaching of the faith’. Consider 6:17, where the present/future tense marker -all appears to be absent on the verb jafär.
(6:17) lɨɟɨnnät j-affär
sonship 3MSG-bear:IPFV
‘He will gain sonship.’ (Getatchew 1980:579)

In this connection, mention should be made about Getatchew (1983a:165), who refers to a single case (6:18) in an old Amharic manuscript from Wollo (EMML 7007) in which a compound imperfect (cf. jidäbbilall) functions as a subordinate verb (fol 35r).

(6:18) bāgāna bā-mätta-Ø gize fārās-u kā-gas164
harp CONJ-play:PFV-3MSG time horse-DEF in-stable

hon-o ji-däbbil-all hon-ä
be(come):CVB-3MSG.GEN 3MSG-dance:IPFV-NPST be(come):PFV-3MSG

‘It so used to happen that when he played the harp, the horse in the stable danced. (?)’ (Getatchew 1983a:165)

Habte-Mariam (1973) observes that in the Gojjam variety the imperfect may be used in a subordinate position without a clause subordinating prefix in-‘so that, to’. Furthermore, in the dialects of Mänz and Wällo, it appears without a relative clause marker/complementizer (cf. also Leslau 1995:315). Consider the following example (6:19) from Wällo, where jìmät’u is used instead of jämminät’u, which seems to point to a more subordinate status of the imperfect (see also Leslau [1995:311], who states the bare imperfect is restricted to negative main clauses and affirmative subordinate clauses).

(6:19) ji-mät’-u ji-mäsl-ä-ɲɲ-al
3-come:IPFV-3PL 3MSG-resemble:IPFV-3MSG-1SG.OBJ-NPST

‘I think they will come.’ (Habte-Mariam 1973:127)

The problem arises when one finds instances like 6:20 below (see also Leslau [1995:313-314] for various uses of the imperfect) where the imperfect alone functions as a main verb (in non-negative clauses). It is difficult to know for sure whether the bare imperfect is used vestigially or innovatively.

Suggestion
(6:20a) tānk’äsak’s-āh ti-mät’a
move.slightly:CVB-2MSG.GEN 2MSG-come:IPFV

‘Should you move and come back?’

164 MA: kā-gat’ ‘in stable’
202
Exclamation
(b) indet ji-sik’
how 3MSG-lough:IPFV
‘He would laugh out loud!

Polite imperative
(c) jä-ne aläm madärja t-as-ajji-pp
POSS-1SG world place.to.spend.the.night 2FSG-CAUS-see:IPFV-1SG.OBJ
bil-w-at-all
say:CVB-3MSG.GEN-3FSG.OBJ-NPST
‘He said to her, “My dear, could you show me where to spend the night?”

Aggression
(d) min ti-hon
what 2MSG-become:IPFV
‘What are you gonna do about it (, heh?!)” (record)

Consider also the imperfectives with the subordinators s- and l- in 6:21a and b, the perfective with the subordinator ij- in 6:21c, and the verbal noun (with the prefix m-) in 6:21d (see also Leslau 1995:364, 836).

Begging/urging (someone to eat…)
(6:21a) s-i-mot
CONJ-1SG-die:IPFV
‘please!’

Interrogation
(b) and igr-ij-[in] and igr-ij-[in] bil-w-all
one leg-2FSG.POSS-ACC one leg-2FSG.POSS-ACC say:CVB-3MSG.GEN-NPST
‘He said, “(Give me) one leg (give me) one leg.”

bä-min-e l-i-hed-a bil-Ø-all-äcc
by-what-1SG.POSS COMP-1SG-GO:IPFV-Q say:CVB-3FSG.GEN-NPST-3FSG
‘And she said, “(If I give you my leg) by what means will I be able to go then?”

Polite imperative
(c) dähna wal-ʃ ijj-al-ʃ
well spend.day:PFV-2FSG CONJ-say:PFV-3MSG-2FSG.OBJ
‘Reply to his greeting.’
Lit. ‘He is asking you, “How did you spend the day?”’
Exclamation
(d) wa wa s-i-l c’uhät-u
wa wa CONJ-3MSG-say:IPFV scream-3MSG.POSS

m-as-färrat-u
NMLZ-CAUS-fear-3MSG.POSS

‘It’s scream when it says “wa… wa!” is terrifying.’ (record)

The above examples in 6:21 are instances of a formally subordinate verb functioning as a main verb for various (pragmatic) ends. In order to ascertain whether this is really a case of insubordination, their diachronic development needs to be investigated further. Here the point is that functioning as a main verb while being formally dependent is a phenomenon shared by other verb forms as well.

6.4. Conclusion

The converb in Amharic, but potentially in other languages as well, exhibits features that seem to violate its definition, i.e. by functioning as a main verb. As the inceptive construction mainly employs this verb form, it is deemed necessary to investigate the matter to some extent. The data (and literature) suggest that the phenomenon belongs to an independent diachronic process called insubordination. That is, converbs are originally dependent verbs, but the main verbs or auxiliaries they depend on get ellipsed, and they more and more come to acquire an independent verb status (e.g. as shown in their ability to take negation and relative markers). As a main verb, they appear in surprise/exclamation, interrogation, rhetorical question, wish, and resultative/perfective clauses. It is also cross-linguistically attested that verb forms other than the converb can undergo such a process. This is probably the case in Amharic, too (e.g. the imperfective and verbs with conjunctions), although further research is required to confirm this. Thus, the main verb use of some converbs does not nullify the definition of converbs and does not put Amharic converbs in general into a different category.
VII. Conclusion

This thesis is an inquiry into the syntactic features, range of functions, and historical development of a rarely occurring construction type known as the inceptive construction. The inceptive construction is based on a grammaticalized use of verbs of ‘get up’, ‘pick up’, ‘grasp’, and ‘take’. The languages under investigation are a small family of Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia, known as Transversal South Ethio-Semitic (TSE) languages. They include Amharic, Argobba, Harari, Zay, Selt’i, and Wolane. The study mainly focuses on Amharic and as far as Wolane is concerned very little first-hand data was collected. Data were collected using free conversation and narrative recording, analysis of written materials, and elicitation of relevant linguistic examples.

The analysis shows that the verbs identify the initial phase of the event encoded by the main verb, hence the name ‘inceptive construction’. This is based on a linguistic notion where events are considered to consist of three basic sub-events, namely inceptive, core, and terminative sub-events, and where each sub-event can be independently identified by distinct verb forms. The verbs in TSE are further associated with nuances like volition, surprise, and emphasis. The rise of such interpretations as surprise and emphasis appears to depend mainly on the context, while volition is inherent to the construction.

Syntactically, the construction is a complex predicate displaying diagnostic properties such as being unable to be negated separately, sharing the same subject/object, and having the same tense (but not necessarily the same aspect and mood). The verbs in this use are also regarded as light verbs, as opposed to auxiliaries. This is due to their functions, co-occurrence restrictions (e.g. transitive light verbs with transitive reference verbs), and verb forms (e.g. taking variable forms, form identical with a main verb counterpart). Note, however, that no strict dichotomy between light verbs and auxiliaries is assumed, and it is acknowledged that light verbs could in principle diachronically develop into auxiliaries.

The construction generally does not show much variation between or within the languages under investigation. However, there is a notable difference in some co-occurrence restrictions. For instance, while the light verb for ‘pick
up’ can co-occur with a reference verb for ‘say’ in Amharic, this is not allowed in Harari. On the other hand, in Harari and Zay, there is individual variation among the consultants as to which converbs they use.

It is difficult to know the origin and development of the inceptive construction in these languages. This is partly because of the lack of adequate historical data and partly because of the rarity of the construction. There are only some traces of the construction in Amharic in the 15th century. It is assumed, however, that collocation, frequency, and speakers’ conception of the action of the converbs are possible factors that lead the verbs to grammaticalize into markers of the inception phase.

There is also a construction on par with the inceptive construction called ‘the terminative construction’ in Amharic (but assumed to exist in the other TSE languages as well). Here, instead of the inceptive phase, it is the final or terminative phase of an event that is identified. It involves the verbs for ‘rest’, ‘remain’, ‘sit down’, ‘be quite’, ‘throw’, and ‘leave’. Like the inceptive construction, the terminative construction has associated interpretations, i.e. surprise/emphasis and detriment.

The converb is the principal form of the verb used in the inceptive construction, although other verb forms are allowed, such as those that take an iterative marker/’while’ and a coordinating conjunction in Amharic and Argobba. This verb form has a variety of other uses in TSE languages that include being lexicalized/grammaticalized as an adverb, adposition (i.e. circumposition), causative, conjunction, and part of a lexical juxtaposition. The converb is a type of ‘general converb’ in that it takes no special marker for each role. However, it presents differences in other morphological/syntactic features. So, for instance, converbal conjunctions cannot be negated, whereas adverbs can; converbal causatives can be combined with the reference verb by a coordinating conjunction in Amharic, whereas adverbs cannot; etc.

The nature of the Amharic conjunction =nna ‘and’ is among the topics probed in this thesis. The reason for this is its role in alternative inceptive construction where it links a semantically bleached and a functionally modifier light verb with a lexical and modified reference verb. It is also used in causal(purposive) and conditional coordination where the verbs have a modifier-modified relationship, too. Generally, the conjuncts in the inceptive construction are analyzed as the ‘same type’, as they basically share the same verb form. In addition, the use of the coordinating conjunction signals that the light verb is not completely bleached. The case with the other constructions is different. The conjuncts may lack tense iconicity and can take variable positions. This suggests that =nna ‘and’ is ‘polysemous’. The =nna ‘and’ in the causal and conditional clause can be taken as a subordinator. Further-
more, there is homonymy in which =nna takes a non-conjunctual function as an emphatic marker.

The last chapter deals with an issue that is not central to the inceptive construction as such, but is nonetheless crucial in understanding the nature of the verb form dominantly used in the construction, i.e. the converb. The converb in Amharic at times is used as a main verb, which makes it less converb-like. For instance, it can take a negation marker (a feature associated with a main verb). This is because the main verb or auxiliary it depends on gets ellipsed over time, a phenomenon widely known as ‘insubordination’. An insubordinated converb comes to function as an expression of surprise/exclamation, interrogation, rhetorical questioning, wishing, and resultative/perfective. The main point is that this is a separate historical process that cannot hinder us from using the notion of ‘converb’ in the inceptive construction (and in other uses or construction types).
Den inceptiva konstruktionen och relaterade teman i amhariska och besläktade språk

Desalegn Asfawwesen

Sammanfattning på svenska

Det huvudsakliga temat för detta arbete är den sk. inceptiva konstruktionen i amhariska och fyra besläktade språk inom transversala sydetrosemitiska språk (TSE) i Etiopien: argobba, harari, zay och selt’i.

Kapitel ett presenterar konstruktionen, undersökningsspråken och deras talare, några egenskaper hos språken i fråga (avsnitt 1.1-1.3), metoder för datainsamling (1.4) samt problem som uppstod under undersökningens gång (1.5). Kapitel två ger en bakgrund om de verbformer som kallas konverb, dels i allmänhet, dels vad gäller deras specifika egenskaper i TSE-språk (avsnitt 2.1). Den inceptiva konstruktionen diskuteras sedan i termer av den större kategori den tillhör, nämligen komplexa predikat (2.2).

Den huvudsakliga analysen utgör kapitel tre. Här beskrivs i detalj de funktioner, syntaktiska egenskaper (avsnitt 3.1-3.2) och historia (3.4) som den inceptiva konstruktionen med konverb har i TSE-språk. Kapitel fyra jämför och kontrasterar den inceptiva konstruktionen med andra användningar och konstruktioner där konverb ingår.

Kapitel fem och sex befattar sig nästan uteslutande med amhariska. Kapitel fem redogör för de olika funktioner som uppvisas av konjunktionen =mna ‘och’ (som även används i den inceptiva konstruktionen). I kapitel sex beskriver en förbryllande användning hos konverb i andra kontexter, nämligen som huvudverb (sk. insubordination), med hänvisning även till liknande fall involverande andra verbformer.

Det sista kapitlet, kapitel sju utgör avhandlingens sammanfattning.
Konverb och den inceptiva konstruktionen


Zay ’greppa’

(1) giını adirru-j inz-ä-m näkäs-e-j
    hund katt-DEF greppa:PFV-3MSG-CVBI bita:PFV-3MSG-3MSG.OBJ
    ’En hund bet katten.’
    *’Efter att ha greppat (katten), bet en hund katten.’ (elic.)

Verbet inz-ä, i normalfallet ett huvudverb med betydelsen ’greppa’, blir i perfektiv form ett konverb genom den särskilda markören -m (sk. kort konverb [CVBI]; ibland -nim som ger ett sk. långt konverb [CVBII]). Konverbet är normalt icke-finit (dvs. saknar markering för tempus) och kan som regel inte användas som huvudverb. I (1) har det inte sin ursprungliga betydelse, utan används utan att det förekommer något greppande från hundens sida.

Syftet med detta arbete är alltså att studera den inceptiva konstruktionens funktion och syntaktiska egenskaper, och de diakroniska processer som gett upphov till den. Vidare behandlas en alternativ inceptiv konstruktion som använder sig av samordning och sk. insubordinering av konverb.

Material och metod

De huvudsakliga datakällorna utgörs av inspelningar av samtal och narrativer, skriftligt material, och elicitering av relevanta språkexempel. Därtill har information hämtats ur tidigare beskrivningar av språken.

Inspelningar av konversationer och narrativer gjordes mellan september 2013 och mitten av februari 2014, med talare av olika kön, ålder, yrkes och språkbakgrund. Tabell 1 sammanfattar inspelningsstid per språk samt antalet inspelade talare.

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165 Distinktionen mellan korta och långa konverb finns även i selt ’i och wolane.
Tabell 1: Inspelad konversation och narrativer; tid och antal informanter per språk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Språk</th>
<th>Inspeln.längd (hh:mm)</th>
<th>Antal talare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amharic: Gondar var.</td>
<td>21:00</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amharic: Gojjam var.</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zay</td>
<td>02:10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harari</td>
<td>03:15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolane</td>
<td>00:09</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argobba: Aliyu Amba var.</td>
<td>02:25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selt‘i</td>
<td>03:08</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summa:</td>
<td>44:07</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

För amhariska hämtades en del data från internet. Som modersmålstalare av amhariska analyserade jag inspelningarna på detta språk och excerperade förekomster av den inceptiva konstruktionen. Inspelningarna på selt‘i, zay, harari och argobba transkriberades (med amharisk ortografi) och översattes av infödda talare av dessa språk som inte själva figurerar i det inspelade materialet. Därefter gick jag igenom materialet noga i jakt på den aktuella konstruktionen.

Jag sökte också efter konstruktionen i skrivna källor på amhariska, såsom dagstidningar, tidskrifter och böcker (t.ex. romaner, sagoböcker, och personliga hågkomster). En sökning på amhariska verb och verbkonstruktioner på nätet utfördes med hjälp av Google. För data om den diakrona utvecklingen konsulterades äldre manuskript (som officiella dokument, brev, och hyllningssånger till kungar).

Den inceptiva konstruktionen är ovanlig. Relativt få förekomster påträffades i inspelade och skriftliga data för amhariska; för zay och selt‘i bara en handfull; och för harari inga alls (argobbamaterialet användes inte). Därför bygger analysen av konstruktionens olika egenskaper nästan helt på eliciterade data, utom vad gäller amhariska.

I eliciteringen användes exempel på konstruktionen som påträffats i det skriftliga och inspelade amhariska materialet. Exempelmeningarna med sina specifika kontexter presenterades för (tvåspråkiga) försökspersoner framför allt från de andra språken. I de fall de rapporterade att motsvarande konstruktioner förekom i deras egna språk ombads de var och en att (om möjligt) översätta, ge motsvarigheter, och komma på andra besläktade uttryck. Detta följes av frågor om olika egenskaper hos konstruktionen, som tempus, aspekt, diates, negation, kongruens och samförekomst. Senare ombads
talarna också att utforska och jämföra egenskaper hos konverben i andra användningar. Alla elicitingssessioner genomfördes på amhariska.

**Resultat och analys**
Analysen visar att konverben i denna konstruktion identifierar den inledande fasen av de händelser som uttrycks av huvudverben, därav namnet ‘inceptiv konstruktion’. Detta grundar sig på en lingvistisk tanke om att händelser kan indelas i tre grundläggande underhändelser, nämligen inceptiva (begynnande), kärn- och terminativa (avslutande) delhändelser, och att varje sådan delhändelse kan uttryckas för sig av skilda verb (se Bodomo 1997; De Vos 2005:32; Wiklund 2009). Den inceptiva konstruktionen förknippas i TSE vidare med betydelsenyanser som vilja, överraskning och emfas. Uppkomsten av bibetydelser som överraskning och emfas tycks främst bero på kontexten, medan vilja är en del av själva konstruktionens betydelse, vilket antyds av det faktum att den inte kan förekomma i passivum i följande exempel (2) från selt’i.

Selt’i ’resa sig’

(2) *c’ulo-j nák’-ä-Ø bä-t’ifi t-ok’-a
    barn-DEF resa.sig:PFV-3MSG-CVBI av-klappa.till PASS-slå:PFV-3MSG
    ’Pojken blev tillklappad.’ (elic.)

Syntaktiskt är konstruktionen ett sammansatt predikat som uppvisar diagnostiska egenskaper som att verben inte kan negeras separat, de delar subjekt/objekt, och har samma tempus (men inte nödvändigtvis samma aspekt och modus) (jfr Butt 1997b; 2003; Bril 2007; Croft 2012). Konverb i denna funktion kan ses som lättverb, snarare än hjälpverb. Detta baseras på deras funktioner (t.ex. att markera emfas, överraskning och vilja), begränsningar på samförekomst (som att transitiva lättverb används med transitiva huvudverb), och verbformer (formen är identisk med motsvarande huvudverb, som kan ha ett antal böjningsformer förutom konverbformen) (jfr Butt 1997a; b; 2003; Seiss 2009).

Notera dock att ingen strikt åtskillnad mellan lättverb och hjälpverb görs här, och att det medges att lättverb i princip skulle kunna utvecklas till hjälpverb med tiden.

I allmänhet varierar konstruktionen inte särskilt mycket mellan de undersökta språken, eller inom enskilda språk. Det finns dock märkbara skillnader i vissa begränsningar på samförekomst. Exempelvis kan konverbet ’plocka upp’ samförekomma med huvudverbet ’säga’ i amhariska, men inte i harari. I både harari och zay finns också skillnader mellan talare vad gäller vilka konverb de använder.
Det är svårt att avgöra den inceptiva konstruktionens ursprung och utveckling i dessa språk. Det beror dels på bristen på relevanta historiska data, och dels på konstruktionens låga frekvens. Det finns bara ett fåtal spår av konstruktionen i 1400-talsamhariska. Begrunda exempel (3):

Amhariska ’greppa’

(3) isat ji-mäsil 3an\textsuperscript{166} tärara ?ixiz-o
eld 3MSG-likna:IPFV kejsare berg greppa:CVB-3MSG.GEN

s-i-lis\textsuperscript{167}
CONJ-3MSG-bräonna::IPFV

’Kejsaren är som en skogsbrand som bränner berg.’

Det antas dock att samförekomst, frekvens och talarnas uppfattning om de händelser som konverben betecknar är möjliga faktorer som lett dem att grammatikaliseras som markörer av inceptionsfasen (jfr. Heine 1993; Dahl 2001a; Brinton & Traugot 2005; Azeb & Dimmendaal 2006).


Harari – lexikaliserat adverb

(4) islaam ji-rgäbgi-ma j-oobbaa-m-eel
muslim 3-återvända:IPFV-CVB 3-äta:IPFV-NCM-NEG.AUX

’En muslim kommer inte att äta av det igen.’ (Leslau 1970c:264)

Konverbet är ett slags allmänt konverb i den meningen att det inte har någon särskild markering beroende på funktion (jfr. Ebert 2008). Däremot uppvisar det skillnader vad gäller andra morfologiska och syntaktiska drag. Exempelvis kan konverb som fungerar som konjunktion (konverbiella konjunktioner) inte negeras, medan adverb kan det; i amhariska kan konverbiella kausativer samordnas med huvudverb med hjälp av konjunktion medan adverb inte kan det, osv.

Ett ytterligare tema som undersöks i denna avhandling är den amhariska konjunktionen =nna, ’och’. Anledningen är att den används i en alternativ

\textsuperscript{166} 3 an förefaller vara en äldre form av 3 anhoj ’titel som används i tilltal till kejsaren’.
\textsuperscript{167} sil i s ’är troligen besläktat med sil i t ’när han/det skalar’. 3 an
Inceptiv konstruktion där den förbinder ett semantiskt bleknat lättverb med ett lexikal huvudverb som lättverbet utgör bestämning till.

Argobba 'greppa'

(5) lijt-u-n wahaz-ät=enna bät’ifi māhat’a-t-e
  barn-DEF-ACC wahaza:PFV-3SG=och av-klappa.till slá:PFV-3SG-3MSG.OBJ

'Hon klappade till pojken.' (emfas, överraskning) (elic.)


Amhariska

(6) bā-dāngaj nā-w jā-tāk’āmic’c’e
  på-sten COP:NPST-3MSG.OBJ REL-sitta:CVB-1SG.GEN

'Det är på en sten jag har suttit.’ (inspeln.)

‘konverb’ när det gäller den inceptiva konstruktionen (eller andra användningar och konstruktionstyper).

**Slutsatser**
Konverben i den inceptiva konstruktionen uttrycker den inledande fasen av händelser som beskrivs av huvudverb. Konstruktionen förknippas vidare med betydelsenyanser som vilja, överaskning och enfas, där de senare tycks vara kontextberoende, medan vilja är en integrerad delbetydelse hos själva konstruktionen.

De undersökta språken uppvisar mycket lite variation sinsemellan när det gäller denna konstruktion, även om det finns skillnader i vilka element som kan samförekomma, och i vissa fall skillnader mellan enskilda talare vad gäller de konverb som accepteras (zay, harari).

Diakront finns bara enstaka föregångare belagda i 1400-talsamhariska. Faktorer som samförekomst, frekvens, och talarnas uppfattning om de handlingar konverben beskriver är möjliga faktorer som lett till att dessa verb kommit att få den grammatiska funktionen att signalera den inledande fasen i ett skeende.

Även om den inceptiva konstruktionen vanligtvis använder sig av konverb så förekommer även andra verbformer. I amhariska förbinder konjunktionen =mna ‘och’ ett lättverb med det lexikala huvudverbet, men konjunktionen används även i flera andra typer av underordning. Kriterierna tempusikonicitet och syntaktisk flyttbarhet visar att =mna är en samordnande konjunktion i det första fallet, men underordnande i de andra.

Slutligen påvisas att konverbet i amhariska kan insubordineras, genom att det huvud- eller hjälpverb det vanligen stöder sig på utesluts och det kommer att fungera som huvudverb. Det kan då uttrycka förvåning/utrop, undran, retorisk fråga, önskan och resultativ/perfekt.

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