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## Converb in Dizin

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### Abstract

This paper describes converbs in Dizin, one of the least linguistically studied Omotic languages in the southwest part of Ethiopia. Its objective is describing and documenting converbs that appear in the language. The study follows a qualitative research approach. The data were collected using elicitation from key informants and from natural texts recorded in Maji district in 2022. The findings show that Dizin has three types of converb: general converb marked by covert suffix- $\emptyset$ , same-subject anterior converb –tej and different-subject anterior converb-n. The study also shows that converb clauses occur preceding the matrix clause, which accords with s-o-v languages. The study further shows that general converbs in Dizin express adverbial modification for manner, or as causal reading, and as narrative for clause-chaining, while the different-subject anterior converb and same-subject anterior converbs express events which take place one after the other. Furthermore, the study shows that some converbs become lexicalized into agent nouns and adverbs.

**Keywords:** structure, function, (co)subordination, dependent, modification

### 1. Introduction

The Dizi people live mainly in the West Omo Zone of the Southwest Ethiopia Regional State. The neighboring people of Dizi are Me'enit to the north, Suri to the South and West, and Sheko to the Northwest (Abeje2000:10 ).The Dizi people settled predominantly in elevations that lie from 1,200 to 2.200 meters above sea level, which is comfortable for a variety of crop production. As a result the Dizi people are largely agrarian who make their income mainly from agriculture. The Dizi people are predominantly followers of Orthodox Christianity.

The Dizi people call their language Dizin (Beachy 2005). It has about 35,988 native speakers (CSA 2007:99). Dizin was transcribed into writing very recently using the Latin script. The Latin-based orthography is more phonetic and hence what is pronounced is written. Dizin is taught as a subject at

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elementary and high school. It is also used as a language of media on FM of Bench-Maji Zone. Amharic is also spoken as a second language by most Dizin speakers in towns, and also serves as official and a vehicular language among speakers of different languages.

The Dizin language belongs to the Dizoid group of the Omotic language family (Bender, 2000; 2003). Because of their genetic affiliation, Dizin is closely related to languages like Sheko and Na'ö (Aklilu 2003; Bender, 2000; 2003). As a result, the three of them are considered as members of the Dizoid group. Aklilu (2003:65) states that the language has three dialects: Adikas, Maji, and Jaba. These dialects are equivalent to Eastern, Central, and Western Dizin respectively (Beachy 2005:5).

Major linguistic studies on the language include Toselli (1939), Keefer (1969a and 1969b), Habtemariam (1982), Claudi and Serzisko (1985), Breez (1988), Beachy (2005, 2008, 2018), Allan (1976, 1978), Aklilu (1994, 2000, 2003) and Mulugeta (2021).

Aklilu's (1994, 2003), Breez's (1988) and Allan's (1976, 1978) descriptions focus only on a comparative study of the phonological systems of the languages. Only works done by Beachy (2005), Aklilu (2000) and Mulugeta (2021) focus on the description of the phonology and morphology of the language. According to Beachy (2005), Dizin is more agglutinating morphologically and verb-final and pro-drop language syntactically. The author further indicates that Dizin employs SOV word order, although OSV is also possible in the order being pragmatically determined. Beachy's (2008) work emphasizes on analysis of possessive prefixes and verbal agreement proclitic. Beachy's (2018) presents a brief grammar of Dizin. He sketches the order of constituents in a noun phrase; the presence of finite and non-finite verbs; and identifies the types of adverbs such as manner, place and time adverbs.

Dizin is also characterized by its nasal phonemes which are syllabic, i.e. they can be nucleus of the syllable in the process of syllabification. In addition to this, it has three levels of tone: high, mid and low which have both lexical and grammatical functions (Aklilu, 2003 and Beachy, 2005). It is strictly a head-final language with SOV word order.

The preceding discussion focuses on the studies that have been conducted on Dizin. A close inspection of these studies reveals that none of them have dealt with the structure and function of converb clause in the language though

Beachy (2005) touched up on the morphological markers of converbs( which he calls ‘medial verbs’).This paper, therefore, aims to describe converb clause in Dizin, based on the Maji dialect (central Dizin). The paper will be divided into six sections. The second section provides cross-linguistic typological information on converbs. The third section, presents theoretical framework of the work. The fourth section, offers the method of the work. The fifth section, offers the description and discussion on the structure and function of converbs, and the last section provides a conclusion.

## **2. A Cross- linguistic Overview of Converb**

### **2.1. Definition of Converb**

According to Haspelmath (1995:3), converb is fundamentally considered to be a non-finite verb form, whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination. It can also incorporate narrative forms which have clause-chaining function that shows a sequence of events. Put differently, converbs are essentially verbs which are used to modify other verbs or sentences. Nedjalkov (1995:97), on the other hand, considers converb as a finite verb yet dependent verb form ending with a verbal affix instead of a free conjunction. The former definition has got support from Ebert (2008:8) who claims ‘a general converb connects two or more events and only one verb-the last verb in SOV languages carries finite marker.’ From this, one can infer that converb is a verb which is less finite than the main clause verb (Ebert, 2008:23F).

Morphologically, converbs are non-finite verb forms that prototypically do not inflect for tense-aspect and mood. Converbs rather consist of the verb stem and a suffix (Ebert 2008:16). Syntactically, they are not used in independent sentences as they cannot express mood, tense and aspect independently. Converbs depend on the finite verb for the information of reference to their subjects (Haspelmath, 1995:23).Similarly Nedjalkov (1995:97) also points out that converbs cannot occur as main verbs in independent clauses.

### **2.2. Types of Converbs**

As stated by Nedjalkov (1995), converbs can be classified based on their syntactic, semantic and referential properties. Syntactically, Nedjalkov (1995:98) proposes three main types of converbs: (i) converb proper used as an adverbial in a simple sentence, (ii) coordinative converb used as a coordinate predicate, and (iii) conjunctive converb used as a predicate of a subordinate clause. On the other hand, Ebert (2008:8–15) identifies four kinds of converbs: namely, (i) a general converb which helps to join two or more

actions, (ii) simultaneous converb that describes the manner related to the main action, (iii) negative converb (not the same as negated converbs) and (iv) specialized converb (converb with special function: conditional, causal and several temporal subordinations)

Semantically, Nedjalkov (1995:106ff.) distinguishes three types of converbs, such as contextual converbs (general), specialized converbs and narrative converbs. Contextual converbs have one or two meanings of the adverbial type. They can further be classified into two groups: temporal and non-temporal converbs. Temporal converbs express simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority, whereas, the non-temporal converbs have essential meanings of manner, cause, purpose, result, concession. Specialized converbs are the second type of converbs that have three or more adverbial meanings which are realized under certain situations. They may express meanings such as simultaneity, anteriority, posteriority, cause, concession, manner, condition, goal and place. Narrative converbs, on the other hand, are used to express a co-ordinative connection which progresses the narration. They can express three or more finalized actions in succession that advances narration. In narrative converbs, the syntactic dependency relation is frequently not attended by semantic dependence. Narrative converbs are often more frequent in texts than all other converbs together, and in some languages they are more common than finite verbs.

The last category proposed by Nedjalkov (1995:110) is coreferentiality of the subjects of the converb and main verb. Based on coreferential properties, he identifies three types of converbs: namely, same subject, different subject and varying subject converbs. Same subject converbs are the ones whose converb subject and the subject of the main verb are always coreferential, whereas different subject converbs are converbs whose subject of the main verb and that of the converb are not coreferential. The third type is the varying subject converbs, in which case the converb subject and the subject of the main verb are either coreferential or not.

### **2.3. Function of Converbs**

As pointed out by Coupe (2006:149), converbs are employed to indicate functions as anterior, posterior, temporal overlapping, durativity, concession and others. Haspelmath (1995:7) stresses that verbs and clauses are generally modified by converbs, but not nouns or noun phrases, i. e. converbs neither take the place of verbal nouns nor participles.

Equally important function of converbs is clause-chaining. In this regard, Coupe (2006:1460) points out that: “in a more coordinative manner for linking a series of sequentially ordered predications in dependent clauses, with the sentences terminating in matrix clause. This is often referred to as clause-chaining.”

In the typology literature on converbs, such type of converb is said to be narrative converb. It is used to join a string of consecutive events that advance the plot towards its end plot. Haspelmath (1995:21) further sheds light on clause-chaining function of converb. He asserts that several converbs can be joined into longer sequences, having only one finite verb upon which the converb depends.

König (1995:74) notes the importance of constituent order for the explanation of converb construction for languages where the position of the clause containing the converb is not fixed. A case in point is English, in which clauses having converbs can either precede or follow the main verb, whereas Hindi the converb clause always precedes the main verb. This implies that in English, the sequence of the constituents is crucial for the interpretations of converbs, while in Hindi it does not. The different position of converbs indicates how the order of events could be pertinent for understanding the semantic structure of converbs in a sentence.

#### **2.4. Converb in the Ethiopian Context**

Ferguson (1976:75), in his study of Ethiopia as a linguistic area, claims the presence of converbs (or “gerunds” as the author calls them). Since then, there have been several studies conducted on converbs on Ethiopian Languages. Hence, it is essential to look at the converbs of Omotic languages that Dizin, the subject of this study, belongs to. As a result, a review of the converbs found in the previous studies of Omotic languages, such as Dime, Maale, and Wolaitta is presented below.

Mulugeta (2008:157-158) claims two types of converb markers in Dime: *-á* and *-ándé*. The way they are distributed differs. As to him, the long form *-ande* indicates a sequence of two or more actions performed by different subjects, whereas the short form *-a* is used to denote a sequence of two or more events carried out by the same subject. Mulugeta also indicates that the converb *-ande* expresses anterior events that occur before the event indicated by the main verb. Moreover, he reports that converbs can be duplicated and as well combined with other adverbial modifiers in complex sentence.

In Maale, Azeb (2001:190) identifies three types of converbs: namely, (i) same-subject anterior converb (ረ-ሳ??ዐ), which expresses events that take place prior to the event expressed by the main verb, (ii) a general converb (-*í*), which expresses a wide range of meanings, including anteriority, simultaneous, clause-chaining, (iii) the different-subject anterior converb (-*ém*), which is used when the subjects of the converb and the main verb are different. She also indicates that the converbs are directly suffixed to the verb root, i.e. converbs do not distinguish tense-aspect, person, number or gender. Azeb further discusses the syntactic properties and semantic functions. She found that the converbs in Maale are used to convoy a wide range of meanings, including temporal sequencing, simultaneity, and clause-chaining and so on.

Similarly, Azeb (2012:500 ) also shows that Wolaitta, a member of Omotic language family, has four converb types, i.e. (i) same-subject anterior converb marked by -*ídí* or -*á dá* ,(ii) different-subject anterior converb marked by (-*í*)*n*, (iii) same-subject simultaneous converb marked by -*iddí* or -*áiddá* and (iv) a different-subject simultaneous converb (marked by -*ísín* .As reported by Azeb and Dimmendaal (2012:501), the two converb types, same-subject anterior converb and same-subject simultaneous converbs do not fully inflect for subject agreement, i.e. they show only gender and number features of the subject. The third one, the different-subject anterior converb is characterized by an invariable morpheme -*(i)n*. They also reported that negation cannot directly be marked on converbs expressing same-subject and simultaneous converbs. Besides, they claimed that the same-subject anterior converb in Wolaitta has a short and long form. While the short converb is used in verb compounding, the long one can be employed in expressing various functions such as sequentiality, manner, clause-chaining and aspectual distinction.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Dixon (1997) proposes a comprehensive framework called Basic Linguistic Theory (hereforth BLT), which is employed to describe the actual use of language. As to Dixon (1997:128), the theory stands for “the fundamental theoretical concepts that underlie all work in a language description and change, and the postulation of general properties of human language.” BLT is a framework particularly used for grammatical description of languages. It is a cumulative framework that has been developed out of traditional grammar and typology (Dixon 2012). This framework has widely been used by linguists who want to describe language in its own terms without influence of other language. Dryer (2006) points out that BLT is a descriptive theory concerned

with ‘what languages are like’ and the primary goal of this theory is descriptive, without any intended theoretical significance like concerns about “why languages are the way they are”. He further claims that its goal is, ‘to describe a set of facts, without any particular theoretical implications’.

Since BLT focuses on the description of language in its own terms without the influence of others, the investigator has considered it relevant and hence adopted for the present study to describe the structure and function of converb in Dizin.

#### **4. Methods**

The data for this study were gathered from Maji district. This district was chosen because it is a place where the Maji dialect (central Dizin) is dominantly spoken, and it is the variety used in writing. The data used in this paper were collected in two ways. Linguistic elicitation and natural texts like fables were used to obtain the required data. Four informants, two men and two women between the age of 25 and 65 years, were interviewed to produce clauses and sentences, and asked to narrate natural texts. The Leipzig Glossing convention (LGC) was used, in which the boundaries of morphemes are clearly shown (breaks of morphemes are indicated with a hyphen). Examples provided generally consist of three lines. The first line is the data from the targeted language in phonemic form, with morpheme breaks. The second line gives morpheme-by-morpheme English gloss, and the third line is a free translation into English. During the description and discussion, each feature and manifestation of converbs has been explained in depth.

#### **5. Data Description and Discussion**

In this section, a non-final dependent clause type which is repeatedly used in Dizin texts and elicited material will be discussed. As it will be presented later in this section, Dizin texts contain complex sentences which can express sequences of events in one sentence. In other languages like English, however, these sequences of events are regularly extracted by using some sentences than in one sentence.

In the succeeding subsections, the structure and function of converb clauses from the view of morphological, syntactic and semantic typology have been dealt with.

### 5.1. The Morphology of Converb

There are three converb markers in Dizin: (i) a general converb marked covertly  $-\emptyset$ , (ii) same-subject anterior converb marked by  $-tej$  and (iii) different-subject anterior converb marked by  $-n$ , hereafter named as CNV<sub>1</sub>, CNV<sub>2</sub> and CNV<sub>3</sub> respectively. Of the three converb types, the general converb and the same-subject anterior converb do not show agreement with the subject and they lack tense-aspect distinguishing morphemes as well, while the different-subject anterior converb shows agreement with the subject but lacks tense-aspect markers. This is in line with the case of converb in different Omotic languages as they may or may not inflect for person, number or gender. For example, converbs in Ari, Bench, Gamo, Dawro, Wolaitta, and Yem inflect for person, number or gender while in Maale, Dime and Zayse do not (Azeb 2012:502).

In contrast to the converb, main verb in Dizin shows subject agreement for each person, number, and gender as well as for tense-aspect. The following table shows the subject agreement with main verbs in the perfective aspect versus general converb and same-subject anterior converb.

Table 1: Aspect and person inflection on Dizin main verb and converb of the verb *hiat*- ‘run’

	General converb	Same-subject anterior converb	Main verb
1S	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-nò</i>
2S	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-tò</i>
3SF	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-gè</i>
3SM	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-gò</i>
1PL	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-<i>nnò</i></i>
2PL	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-<i>nitò</i></i>
3PL	<i>hiat-∅</i>	<i>hiat-tej</i>	<i>hiat-kì-<i>nifì</i></i>

As the paradigm in Table 1 shows, there are no tense-aspect, person, number or gender distinguishing morphemes in general and same-subject anterior converbs, while in the different-subject anterior converb; there are agreement markers with the subject as, seen in Table 2 below:



Table 2: Agreement markers on Dizin different-subject anterior converb of the verb *tā-* ‘go’

	Different-subject anterior converb	Gloss
1S	<i>ʔḡ-tā-tej</i>	‘I having gone’
2S	<i>ā-tā-tej</i>	‘You having gone’
3SF	<i>í-tā-tej</i>	‘She having gone’
3SM	<i>á-tā-tej</i>	‘He having gone’
1PL	<i>ʔḡ-tā-tej</i>	‘We having gone’
2PL	<i>ít-tā-tej</i>	‘You having gone’
3PL	<i>íf-tā-tej</i>	‘They having gone’

Table 2 also shows that subject agreements are prefixed on the converb, whereas the converb marker (*-tej*) is suffixed to it with the absence of tense-aspect. As mentioned earlier (in section one) tone plays both lexical and grammatical roles. As indicated in Table 2, high and mid-tones are used to identify some agreement markers on converbs. For example, *á-* ‘3SM’ versus *ā-* ‘2S’, and *ʔḡ-* ‘1PL’ versus *ʔḡ-* ‘1S’.

When it comes to negation, in Dizin, the negation of the converb and the regular verb is not marked in the same way. Negation on converb is marked by suffixing the morphemes *-kaj* for both CNV<sub>1</sub> and CNV<sub>2</sub>, while *-k’atf’a* is used for CNV<sub>3</sub>. Compare the following examples.

- (1) a. *mātu*      *íts-a-s*                      *ʔḡ- Ø- kaj*                      *tā-gò*  
 metu      food-DEF.M-ACC                      eat- CNV<sub>1</sub>-NEG                      go-3SM  
 ‘Metu went without eating the food.’
- b. *jáá-a*                      *éjk-a-s*                      *dābúf-kaj-tej*                      *kar*  
 person-DEF                      lion-DEF-ACC                      kill-NEG-CNV<sub>2</sub>                      to  
*ú-g-is*                      *bangir-ò*  
 house-IN-DAT                      return-3SM  
 ‘The man returned to his home without killing the lion.’
- c. *mātu*      *ʔḡ -k’atf’a-n*                      *ts’oni*      *íts-a-s*                      *ʔḡ-ò*  
 metu      eat-NEG-CNV<sub>3</sub>                      tsoni      food-DEF-ACC                      eat-3SM  
 ‘Tsoni ate the food while Metu did not.’
- b. *mātu*      *íts-a-s*                      *ʔḡ-Ø*                      *nán-á*                      *tā-kì-tì*  
 metu      food-DEF.M-ACC                      eat-CNV<sub>1</sub>                      NEG-3SM                      go-PF-NEG  
 ‘Having eaten the food, Metu did not go.’

### 5.3. The Syntax of Converb

Dizin converbs are nonfinite verbs, which are syntactically dependent on the main verbs. Converbs occur preceding the matrix clause. This is generally accepted that converb clauses are likely to come before their matrix clauses and hence correlates with SOV languages. As to their number, one or more converbs can occur at a time. Dizin converbs are also reduplicated to indicate actions that are repetitive and durative, which is also observed in Dime (2008:159) and in Maale (Aze 2000:192-3). See the examples in (2).

- (2) a. [[ *īzū*      *zóku*    *húr-∅* ]      *jǎ-gò* ]  
          he            ox        buy-CNV<sub>1</sub>      come-3SM  
          ‘He came having bought an ox.’
- b. [ [ *ī-g*            *wú-∅*                            *á-kútf-a-s*  
          house-IN        enter-CNV<sub>1</sub>                    3SM.POS- hand-DEF.M-ACC  
          *tf’úrm-∅*        *its-a-s*                        *ʔm-∅* ]                            *tǎ-gò* ]  
          wash-CNV<sub>1</sub>    food-DEF.M-ACC    eat-CNV<sub>1</sub>                            go-3SM  
          ‘Having entered into the house, washing his hand, eating the food, he went’
- c. [ [ *atfík-a-s*            *k’uts-∅*      *k’uts-∅* ]      *kián-a-sis*      *tas-ò* ]  
          meat-DEF-ACC    Cut-CNV<sub>1</sub>    Cut-CNV<sub>1</sub>      dog-DEF.M-DAT    give-3SM  
          He cut the meat and gave it to the dog.’
- d. [[ *áku*            *tímirt*      *ī-pm*                            *hijǎfi-∅*      *hijǎfi-∅* ]      *jǎ-gò* ]  
          aku            lesson    house-LOC    stay-CNV<sub>1</sub>    stay-CNV<sub>1</sub>      come-3SM  
          ‘Aku stayed at school and went.’
- \*e *kómtu*            *wút-è*            *hiat-∅*  
          komtu            fell-3SF        run-CNV<sub>1</sub>

The converbs ‘*hur-∅*’ ‘having bought’ and ‘*wú-∅*’ ‘having entered’ and ‘having washed his hands’ occur preceding the matrix clause. As a result, the examples in (2a and b) are accepted by the native speakers. However, example (2e) is ungrammatical because Dizin does not allow main clause to precede the converb clause. Moreover, the idea contained in both examples (2a&b) gives complete sense, for the fact that each converb clause is used along with matrix clauses. When the converb clause occurs alone without the main clause, it does not express a complete thought, as shown in the following examples.

- 3) a. *áku*      *zóku*      *á-húr-∅*  
          aku      ox            3SM-buy-CNV<sub>1</sub>  
          ‘(Aku) having bought an ox,’
- b. *īzū*      *ī-g-a*                            *wú-∅*  
          he    house-IN-DEF.M                    enter-CNV<sub>1</sub>  
          ‘(He) entering into the house,’

The examples in (3) are all converb clauses. They appear without the main clauses, and hence the information contained in each clause is incomplete.

With regard to subject, the converb and the main verb may not have the same subject; any subject change is clearly indicated by the obligatory agreement markers. But when the converb and the main verb have the same subject, the subject of the main verb is coreferential to the subject of the converb.. Compare the examples below.

- (4) a. *áku gabu-t á-tā-n kómtu jā-gè*  
 aku market-LOC 3SM-go-CNV<sub>3</sub> komtu come-3SF  
 ‘(Aku) having gone to market, Komtu came’
- b. *áku gabu-t tā-∅ jā-gò*  
 aku market-LOC go-CNV<sub>1</sub> come-3SM  
 ‘Aku came having gone to market.’

In example (4a), the converb and the main verb have different subjects as a result, the subject agreement on both verbs are different, whereas in example (4b), the converb and the main verb have the same subject so that the subject agreement is only marked on the main verb.

Since converbs do not inflect for tense-aspect and mood, they only encode the state of the main verb. They can co-occur with verbs of perfective and imperfective aspect, For example, in (5a) ,the converb occurs along with perfective aspect ,while in (5b) it co-occurs with imperfective aspect.

- (5) a. *zóku húr-∅ jā-kì-gò*  
 ox buy-CNV<sub>1</sub> come-PF-3SM  
 ‘He bought an ox and came.’
- b. *zóku húr-∅ jā-dā-gò*  
 ox buy-CNV<sub>1</sub> come-IPF-3SM  
 ‘He buys an ox and comes.’

While the previous sections examine the morphology and syntax of Dizin converbs, the next section focuses on the function of converbs in light of cross-linguistic observation.

#### 5.4. Function of Converbs

Converb clauses have different functions in Dizin depending on their types. They may function as a clause-chaining, as an adverbial clause or they may express overlapping or simultaneous and consecutive events. Therefore, in the subsequent subsections, each of these functions has been examined briefly.

### 5.4.1. Function of General Converb (-Ø)

#### 5.4.1.1. Adverbial function

In adverbial function, converbs are frequently endorsed as satisfying a 'coextensive' or 'concomitant' function, i.e. they are used fundamentally to modify the manner in which the event of the main clause is fulfilled, or encode a causal reading, as exemplified in (6).

- (6) a *áku háru-kɨ hat dāg-Ø jã-gò*  
 aku mule-GEN on ride-CNV<sub>1</sub> come-3SM  
 'Aku came riding a mule.'
- b *nud-a-ke tã-Ø éjk-a utf-ɨ éb-nifi*  
 animal-DEF.M-PL go-CNV<sub>1</sub> lion-DEF.M visit-INF think-3PL  
 '...the animals thought of going to visit the lion...'
- c *ĩzũ sāk tʃoŋg bōrk-Ø súb-ò*  
 he hole in fall-CNV<sub>1</sub> die-3SM  
 'He died falling in the hole.'

The examples in (6) have converb clauses that modify the main verbs. These converbs function as adverb of manner. This is also true

#### 5.4.1.2. Clause-chaining Function

In clause-chaining function, converb clauses express a sequence of different events which precede verbal events determined by main verbs. In other words, it denotes the most unmarked means of conveying a sequence of events, in which only the last event in a sequence is expressed by a full verb. The number of occurrence in the same chain is not limited. Unlike the subordinate clause, the position of converbs in clause-chaining sentence may or may not be changed without a change in meaning. As a result, it is regarded as a (co)subordinate verb form. Consider the examples in (7).

- (7) a. *ízũ tʃ'ánk'a k'áj-Ø k'útf'-a-s tʃ'úrm-Ø*  
 he morning wake up-CNV<sub>1</sub> hand-DEF.M-ACC wash-CNV<sub>1</sub>  
*its ʔm-Ø tã-gò*  
 food eat-CNV<sub>1</sub> go-3SM  
 'He woke up, washed his hand, ate food and went.'
- b. *jááb-à á-átfík-a-s ʔm-Ø múg*  
 person-DEF.M his-meat-DEF.M-ACC eat-CNV<sub>1</sub> local beer  
*běj-Ø kar í-g-ís bángir-ò*  
 drink-CNV<sub>2</sub> to house-IN-DAT return-3SM  
 'The man, ate his meat, drank his beer and went back to his home.'

c.	<i>...bēj</i>	<i>tā-∅</i>	<i>tʃoŋg</i>	<i>wú- kajt--∅</i>	<i>k'ert</i>
	ape	go-CNV	in	enter-neg-CNV	door
	<i>al- -∅</i>	<i>utfi--∅</i>	<i>éjk-k'aŋk</i>	<i>ʔm-dŋ-kajt</i>	<i>jā-gè</i>
	sit-CNV <sub>1</sub>	visit-CNV <sub>1</sub>	Lion-INST	eat-PASS-NEG	come-3SF
	<i>ge-n-dā-gò ...</i>				
	say-PASS-3SM				
	‘... it is said she( ape)went and visited him sitting at the gate and came Back without being eaten by the lion...’				

In example (7a), three converb clauses occur one after the other functioning as clause-chaining and terminate with one main clause, while in example (7b) clause-chaining involves only two converb clauses and one main clause, and in (7c), four converb clauses occur along with the final verb. In this case, the converb functions as narrative for clause-chaining. It also shows that clause-chaining may involve unspecified number of converb clauses.

In Dizin, one may not be able to understand adverbial and clause-chaining function of converb clauses as they are not distinguished by grammatical morphemes. Instead, the context, in which the converb clause used, helps to identify whether it is clause-chaining or adverbial function. Hence, the same sentence may be interpreted in a different way in line with the context, as illustrated in (8).

(8)	<i>áku</i>	<i>zóku</i>	<i>wúúŋ-∅</i>	<i>məʃfi-n-ò</i>
	aku	ox	steal-cn <sub>v1</sub>	catch-PASS-3SM
	‘Aku was caught of stealing an ox.’			
	‘Aku stole an ox and he was caught.’			

This indicates that the Dizin converb fits with Nedjalkov's (1995) group of contextual converbs, or represents Ebert's (2008) general converb. In the same way, in Amharic as reported by Meyer (2012:175) and in Maale by Azeb (2001:191) adverbial and clause-chaining functions are distinguished only by the context where the converb used.

#### 5.4.1.3. Temporal Iconicity

Haspelmath (1995:14) points out that complex sentence having a number of converbs, the place of converbs show tense iconicity. In the same way, such temporal iconicity is attested in Dizin when the converb is used to express sequential events, i.e. the first converb expresses an action that takes places first, the second converb expresses the action that comes second, etc. But reversing the place of converbs results ungrammatical sentence, as seen in (9b).

- (9) a. ...*íts'-a-s*      *tfián- ∅*      *íi-g*      *ál- ∅*      *kék*  
 crop-DEF.M-ACC    harvest-CNV<sub>1</sub>    house-IN    put-CNV<sub>1</sub>    properly  
*k'ibisi- ∅*      *tā-nífi*      *ámint*      *útn-én*  
 close-CNV<sub>1</sub>      go-3PL      but      rat-DEF.F  
*bángir- ∅*      *jāl-g*      *kálu*      *jis- ∅*      *íi-g*  
 come.back-CNV<sub>1</sub>    earth-IN      hole      dig-CNV<sub>1</sub>    house-IN  
*wú- ∅*      *íts'-a-s*      *ʔm- ∅*      *tā-gè ...*  
 enter-CNV<sub>1</sub>      crop-DEF.M-ACC    eat-CNV<sub>1</sub>    go-3SF  
 '...the rat and the monkey, having harvested the crops, putting it in the house and closing it (house) properly, they (the rat and the monkey) went. But the rat, having come back, digging a hole through the house, entering through it and eating the crop, she went...'
- \*b ... *íts'-a-s*      *ál- ∅*      *íi-g*      *tfián- -∅*      *kék*  
 crop-DEF-ACC      put-CNV<sub>1</sub>    house-IN    harvest-CNV<sub>1</sub>    properly  
*k'ibisi- -∅* ]CNV.CLS    *tā-nífi ...*  
 close-CNV<sub>1</sub>      go-3PL  
 '...having put the crops, harvesting it in the house and closing it ( house) properly, they (the rat and the monkey) went...'

#### 5.4.1.4. Overlapping Events

The general converb also shows that the action indicated by the converb overlaps in time with the action of the main verb. It also indicates that the subject of the succeeding verb remains the same. Consider the examples below.

- (10) a. *ízū*      *k'éra-s*      *bāhì- ∅*      *wú-gò*  
 he      door-DEF.M-ACC    open-CNV<sub>1</sub>    ener-3SM  
 He opened the door and entered.'
- b. *ízū*      *kárm-a-s*      *gób- -∅*      *tā-gò*  
 he      fence-DEF.M-ACC    jump-3SM    go-3SM  
 He jumped over the fence and went.'
- \*c. *ʔm-ò*      *íts-a-s*      *bāhì -∅*  
 eat-3SM    food-DEF.M-ACC    open-CNV<sub>1</sub>

There are also some other functions which are not expressed by general converb; instead they are expressed using same-subject anterior converb-*tej* and different-subject anterior converbs *-n*. Each of these functions has been discussed hereunder.

### 5.4.2. Function of Same-subject Anterior Converb (-tej)

Events which take place one after the other with successive subjects are expressed by the same-subject anterior converb *-tej*, i.e. the temporal relation of events expressed by the converb and the final verb is often indicated by a more specific temporal form: anterior ('after') as, seen in (11).

- (11) a. *jááb-a*            *éjk-a-s*            *dābúf-těj*    *kar*    *ú-g-is*  
 person-DEF.M    lion-DEF.M-ACC    kill-CNV<sub>2</sub>    to    house-IN-DAT  
*baggìr-ò*  
 return-3SM  
 'The man returned home after killing the lion'
- b. *ízū*            *á-ts'ir-a-s*            *á-éj-těj*            *kar*  
 he            his-beard-DEF.M-ACC    3SM.POS-shave-CNV<sub>2</sub>    to  
*gabu-t*            *tā-gò*  
 market-LOC    go-3SM  
 'He went to market after shaving his beard'

### 5.4.3. Function of Different-Subject Anterior Converb (-n)

The main function of this converb is to mark a subject variation directly after the converb, i.e. it indicates that the next verb has a different subject. In Dizin, it is marked by *-n*. This type of converb also expresses an action that takes place prior to the event expressed by the final verb. In other words, the temporal relation of events is denoted by anterior ('after') which is also used in the same-subject anterior converb. Consider the following examples.

- (12) a. *áku*            *á-tā-n*            *kómtu*    *jā-gè*  
 aku            3SM-go-CNV<sub>3</sub>            komtu    come-3SF  
 'After Aku went, Komtu came.'
- b. *áku*            *á-hiat-n*            *kómtu*    *jā-gè*  
 aku            3SM-run-CNV<sub>3</sub>            komtu    come-3SF  
 'After Aku run, Komtu came.'
- \*c. *áku*            *á-hiat-n*            *ú-g*            *wú-gò*  
 aku            3SM-run-CNV<sub>3</sub>            house-IN    enter-3SM

Example (12c) is ungrammatical because the converb and the main verb have the same subject, but the different subject marker *-n* is suffixed wrongly.

The other important function of the different-subject anterior converb is particularly very common in copula verb. It is used in in cleft construction when the speaker adds focus to the object. Compare the following examples.

- (13) a. *áku*     *múg*     *bāj-ò*  
 aku     local.beer     drink-3SM  
 ‘Aku drank local beer.’
- b. *múg*     *tì-n*     *áku*     *bāj-ò*  
 local.beer     COP-CNV<sub>3</sub>     komtu-DAT     drink-3SM  
 ‘It is local beer that Aku drank.’
- c. *áku*     *gíánu*     *kómtu-sis*     *táás-ò*  
 asku     coffee     komtu-DAT     give-3SM  
 ‘Aku gave Komtu coffee.’
- d. *gíánu*     *tì-n*     *áku*     *kómtu-sis*     *táás-ò*  
 coffee     COP-CNV<sub>3</sub>     aku     komtu-DAT     give-3SM  
 ‘It is coffee that Aku gave for Komtu.’

As shown above, the word order of examples (13a & c) is parallel with the basic order of the language, i.e. S-O-V. In examples (13b & d), however, the objects are placed initially for pragmatic function, i.e. it adds focus on the object. But the subjects are placed after the copula verb.

To summarize, Dizin uses converbs that serve many semantic purposes, including adverbial, clause-chaining, anteriority, simultaneous, and so on. These uses are also observed in Maale (Azeb 2001), Dime (Mulugeta 2008), and Wolaitta (Azeb and Dimmendaal 2012). The semantic functions depend on the types of converb and on the context in which the converb is used. Converb markers and their associated meaning is recapitulated as follow:

Converb marker	Function
<i>-∅</i>	modification, sequential, clause-chaining, overlapping
<i>-n</i>	DS, sequential
<i>-tej</i>	SS, sequential

### 5.5. Grammaticalization of Converbial Construction

In their cross-linguistic study, Haspelmath (1995:37) and Ylikoski (2003:220) observe converb forms that may be lexicalized into new members of word-class, or that may be grammaticalized and become a grammatical morpheme. This is also observed in Dizin, in which certain converbs can occur in lexicalization process to specify the semantics of a lexeme or to create new terms.



### 5.5.1. Converb as Component of Lexical Verbal Compound

When some converbs and main verbs combine, they develop a particular semantic meaning which cannot be always directly derived from the semantics of the two verbs. Hence, they are considered to be lexicalized verbal compounds, like for example, *hef ajo* (spending the day + spending the night) ‘stay/last for a long time’, *k’ej afo* (working + get a living) ‘earn a living’, *ut wuo* (liking/preferring + enter) ‘enrolling, joining’. These combinations differ from common converb/main verb clauses, i.e., they tend to have different meaning. Similarly, in Amharic by Azeb and Dimmendaal (2006:413), the contents of the two verbs, i.e. the meaning of the converb and the main verb make up one verbal meaning.

### 5.5.2. Converb >Noun

When the converb/main verb compounds are nominalized into agent nouns, the main verb loses its subject agreement, instead adds the deverbal marker -*daz*. For example the nominal *tā baṅgirdaz* ‘round trip’ might have developed out of the sentence as, in (14).

- (14) *tā-∅*            *baṅgīr-∅*  
 go-CNV<sub>1</sub>        come back-3SM  
 ‘He came back having gone.’

Semantically, these agent nouns are gender-neutral and can denote female or male representatives. Table 3 below contains some agent nouns based on converb plus deverbal noun.

Table 3: Agent nouns from converb plus deverbal noun

	Agent noun	Gloss	Source
a.	<i>k’ibf ʔmdaz</i>	stingy	(closing +eat)
b.	<i>kof ajdaz</i>	tiller	(Ploughing +get a living)
c.	<i>tfətʃ ajdaz</i>	pastoralist	(breeding +get a living)
d.	<i>k’əj ʔmdaz</i>	laborer	(working +eat)
e.	<i>ut wūdaz</i>	volunter	(loving +enter)
f.	<i>fiḡin hurtdaz</i>	speedy succour	(being fast +arriving person)
g.	<i>baṅgīr afīfdaz</i>	rehabilitation	(returning + to constitute)
h.	<i>tā baṅgīrdaz</i>	round trip	(arriving +returning)

Nominals in Table 3, derived from converb plus deverbal noun, are sometimes also used as adjectives. Take for example, *tā baṅgirdaz kambil* ‘return car’,

*baṅgìr afìfdaz programo* ‘rehabilitation program’ *tə baṅgirdaz wə̀rək’əto*  
 ‘return ticket, but this is not conclusive; it needs further research.

- (15) *áku tē baṅgìr-∅-daz wə̀rək’əto k’uts-kì-gò*  
 aku arrive-CNV<sub>1</sub>-return-NMZ ticket cut-PF-3SM  
 ‘He has bought round-trip ticket.’

### 5.5.3. Converb > Adverb

In Dizin, a few numbers of general converbs become lexicalized into manner or time adverbs, which is also common in Amharic by Leslaw (1995) and Meyer (2012). The general converb of the verb *t’us-* ‘know’ for instance has developed the meaning ‘deliberately’. Less frequent converbs lexicalized into adverbs are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Adverbs based on converbs

	Adverb	Gloss	Source
a.	<i>mə̀tfis</i>	then, subsequently	<i>mə̀tfisò</i> ‘continue’
b.	<i>dog</i>	after a while	<i>dogò</i> ‘spend a long time’
c.	<i>t’ús</i>	deliberately, on purpose	<i>t’úsò</i> ‘know’
d.	<i>hef aj</i>	eventually, in the long run	<i>hefò</i> ‘spend the day’ and <i>ajò</i> ‘spend the night’

The adverbs in Table 4 do not mark subject agreement for each person, number or gender. Consider the adverb *t’us* ‘knowing’, in (16).

- (16) a. *áku kī án-a-s t’ús-∅ də̀búf-ò*  
 aku Dog-DEF.M-ACC know-CNV<sub>1</sub> kill-3SM  
 ‘Aku killed the dog deliberately.’  
 b. *kómtu míág-a-s t’ús-∅ də̀búf-è*  
 komtu eag-DEF.M-ACC know-CNV<sub>1</sub> kill-3SF  
 ‘Komtu broke the egg deliberately.’

## 6. Conclusion

This paper presented the basic description of converbs in Maji dialect of Dizin. On the basis of the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn: Dizin has three types of converb: general converb marked by the covert suffix *-∅*, same-subject anterior converb marked by *-tej* and different-subject anterior converb marked by *-n*. The converb clause is a non-finite verb form that occurs following the subject and preceding the main verb.

Semantically, depending on the context where it is used, the general converb can function as adverbial modifier for manner or cause, or as narrative for clause-chaining and for overlapping events in time. As result, it is regarded as a (co)subordinate verb form. The second type of converb, the same-subject anterior converb (*-tej*), expresses events which take place one after the other with successive subjects. The temporal relation of events of the converb and the final verb is expressed by a more specific temporal form: anterior ('after'). The third type of converb, different-subject anterior converb (*-n*), helps to mark a subject change directly after the converb, i.e. it indicates that the next verb has a different subject. This type of converb also expresses an action that takes place prior to the event expressed by the final verb. In other words, the temporal relation of events is denoted by anterior ('after'). Such type of converb is more frequent in copula verb of cleft construction which adds focus on the object.

Some converbs and converb structures became part of new lexical constructions. For example, certain converbs and main verbs form lexicalized compounds which can later be nominalized into agent nouns. In a different lexicalization way, converbs can become adverbs, which do not mark agreements for each person, number or gender.

It is hoped that this study can shed light on the grammatical features of converbs of Dizin that relate it to and distinguish it from other Omotic and Ethiopian languages. However, there are still some aspects of converb that the researcher could not describe in enough depth and understand. Regarding this, the researcher would like to suggest that further research be done on the grammaticalization of converbial construction as well as the combination of converbs with adverbial modifiers in Dizin.

**Abbreviation**

ACC	Accusative	1S	First person singular
CNV	Converb	2S	Second person singular
COP	Copula	3SM	Third person singular masculine
DAT	Dative	3SF	Third person singular feminine
DEF.M	Definite masculine	1PL	First person plural
DEF.F	Definite feminine	2PL	Second person plural
DS	Different subject	3PL	Third person plural
FUT	Future	´	High tone`
GEN	Genitive	˘	Low tone
INF	Infinitive	-	Mid-tone
IPF	Imperfective	[ ]	Syntactic unit
IN	Incisive	*	Ungrammatical
INST	Instrument		
LOC	Locative		
PASS	Passive		
PF	Perfective		

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