

Baram Converbs: An Overview

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Abstract

This paper offers an analysis of the converbs in Baram. Baram has sequential, simultaneous, and progressive converbs. The sequential converb, also known as conjunctive participle -in, is also homophonous with the progressive marker, and has multiple syntactic-semantic functions in Baram. The suffix appears not only as typical 'sequential actions' but also serves other syntactic functions in clause combining, such as temporal, reason, concessive, perfective, among others. Similarly, Baram employs the simultaneous converb, -la, and progressive converb -cəi. They are used to conjoin the simultaneous and progressive actions to that of the main clauses.

Keywords: Converb, sequential, simultaneous, progressive, clause combining

1. Introduction

Baram, is a Tibeto-Burman (TB) language spoken in the western Nepal in the district of Gorkha. According to CBS (2001), there are 342 Baram speakers, and a more recent census (CBS 2012) reports that only 155 people speak the language; however, the number of speakers may actually be even lower than this figure. Bradley's (1997) classification suggests that Baram includes Baram in the Eastern sub-branch of West Himalayish, which itself belongs to the Bodic branch of Tibeto-Burman. Baram (ISO'brd') is a severely endangered language spoken mainly in one village named Dandagaun (literally, "hill village") of the Takukot Village Development Committee (VDC) in the Gorkha district of western Nepal (van Driem 2007). In addition to Dandagaun, Mailung of the Takukot VDC is also a village where speakers with very low proficiency use this language. The Baram people are engaged in subsistence farming and are Hindus by religion. The sociolinguistic survey reveals that it is a severely endangered language (Kansakar et al. 2011a)¹.

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Baram is a verb-final language and modifiers precede the head nouns. The phonology of Baram resembles to Nepali as it contains 6 vowels and 29 consonants (cf. Acharya 1991). The verb morphology is mainly prefixing whereas Baram employs mainly suffixes in nominal morphology. Despite the fact that Baram has high resemblances with Nepali at present, Baram has still retained some phonological features, viz. making use of the velar nasal η in word-initial position. Baram is an ergative-absolutive language, but neither the ergative nor absolutive marking is consistent in the language. Baram presents an interesting case in terms of borrowing, as it borrows about two third of its vocabulary from Nepali (cf. Kansakar et al. 2011c, Dhakal 2014b) ².

Kansakar (et al.2011c) point out very basic information related to converbs, such as their forms and basic functions. For example, they noted that the sequential converb is primarily used to connect the events in sequence and the simultaneous converb is used to describe the simultaneous actions. This article offers a detailed analysis of these converbs highlighting its syntactic and semantic features.

2. Data and Methodology

The data for this study comes mainly from the corpus of Baram during the documentation of the Baram language (2007-2011)³. The author also uses the field notes he wrote which he made during the documentation of the Baram language. In addition, some examples from earlier sources, such as Kansakar et al (2011c) have also been used.

3. Forms

There are three converbs in Baram, viz. *-ij*, *-la* and *-cin*. Among these converbs, the

-ij can also be explained as a conjunctive participle which is also called converb in some typological studies. It is more frequently used for expressing adverbial functions (Nedjalkov and Nedjalkov, 1987; Haspelmath, 1995; Coupe 2006). The converbs are described in detailed in the languages of Nepal and south Asia

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² Baram is very interesting in terms of language contact and contact-induced changes. Baram has borrowed more than two third of the lexical items, and also heavily borrowed in grammatical structures which are yet to be investigated. Like in lexicon, Baram also borrows the affixes from Nepali in different areas of morphosyntax.

³ The annotated data of Baram can be looked at (<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0007>).

(Noonan 1999 for Chantyal, Genetti 2005 for Dolakha Newar, Peterson 2002 for Nepali, Yadava 2005 for typological comparison of Hindi, Maithili and Nepali). This is a feature found in the languages of South Asia, related or unrelated to Indo-Aryan languages (Masica 1976, 1991). The converb *-iŋ*, conjunctive participle, is used with the postposition, sequential, manner, reason among others (also see Kachru 2006; Davison 1986:8, Masica 1991). Although the sequential converb is used for some multiple functions, the other converbs, viz. simultaneous and progressive, are also used to show simultaneous and progressive actions of the dependent clauses to that of the main clauses. The forms of the converbs in Baram are shown in Figure 1.⁴

Sequential <i>-iŋ</i>	Simultaneous <i>-la</i>
	Progressive <i>-ci</i>

Figure 1: Overview of Baram converbs

Here are a couple of examples where this suffix *-iŋ* is used to yield the progressive aspects in the past and non-past tense.

- (1) *nista ucaucumæi bæneiŋ nihuk*
 nis-ʈa ucaucumæi bæne-iŋ ni-huk
 two-CLF children play-PROG NPST-sit
 'Two children are playing.' [Kansakar et al. 2011c:85]
- (2) *sja abingiŋ ŋiŋa*
 sja abing-iŋ ŋi-ŋa
 cow grze-PROG NPST-sit
 'The cow is grazing.'

We see that the progressive marker is followed by the lexical verb *huk* 'sit' in (1) but the copula *ŋiŋa* is used for the same purpose in (2). In this way, the progressive marker is followed by the copular verbs *ŋiŋa* 'be.NPST' and *kiŋa/kã*

⁴ The distinction of non-sequential converbs, viz. simultaneous and progressive is based on Peterson (2002). The progressive converb *-cəi* is similar to the progressive converb *-dəi*, and the converb *-la* is the same as *-da*.

'be.PST' in the non-past tense, and in the past tense respectively. See Kansakar et al. (2011c) for some further details.

The conjunctive participle is realized slightly differently, viz. *-iŋ*, *-uŋ*, or *-əŋ*. We see that the verb stem ending in *-a* is changed into *-ə* when the sequential converb is attached to it (3a-3c). It is also realized as *-iŋ*, or *-eŋ* as can be seen in (4a-4c). However, the verb stems which end in consonants do not trigger such changes. Following are the examples.

(3a)	dəiŋ da-iŋ 'say-SEQ'	(3b)	nəiŋ na-iŋ 'sleep-SEQ'	(3c)	khələiŋ khəla-iŋ 'speak-SEQ'
(4a)	təeŋ təi-iŋ 'come-SEQ'	(4b)	dzjoeŋ dzjo-iŋ 'walk-SEQ'	(4c)	ajeiŋ ajo-eiŋ 'look-SEQ'

The converb also is realized as *-uŋ* with some verbs as shown in (5a-5c).

(5a)	tukuŋ tuk-iŋ 'do-SEQ'	(5b)	dumuŋ dum-iŋ 'find-SEQ'	(5c)	tsipuruŋ tsipur-iŋ 'make enough-SEQ'
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Further investigation is required to determine the morphophonological contexts where the forms of the converbs are realized differently.

In addition to the sequential converb, the simultaneous converb *-la* and the progressive converb *-ci* also are attested in Baram. The simultaneous converb *-la* is also homophonous with the conditional marker, the next sequential marker *-ci* stands alone to indicate the sequential converb. The simultaneous converb occurs in the text very rarely but is attested in elicitation. Unlike the sequential converb, then the simultaneous converbs *-la* and the progressive converb *-ci* are attached to the verbs without triggering any morphophonological changes.

4. Sequential Converb *-iŋ*

Different uses of the conjunctive participle are discussed in the following sections. They include the temporal sequence, recapitulation, complementizer, perfective, manner, concessive (antithetical), reason among others.

4.1. Temporal Sequence

The conjunctive participle *-iŋ* signals the temporal actions, mainly with the same subjects. The action coded by the temporal clause is coded by the converb. The events (or predicates) favor the same subject, thus serves the subject for the two clauses, viz. main and dependent clauses. The temporal relation shows that the events or states are in sequence, occurring one after another. This function is also

referred to as ‘event sequencing’ (cf. Genetti 2005:42). We note that the clauses combined with the converb typically precede the main clause marked with tense and finite morphology as is expected in SOV languages (6-7).

- (6) *nuyəi ahuij ten məpna*
 nuŋ-i ahu-ij ten mə-pəna
 you-ERG beg-SEQ bring NEG-should
 ‘You should not beg and bring (lit. bring by begging).’

- (7) *rəksi bəndisiŋ pi nepna*
 rəksi bən-di-siŋ pi ne-pəna
 wine make-LVM-SEQ give NPST-should
 ‘Having made liquor (you) should give.’

We see that the actions given in (6-7) are in sequence. The actions *ahu* ‘beg’ precedes the next action *ten* ‘bring’. The verb *ahu* ‘beg’ codes the suffix *-ij*, and thus the first clause is anterior to the next action (6). In this way, the converb typically encodes the actions which take place earlier to the actions coded in the main clause. We also see that the clauses have the same subject in both of these examples (6-7). Although the same subject is strongly preferred, there are cases where different subjects are also permitted. See section (7) for the further discussion on same subject or different subjects. Sometimes the temporal sequencing is suggested when the non-finite forms are reduplicated (8-9).

- (8) *heləŋ tukiŋ tukiŋ jengo ho*
 heləŋ tuk-iŋ tuk-iŋ jen-go ho
 like.this do-SEQ do-SEQ take.away-INF COP.NPST
 ‘Doing like this (continuously), (he) has taken it away.’

- (9) *ho tukiŋ tukiŋ bəllə njakpho*
 ho tuk-iŋ tuk-iŋ bəllə ŋi-akpho
 that do-SEQ do-SEQ now NPST-be.daybreak
 ‘Doing like that, it is day break again.’

Suffice it to say that one of the functions of the converb is to encode the event sequencing as illustrated in (6-9).

4.2. Recapitulation

One of the functions of the converb is to recapitulate what is said in the preceding sentences in the discourse. Just like in ‘tail-head linkage’ in some TB languages (Ebert 1997) including Nepali (cf. Peterson 2002:106), the sequential clauses often show recapitulation mainly in the natural discourses. Genetti (2005:49) terms this use of the participle construction in Dolakhae, describing it as ‘a process common in South Asian narrative, where one begins a syntactic sentence

by repeating, often in abbreviated form, the substance of the preceding finite clause or sentence.’ This is found in some other languages as well (see Genetti 2005 for Dolakha Newar; Taylor 2006 for Shinhala, Bai 2009:57 among others)⁵. The recapitulated events are also temporally sequenced and they perform the same function as the event sequencing.

- (10) *car məina hukla məŋ ami ami gədə kilik kã*
 car məina huk-la məŋ ami ami gədə ki-lik
 ki-ŋa
 four month sit-SIM also little little well PRF-become
 PST-be

‘Even though he stayed for four months, he had got well a bit.’

- (11) *gədə likiŋ namgəi kithya*
 gədə lik-iŋ nam-gəi ki-thəya
 well become-SEQ house-LOC PST-bring

‘Having (he) got well, (we) brought him home.’

- (12) *namgəi thəiŋ pəcshi ami ami kitsa*
 nam-gəi thə-iŋ pəchi ami ami ki-tsa
 house-LOC bring-SEQ later little little PST-bring

‘Having (brought home), (he) ate little.’

Examples (10-12) are obtained from the discourse. The speaker in this discourse is narrating how her husband became sick, and how they tried to save him by taking him to different places for medical treatment. We see that the event is coded by the finite verb *kilik kã* in (10). This finite verb is recapitulated and appears with the sequential converb *lik-iŋ* ‘become-SEQ’ in (11), which in turn follows (12). In the same way, the sentence terminates with the verb *kithya* in the finite clause in (11). Like in previous examples, the verb *thə-* ‘bring’ is repeated in (12), which is recapitulated in the sentence that immediately follows it. Thus, the finite clause in the preceding sentence is recapitulated by making use of the sequential converb in the second clause. The recapitulated event also serves the temporal sequencing. Examples follow.

- (13) *nəsa tuk pəchi aju adaŋ nepna*
 nəsa tuk pəchi aju adaŋ ŋi-pəna
 clay do later seed search NPST-should
 ‘After making clay (soil), (we) should search the water.’

⁵ This phenomenon is also discussed as ‘tail-head linkage’ in some Kiranti languages (Ebert 1997).

- (14) *aju adaiŋ əni chərdigo nepna*
 aju ada-iŋ əni chər-di-go ŋi-pəna
 seed search-SEQ and.then sow-LVM-INF NPST-should
 'After having searched the seed, it has to be sowed.'

The recapitulation is widely used in the discourse data.

4.3. Complementizer

It is to be noted that the complementizer, when it is present, has the converb *-iŋ* in the process of clause combining. The quotative as a complementizer is used in South Asia and is widely used in different language families (Masica 1976; Saxena 1988, Genetti 2005). In this sense, this function as a complementizer, and this is common in a number of languages (cf. Genetti for Dolakha Newar, Taylor 2006 for Sinhala). Between two verbs of saying in Baram, i.e. *kham-go* 'to say' and *da-go* 'to say', the verb *daiŋ* is used as a complementizer. It is, however, to be noted that the later does not occur even in once in this kind of construction. Although the complement clauses can also be formed without the use of the complementizer in Baram (cf. Kansakar et al. 2011c:162), we see the sequential converb used as a complementizer with the verb *da* 'say' in (15-16).

- (15) *ŋago namgəi maha daiŋ ŋəi ŋido*
 ŋa-go nam-gəi maha da-iŋ ŋa-i ŋi-da
 I-GEN road-LOC be.not say-SEQ I-ERG I-say
 'I said that there are no (such things) in my house.'

- (16) *ŋəi təja gida kã daiŋ kikham*
 ŋa-i təja gi-da kã da-iŋ ki-kham
 I-ERG yesterday PST-say be.PST say-SEQ PST-say
 'She said that she had told it the day before.'

In addition to the entirely complementizer, the meaning yielded by the sequential converb is also 'imagining' or 'thinking', or 'hoping' (17). In example (17), for example, the speaker imagined that something in the cliff is tasty.

- (17) *kyosa kilik daiŋ testak pərakkəi kja*
 kyosa ki-lik da-iŋ testak pərak-kəi
 ki-ja
 sweet PST-become say-SEQ like.that cliff-LOC PST-go
 'Thinking that there are sweets, (I) went there.'

As expected, the converbal form in this kind of construction links the subordinate clause to the main clause. We see that the complement clause is coded with the verb *da* 'say' in this clause. In addition to conjoining simple complement clause,

quotative complementizer also links the question to the main clause as shown in (18-19).

- (18) *pacae ubaŋəi hai ʰango dəiŋ kikhə*
 paca-e ubaŋ-i hai ʰan-go da-iŋ
 ki-kham
 father-ERG he-ERG what be.able-INF say-SEQPST-say
 'Father said what he could do.'

- (19) *cəŋpae hudi jam dəiŋ bicar kituk*
 cəŋpa-e hudi ja-m da-iŋ bicar
 ki-tuk
 father-ERG where go-NPST.1SG say-ERG thought
 PST-do
 'The old man thought where he would go.'

Saxena (1988) explains a number of different uses of the quotative verb 'say' in Tibeto-Burman languages. One of them is the causal meaning yielded by the quotative as shown in (20-21). It connects the sentences as complements.

- (20) *ucməi gidum dəiŋ usgəi hela kituk*
 ucməi gi-dum da-iŋ u-gəi hela ki-tuk
 daughter PST-give.birth say-SEQshe-ACC hatred PST-do
 '(They) hated (despised) her because she gave birth to a baby girl.'

- (21) *cəŋpai rəksi kisjaŋ dəiŋ cəŋma kirisjaidi*
 cəŋpa-i rəksi ki-sjaŋ da-iŋ cəŋma-i ki-
 risjai-di
 husband-ERG liquor PST-drink say-SEQwife-ERG PST-
 be.angry-LVM
 'The wife got angry because the husband drank much liquor.'

The quotative also yields the purposive meaning. Examples follow (22-23).

- (22) *ŋəi nam bəndisgo dəiŋ pokhəragəŋ kitəi*
 ŋə-i nam bən-dis-go da-iŋ pokhəra-gəŋ
 ki-təi
 I-ERG house build-LVM-INF say-SEQPokhara-ABL PST-
 come
 'I came from Pokhara in order to build house.'

- (23) *ŋəi cəŋmagəi wapuŋ dəiŋ kitəi ŋiŋə*
 ŋə-i cəŋma-gəi wapu-m da-iŋ ki-təi ŋi-ŋə
 I-ERG wife-ACC meet-NPST.1SG say-SEQ PST-come NPST-
 be

'I have come intending to meet my wife.'

The lexical word *da* 'say' loses its literal meaning 'say' in the kind of construction. Instead of its lexical meaning, it yields the meaning of the complementation. The suffix *-ij* is the grammaticalized in the uses referred to above.

4.4. Perfective

The perfective meaning is expressed by means of the conjunctive participle followed by the lexemes, such as *pāchi* 'later', or *āni* 'later'. Although both of these words are borrowed from Nepali, the verbs take the native morphemes to express this purpose (cf. Peterson 2002:101). It is interesting to look at this structure from contact-induced change perspective as both of the adverbials used in this structure seem to be 'pattern borrowing' from Nepali. It is, however, to be noted that while two distinct non-finite forms exist in Nepali as 'conjunctive participle' and 'absolute', Baram borrows the pattern from Nepali but makes use of the sequential *-ij* to encode the function which serves this purpose. Examples follow.

- (24) *awa cunij pāchi namgāi cokho thamgāi nito*
 awa cun-ij pətshi nam-gāi cokho tham-gāi
 ni-ta-o
 water keep-SEQ later house-LOC pure place-LOC
 NPST-keep-3
 'Having kept the water, they keep (it) in the pure place.'

- (25) *aju adaij āni tshərdigo nepna*
 aju ada-ij āni tshər-di-go ni-pəna
 seed search-SEQ and.then sow-LVM-INF NPST-should
 'After having searched the seed, it has to be sowed.'

Sometimes, the postpositions in Baram may precede the bare verb stem as shown in (26). The meaning in this kind of construction remains the same as illustrated in (24-25).

- (26) *nāsa tuk pāchivaju adaj nepna*
 nāsa tuk pāchi aju adaj ni-pəna
 clay do later seed search NPST-should
 'After making clay (soil), (we) should search the water.'

We may compare the 'perfective' sense yielded in the examples (24-25). Similar meaning is expressed in (26).

4.5. Reason

The converb *-ij* occurs affixing to the verb *lik* 'become' and it occurs with the with the lexicon *hon* 'for no reason', 'of no value', and together they form a conjunction *hon likij* 'therefore' (lit. 'becoming like that'). This conjunction connects the finite clauses and occurs with the converb clause. When these two words (viz. *hon likij*) occurs together, it yields a grammaticalized meaning 'therefore'. This form occurs to conjoin the finite clauses in this case as shown in pairs of examples (29-30).

(27a) *kəile ɲa mə-ʈaŋ.*
 kəile ɲa mə-ʈaŋ.
 sometimes 1SG NEG-be.able
 'Sometimes I can not (do it).'

(27b) *hon likij həiran ɲilik.*
 hon likij həiran ɲi-lik.
 free become-SEQ fatigued NPST-become
 'Therefore I am exhausted.'

(28a) *khonei gida masəi.*
 khon-i gi-da ma-səi.
 daughter-in-law-ERG PST-say NEG-obey
 'The daughter in law does not obey (me).'

(28b) *hon likij ɲa kəpheij hukum.*
 hon lik-ij ɲa kəphe-ij huk-um.
 free become-SEQ 1SG be.parted-SEQ sit-NPST.1SG
 'Therefore I live alone.'

The sentences given in (27b), and (28b) show the reasons occurring before the other sentences preceding them. When these lexical items co-occur, the meaning is grammaticalized. The reason is also expressed simply by the converb clause alone.

The clause coded with the converb yields the reason to that of the main clause. For example, examples (29-30) obtained from the corpus tell us that the speaker recognizes him only because he scolds him.

(29) *naŋ həkaidij ɲəi kici*
 naŋ həkai-di-ij ɲa-i ki-ci
 2SG scold-LVM-SEQ 1SG-ERG PST-recognize
 'I recognize because you scolded (me).'

(30) *əbə hiũəi bukiŋ kjoŋo mə-ʈaŋ*
 əbə hiũə-i buk-ij kjo-go mə-ʈaŋ

now snow-ERG bury-CVB come out-INF NEG-be.able
 '(They) cannot come out because (he) was covered with snow.'

4.6. Manner relation

The converb is also used to connect the action which contains the manner relation to the main clause. In (31), the subordinate clause with converb encodes the answer 'How did he come?'

- (31) *ubaŋ dzhoiŋ kitəi*
 ubaŋ dzho-iŋ ki-təi
 they walk-SEQ PST-come
 'They came walking.'

- (32) *ajə səmmə sugəi ahuiŋ nuŋ məpan nie*
 ajə səmmə su-gəi ahu-iŋ nuŋ mə-pan ni-e
 today until who-ACC beg-SEQ you NEG-feed
 1PL-ERG
 'I haven't fed you asking (begging) from other people.'

In these clauses, the clauses marked with the converb have shown the manner relation to the main clauses. Typically, in these clauses, the converb clause functions like a manner adverbial.

4.7. Concessive/Antithetical

The converb is also used to yield antithetical meaning. We see that the clause marked by the converb clause shows the antithetical meaning to the main clauses. There is also the presence of the negative marker co-occurring in the finite clauses in this kind of construction (Davison 1986; Peterson 2002:101). Here are a couple of examples.

- (33) *dinbhəri hukun məŋ mayochə*
 din bhəri huk-un məŋ ma-ayo-chə
 day full stay-CVB also NEG-look-EVID
 'They did not see although they did stay the whole day.'

- (34) *cəŋpa likun ŋa səpəi thok tuk nepna*
 cəŋpa lik-iŋ ŋa səpəi thok tuk ni-pəna
 old become-SEQ 1SG all thing do NPST-
 should
 'Despite being old, I should do all things.'

Generally, the converbs also follow the negative word *məŋ* 'also' (including its Nepali equivalent *pəni* 'also') when it occurs with the non-finite clauses.

- (35) *karbai tukuŋ pəni bhari tsəpu-iŋ ni-ŋa*
karbai tuk-uŋ pəni bhari tsəpu-iŋ ni-ŋa
punishment do-SEQ also load carry-PROG NPST-be
'Even though they are punished, (they) are carrying loads.'

- (36) *dhəbo bokra likiŋ məŋ cəiŋ məŋ gədə kilik*
dhəbo bokra lik-iŋ məŋ ca-iŋ məŋ
Sajho.tree bark become-SEQ also eat-SEQ also
gədə ki-lik
good PST-become
'(They) used to recover even if they eat the bark of Sajho tree.'

The clauses marked with the converb combined with the lexical word 'also' yields the antithetical meaning in (35-36).

4.8. Rejection

The converb also yields the meaning, such as 'instead of' (cf. Dixon 2009). It often occurs with the negative marker in the clauses where it occurs. Examples follow.

- (37) *namgəi mətəiŋ papaca hanɖuŋ pəta kihuk*
nam-gəi mə-təi-iŋ papaca hanɖuŋ pəta ki-
huk
house-LOC NEG-come-SEQ boy village towards PST-
sit

'Instead of coming home (lit. without coming home), the boy lived around in the village.'

The dependent clause bears the converb marker to show the meaning the rejection (37). The dependent clause occurs in the clause-initial position again. We see that between the two alternatives in the clause, one is favour by rejecting the other event. For example in (37), the participant rejects coming home in favour of staying outside in the village.

5. Simultaneous Converb⁶

In addition to the sequential converb with a wide ranges of functions, the non-finite forms of the verbs are also used to combine clauses. The simultaneous converb *-la* encodes the simultaneous actions. The simultaneous converb is also homophonous with the conditional marker. As noted in Noonan (1999), the simultaneous converbs are "simultaneous with or temporally overlapping with" the predicates in the matrix clause. Examples follow.

⁶ The progressive converb *-cəi* is similar to the progressive converb *-dəi*, and the converb *-la* is the same as *-da*.

- (38) *cəŋpa hukla cəŋma kithya*
 cəŋpa huk-la cəŋma ki-thəya
 old.man sit-SIM old.woman PST-arrive
 'While the old man was sitting, the old woman arrived.'

- (39) *namgəi yala wa kikhyo*
 nam-gəi ya-la wa ki-khyo
 house-LOC go-SIM hen PST-crow
 'While (I) was going home, the hen crowed.'

We see that the clauses combined by the marker *-la* is simultaneous to the main clause. The actions in these clauses overlap to that of the main clause. Although the action of 'sitting' is longer in (38), the act of 'returning' is completed in the same time frame. The actions temporarily overlap in these clauses. In other words, the act of 'returning' is completed within the time frame of the act of 'sitting'. Such converbial forms also sometimes reduplicated pervasively in the discourse such as (40). The reduplicated converbs yield a prolonged sense of the action encoded in the verbs. An example follows (40).

- (40) *yala yala cəŋpa handuŋgəi kithya*
 ya-la ya-la cəŋpa handuŋ-gəi ki-thəya
 go-SIM go-SIM old.woman village-LOC PST-arrive
 'The old man reached Dandagaun while walking (continuously).'

We find that both of the actions take place at the same time, viz. sitting and arriving. It shows the complete simultaneity as it is also evidenced in Nepali (cf. Peterson 2002:102). When we look at closely, it is to be noted that the simultaneous converb is also homophonous with the conditional marker.

6. Progressive Converb

Baram also makes use of the progressive converb *-cəi* to encode the progressive actions. It can be described as 'progressive converb' as the actions are completely overlapping with the main events. A couple of examples are given in (41-42). [Examples are from Kansakar et al. (2011c:168)].

- (41) *ucuməie nuicəi cacəi kituk*
 ucuməi-e nui-cəi ca-cəi ki-tuk
 daughter-ERG laugh-PROG eat-PROG PST-do
 'The daughter kept laughing and eating.'

- (42) *ŋai hapuŋ uməigəi kjakho*
 ŋa-i hap-iŋ uməi-gəi ki-akho
 I-ERG weep-SEQ wife-ACC PST-call

'I called my wife weeping.'

There is a complete overlapping between the act of laughing and doing in (41). In other words, there is a sense of the action (viz. laughing) being continued in it with the verb *tuk* 'do'. The same relation is established between the verbs 'weeping' and 'calling' in (42).

7. Syntax

The converb clauses are predominantly attested in the initial position, and precede the finite clauses. This is true in SOV languages (cf. Diessel 2001). This is true in many languages of this region (cf. Yadava 2005:446). The subjects of the matrix clause and the subordinate clauses are generally identical in converb clauses, which is also referred to as 'identical subject constraint' (Subbarao and Arora 2009:360; Genetti 2005:41). For example, consider the example in (8-9) in which the subjects of the finite clauses and the converb clauses are identical. An example follows (41).

- (43) *ale t̄aiŋ namgəi kihuk*
 ale t̄ai-iŋ nam-gəi ki-huk
 brother come-SEQ house-LOC PST-sit
 'Having come home, the brother sat.'

Despite the fact that the subject is not repeated in (43), the same subject *ale* 'brother' is the subject of the converb clause and the matrix clause. However, this is not always the case. There are some cases in which the subject differs in the converb clause and the matrix clause as explained in (44).

- (44) *cəŋpa t̄aiŋ cəŋma khusi kilik*
 cəŋpa t̄ai-iŋ cəŋma khusi ki-lik
 husband come-SEQ wife happy PST-
 become
 '(After) the husband came home, the wife became happy.'

In addition to sharing the subject, we also see that the subjects can be full noun phrase (NP), or the pronoun in Baram.

8. Conclusion

The discussion regarding the converbal construction in Baram, the following observations can be made. Firstly, the sequential converb *-iŋ* serves different functions ranging from temporal sequence, recapitulation, manner, rejection, complementization, perfective, reason and antithetical. In addition to the sequential converb, there are distinct converbs to show the the simultaneous relation (converb *-la*), and the progressive relation (converb *-cəi*). Despite the fact that Baram has borrowed vocabulary extensively from Nepali and

grammatical features, Baram has retained some nuances of meaning in converbal construction.

Abbreviations:

ABL: ablative; ACC: accusative ; CAUS: causative; CLF: classifier; ERG: ergative; INF: infinitive; LOC: locative; LVM: loan verb marker; NPST: non-past; NEG: negative; PRF: perfect; PST: past; PROG: progressive, progressive converb; SIM: simultaneous converb; 1: first person pronoun; 2: second person pronoun; 3: third person pronoun.

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