

Non-finite verbal constructions in Adyghe text: verbal suffix - š̂

The Adyghe verb system distinguishes between finite verbs and non-finite verbs. Nonfinite verbal constructions are used in connecting clauses. They function as dependent clauses, preceding the finite main predicate of a sentence.

This paper describes the function of the non-finite verbal suffix -š̂ in Adyghe discourse¹.

This suffix can be attached to dynamic and stative verbs and occurs in different tenses of the verb. According to the descriptive grammar of Adyghe by Rogava and Kerasheva² this suffix occurs with dynamic verbs in the present and future tense and the perfective and imperfective past. It can also be attached to negative forms, though not with all tenses. Occurrences with stative verbs are given in present tense.

Two main functions have been attributed to this non-finite verbal construction by Rogava and Kerasheva. Depending on its occurrence with stative or dynamic verbs, the environment of the verb, and the sequences of tenses, it functions 1) as a conjunction (CNJ) between verbal clauses, or 2) as a logical connector for an adverbial clause of reason (causal). This type of non-finite verbal construction fits Haspelmath's definition of 'converb' in the sense that its "main function is to mark adverbial subordination" (1995:3)³.

Examples⁴:

Dynamic verbs	affirmative	negative	function
past perfective (PRT1)	si-txa-ğe-š̂ I-write-PRT1-š̂ I wrote and / or: as I wrote	si-txa-ğe-p-i-š̂ I-write-PRT1-not-i-š̂ I did not write and / or: as I did not write	conjunction/ causal
past imperfective (habitual past) (HABPRT1)	si-txe-štıǵe-š̂ I-write-HABPRT1-š̂ as I used to write	si-txe-štıǵe-p-i-š̂ I-write-HABPRT1-i-š̂ as I did not use to write	causal
future 1 (FUT1)	si-txe-štı-š̂ I-write- FUT1-š̂ as I shall write	si-txe-št-ep-i-š̂ I-write-FUT1-not-i-š̂ as I shall not write	causal
Stative verbs			
present (PRES)	si-š̂is-i-š̂ I-sit-i-š̂ as I sit	si-š̂is-ep-i-š̂ I-sit-not-i-š̂ as I do not sit	causal

The results of my research confirm the basic points of this analysis, but also contribute further information concerning the distribution of tenses and types of information implied by the use of this verbal suffix.

Moreover, this paper expands the analysis of Rogava and Kerasheva by describing the suffix in the context of its function at the discourse level.

Analysis of Adyghe texts has shown that the occurrence of this non-finite verb construction correlates with specific types of information found in different genres of discourse. In narrative

discourse, predominantly past tense events expressed via finite verbs make up the main line of the story and represent foreground information.⁵ Non-finite verb constructions ending with the suffix -*ŝ* convey background information, such as nonevents and collateral information.⁶ In the material I researched, which includes folklore and fairy-tales, personal reports and newspaper articles, the non-finite verbal suffix -*ŝ* occurs mainly in direct speech. The kind of information in these sentences often contain commands, exhortations and instructions which are typical features of behavioral and procedural discourse. Here these non-finite verb constructions are part of the main line of information.

Examples from "Adige psisexer (Adyghe fairy-tales)"⁷:

- (1) a č'alew ž°i-ğ°eti-št1-r mafe ŝ°i-feč°-št1-ŝ
 that boy(ADV) you.PL-find-FUT1-PART happy you.PL-make-FUT1-CNJ.causal
- c'ew fe-ŝ°i-w1s1-št1-r l'1maf
 name(ADV) BEN-you-call-FUT1-PART Happy-Man
 'Because the boy whom you will find will make you happy, you shall give him the name Happy-Man'
- (2) sxin ŝ'ığeř z1-ŝ°i-w1x1-č'e sek°e ʔazexew nebgiribl
 food prepared REL-you.PL-finish-when hunter skillful.ADV person.seven
- ŝ°i-y1-ğ°ise-ŝ axeme ŝ°-a-ğesxe-št
 you.PL-POSS-companion(STAT.PRES)-CNJ.causal they you.PL-they-feed-FUT1
 "When you finish the prepared food, because seven skillful hunters are your companions, they will feed you."
- (3) mar1 wadež s1-z1-ŝ1?e-r i1es-n1q°e č°i-ğe-ŝ z1
 well, you.at I-REL-live-PART year-half become-PRT1-CNJ nothing
- we-s-ʔ°a-ğe-p
 you-I-say-PRT1-not
 "Well, it has been half a year that I live with you and I told you nothing."

On the basis of this distinction, the third function of non-finite verb constructions with suffix -*ŝ* can be interpreted as a verbal discourse marker distinguishing foreground and background information in different types of discourse.

Notes

1. The suffix -*ŝ* has variants in different dialects, e.g. -z1 in Abadzekh, -ŝ1 in Temirgoy
2. Rogava G.V., Kerasheva Z.I. 1966. Grammatika adyghejskogo jazyka, Krasnodar/Majkop
3. Haspelmath, Martin. 1995. The Converb as a cross-linguistically valid category. Converbs in cross-linguistic perspective, ed. by M. Haspelmath and E. König, 1-56. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
4. The table does not present all possible occurrences
5. Longacre, R.E., 1996. The grammar of discourse. 2nd edition, New York: Plenum
6. Grimes, J.E., 1975. The thread of discourse. The Hague: Mouton
7. Xut, K.N., 1987. Adige psisexer (Adyghe fairy-tales), Majkop