

Biabsolutives in Archi
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Archi (Lezgian), like many other Dagestanian languages allows biabsolutive constructions. The ergative alignment is obligatory with the predicate in the perfective, biabsolutive is available with the imperfective predicate:

- (1) tor χ° ošon b-a-r-ši eɾdi
 she.ABS dress(III)[SG.ABS] III.SG-make-IPFV-CVB <II.SG>be.PAST
 She was making a dress.

Normally, this sentence can only be said if the speaker actually saw the woman making a dress. Compare the next pair of examples:

- (2) tuw-mi paha-r-ši i **qilin**
 he-ERG smoke-IPF-CVB be.IV.SG.PRS cigarette(IV)[ABS.SG]
 He is smoking.
- (3) tuw paha-r-ši w-i **qilin**
 he.ABS smoke-IPF-CVB I.SG-be.PRS cigarette(IV)[ABS.SG]
 He is smoking.

It would be better to translate (2) as ‘he smokes’, it can be said if the speaker made a conclusion about the smoking by indirect evidence, whereas (3) is much more likely to be said when the speaker actually saw the person smoking.

The biabsolutive construction is the only option when the predicate contains the imperfective converb in *-mat*:

- (4) tor č'il b'aža-r-mat d-i
 she.ABS hay(IV)[SG.ABS] cut-IPFV-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
 She is still cutting hay.

This can be said when the woman was expected to finish hay cutting, but is still doing it.

There are claims that the biabsolutive construction can be thought of as kind of noun incorporation (Forker 2009); the same reasoning allowed Polinsky (2008) to include Archi in the list of languages that have antipassive. However, the biabsolutives in Archi behave in a way that make such interpretation less persuasive:

- the object noun can be moved to the rightmost periphery (examples 2 and 3);
- the object noun can be in the plural:

- (5) tor χ° ošon-um a-r-ši d-i
 she.ABS dress(III)-PL.ABS NHPL.make-IPFV-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
 She is making dresses.

- if there is an agreeing pronoun, it agrees with the object (contrary to what is claimed in Kibrik 1979):

- (6) tuw **q'onq'** oɾkɫin-ši w-i **ez**
 he.ABS book(IV)[SG.ABS] IV.SG.read-IPFV-CVB I.SG-be.PRS IV.SG.1SGDAT
 He is reading for me (woman speaking).

References

- Forker, Diane. 2009. The Biabsolutive Construction in Nakh-Daghestanian – a new type of object incorporation? Paper presented at the 8th Meeting of the Association of Linguistic Typology, University of Berkeley, USA.
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- Polinsky, Maria: Antipassive Constructions. In: Haspelmath, Martin & Dryer, Matthew S. & Gil, David & Comrie, Bernard (eds.) *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Munich: Max Planck Digital Library, chapter 108. Available online at <http://wals.info/feature/108>. Accessed on 12.10.2010.