

Non-finite adverbial subordination in Chintang

Netra P. Paudyal, Balthasar Bickel, Robert Schikowski,
Sabine Stoll, Elena Lieven, Goma Banjade, Ichchha P. Rai,
Manoj Rai, Martin Gaenzle, Novel K. Rai, Toya N. Bhatta

Abstract

In Chintang (Sino-Tibetan, Kiranti) both finite and non-finite adverbial clauses are found. In this paper we discuss only non-finite subordinate clauses in terms of their control behaviour, S/A coreferentiality, scope and other morpho-syntactic properties. An interesting feature of Chintang non-finite adverbial clause is their the person and number marking.

1. Introduction¹

Traditionally, non-finite subordinate clauses are defined as subordinate clauses whose verb does not bear any person, number, mood and tense markers.² In Chintang this definition does not seem to hold. Even though all non-finite clauses lack tense, and mood, in Chintang we encounter person and number marking in purposive clauses as possessive prefixes. The covert S/A argument of the embedded clause is identical with the S/A of the superordinate clause. A survey of the

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² Chintang corpus currently includes approximately 600,000 words, and is deposited in the dobes archive. (www.mpi.nl/dobes)

Chintang corpus shows that the texts are full of many complex structures which contain a great number of converbial clauses. The purpose of this paper is to describe the converbial clauses of Chintang, which are non-finite adverbial clauses.

2. Converbs in Chintang

2. 1. The simultaneous converb –*saŋa*

The simultaneous converb –*saŋa* 'CVB' is suffixed to a verb stem, and it indicates that the action of the embedded clause takes place simultaneously with the matrix clause event. It combines two different actions expressed by two different verbs but happening at the same time or temporally overlapping. In most of the cases, the simultaneous converb clause precedes the matrix clause. The S or A argument of the converbial clause is always coreferential with that of the main clause. The converb -*saŋa* appears mostly with motion verbs. However, there are a few examples in the corpus where it is also found with some other types of verbs including stative verbs like *yuŋ*- ‘stay’.

Ebert (1993) describes converbial clauses under the maximally reduced clause group. Like in many other languages, the S/A argument of the embedded clause is always coreferential with the S/A argument of the matrix clause in most if not all of the Kiranti languages--(Ebert 2003a, 2003b). The converbial suffix is attached directly to the uninflected verb stems.

Both the embedded and matrix clauses can be intransitive with shared S argument as in (1a) or the matrix verb can be transitive, as in (1b).

- (1) a. *reiʔ-saŋa=ta* *yu-i-yakt-i-ŋa=kha* *abo*
laugh-CVB=FOC stay-PL-IPFV-PL-e=BGR now
‘We were staying, laughing.’ appa_katha_talk.032
- b. *cek-saŋa* *ca-no*

speak-CVB eat-NPST
 ‘S/he eats, speaking.’

In example (2a), both the embedded and matrix clauses are transitive, where the embedded A argument is coreferential with the matrix A. The embedded A can also be coreferential with matrix S argument, as in (2b).

- (2) a. *teĩ-saŋa=ta khatt-e khoku*
 beat-CVB=FOC take-PST Khoku
 ‘They took (him) to Khoku, beating him.’
 chintang_sahid.185
- b. *cuwa tak-saŋa khaiʔ-ya-ʔã*
 water bring-CVB go-1sS-NPST
 ‘I go there when I go to bring water.’
 CLLDCh1R10S09. 711

According to our corpus, more than 80 % of converbial constructions do not contain any overt argument. This means that both the embedded and matrix clauses are constructed with out overt arguments. If there is any overt S/A argument, it belongs to the matrix clause. It is impossible to have an overt S/A argument in the embedded clause. In example (3), the embedded verb cannot assign an ergative case to its argument.

- (3) **[phak-ŋa ca-saŋa] ti-e*
 pig-ERG eat-CVB come-PST
 ‘The pig came, eating.’

However, it is possible to have an overt P argument in an embedded clause. Unlike it is the case for S/A arguments, it is not necessary for the P to be identical in the embedded and matrix clauses. The embedded and the matrix clause can have two different objects, e.g., (4a). However, it is impossible to have a shared P with S, as in (4b).

- (4) a. *gol khonj-saja akka biskut ca-kku-ŋ*
 ball play-CVB 1s biscuit eat-NPST-1sA
 ‘While playing with a ball, I eat a biscuit.’
- b. **khaŋ-saja thoms-e*
 watch-CVB do.a.shamanic.session-PST
 intended: ‘He did a shamanic session while everybody
 was watching him.’

Bickel (1993) reports that it is common for converbs to be repeated for emphasis in the neighboring language Belhare. This also holds true for Chintang.

- (5) *khi-saja khi-saja rikt-e*
 quarrel-CVB quarrel-CVB chase-PST
 ‘He chased, scolding him.’ CLLDCh4R13S05.568

As in the above examples, a converb generally precedes the main clause. But, in addition to this, a converbial clause can also appear following the main clause. However, the position of the converbial clause does not influence the interpretation or the choice of the controller.

- (6) *khim-beʔ=ta yuŋ-no o chap-saja*
 house-LOC=FOC be-NPST EMPH write-CVB
 ‘He stays at home writing.’ CLDLCh3R01S02.479

2.1.1. Complex converbial construction

It is possible for a converb to form a complex converbial construction in Chintang. In this case, a converb is dependent on another converb. All the simultaneous converbs form an order like V₁-CVB, V₂-CVB and V-matrix, where the event marked by V₁-CBV do not need to happen prior to the V₂-CVB. Both actions can happen simultaneously, as in (7). Moreover, bipartite or compound verbs can also form converbial constructions, as in (8).

- (7) *tij-saja tij-saja khel-a mes-saja thapt-u-kho*
kick-CVB kick-CVB play-N.NTVZ do-CVB
bring.across-3P-IMP
‘Bring it here by kicking and playing it.’ CLS02.0542
- (8) *phan-a=lo yoʔ-ni omba-pak-saja khac-ce*
walk-IMP=FOC DEM.ACROSS-DIR crawl-crawl-
CVB go-d
‘Please come! Let’s go there, crawling.’ CLS02.463

2.1.2. Scope of Negation

Like in Belhare (Bickel 1993) and in Puma (Schackow et al. in press), the scope of negation can have an effect on the embedded clause in Chintang. In the example (9a), what is negated is not the fact of 'going' but the mode of 'going' even though the negation marker is on the matrix verb 'go'. The same thing is also noticed in (9b), though the matrix verb is negated the effect of negation is not on 'sleeping' but on 'drinking', which is a cause for sleeplessness of the participant.

- (9) a. *phaĩ-saja akka khaiʔ-ya-ʔã-niŋ khim*
walk-CVB 1s go-1sS-NPST-NEG home
‘I don’t go home by foot.’ (...but by bus)
- b. *arkha hop-saja im-ma-ʔã-niŋ*
local.alcohol drink-CVB sleep-1sS-NPST-NEG
‘I don’t get sleepy from drinking alcohol.’

The negation marker on the embedded converbal clause is not attested in Chintang except in the lexicalized verb *mahima* ‘be sick’ (literally ‘not be able to’).

- (10) *utti=ta ma-hi-saja ti-e*
then=FOC NEG-be.well-CVB come-PST
‘He came back being sick.’ appa_katha_talk.035

2.1.3. Scope of question

We do not have any clear evidence so far for *sa* 'who' questioning an argument inside the embedded clause. In the example (11a), though the question word precedes the embedded clause, it does not belong to the embedded but to the matrix clause. In example (11b) where the question word questions an element inside the subordinate clause, was rejected by the consultants.

- (11) a. *sa-niŋ* *haĩ-saŋa* *a-yuŋ-no*
who-COM talk-CVB 2-be-NPST
'Whom did you stay while talking.'
- b. **sa-niŋ* *khoy-saŋa* *i-laŋ* *od-e*
who-COM play-CVB 2sPOSS-leg break-PST
'Intended: Whom did you play with and break your leg.'

But we have many clear evidences where the interrogative pronouns *them* and *aŋ*, unambiguously belong to the embedded clause, as in (12).

- (12) a. *them khem-saŋa* *a-yuw-a-kha elo*
what listen-CVB 2-stay-PST-BGR OR
'What were you listening to and sitting?'
CLLDCh4R07S05.1554
- b. *aŋ* *num-saŋa* *a-yuŋ-no*
what do-CVB 2-stay-NPST
'What are you doing being here?'

The scope of a question is sometimes ambiguous. *Aŋ* in example (13) may question either the mood of going 'by climbing' or simply fact of 'going'.

- (13) *waŋ-saŋa* *kha?-no* *aŋ*
climb-CVB go-NPST PTCL

'Does he GO by climbing?' or
'Does he go (up) by CLIMBING?'
CLLDCh2R14S03.0732

2.1.4. Argument sharing

The converbial construction of Chintang involves a strict syntactic constraint on argument sharing. The examples discussed in this section illustrate the following configurations: (1) Two intransitive clauses sharing their S argument: S=S (1a), (8b). (2) Two transitive clause sharing their A argument only: A=A (4a). (3) Two transitive clause sharing both their A and P arguments: A=A, P=P (2a), (8a). (4) Coreference between the A of matrix clause and S of embedded clause: A=S (1b). (5) Coreference between the S of matrix clause and the A of embedded clause: S=A (2b).

Argument sharing between embedded and matrix clauses is obligatory. We have no examples where there is no argument sharing in the converbial constructions. However, not all possible relations are equally common. The systematic study of our corpus constituted by the first 600 converbial constructions in the various annotated sessions shows that the S=S configuration is the most popular one. The study also shows that relatively long chains of converbs describing successive events (more than three events) are not typical of Chintang discourse, and in the corpus, sentence such as (7) is quite rare.

2.2. The purposive clause

The purposive clause is marked by the suffix *-si*, which is glossed as 'PURP' in this paper. Like in other Kiranti languages, the purposive suffix *-si* is typically restricted to verbs of motion: a person or an animal moves somewhere in order do something. In the embedded clauses, a *-si* marked constituent functions as the head of the clause which appears

in the periphery of another clause. Like in the converbial clauses, the participants of the main clause must have control over the embedded clause as well.

- (14) *siŋ khop-si khatt-u-ku-ŋ*
 wood search-PURP take-3P-NPST-1sA
 ‘I take (him/her) to search wood.’
 b. *kappe hungoi-ʔ im-si lik-no*
 K. DEM-LOC sleep-PURP enter-NPST
 ‘Kappe goes there to sleep.’ CLLDCh3S12R04 211

In our corpus *-si* very rarely occurs with stative verbs, as e.g. in (15). The same constraint has also been noted for neighboring Belhare (Bickel 2004).

- (15) *beuli cop-si yuw-e*
 bride look-PURP be-PST
 ‘He sat down there to see the bride.’

Like in the simultaneous converbial clause, there is no overt appearance of an S or A argument in the embedded clause (16a). But it is possible to have e.g. a locative argument and a P argument in an embedded clause, as in (16b).

- (16) a. **menuwa-ŋa sencak ca-si kuŋs-e*
 cat-ERT mouse eat-PURP come.down-PST
 ‘The cat came down to eat a mouse.’
 b. *ama akka jarkin-be cuwaphas-si khaiʔ-ya-ʔã*
 mother 1s jerrycan-LOC water fill-PURP go-1sS
 NPST
 ‘Mother, I go to fetch water in the jerrycan.’ CLS04.212

Like the *-saŋa* converb clause, the purposive embedded clause can also appear in the middle position (17a) and at the final

position of a sentence (17b). Postposed purposive clauses are quite common in Chintang.

- (17) a. *a-ti-a-c-e* *kina ba-i? ladaɪ num-si akka-be*
 2-come-PST-d-PST SEQ DEM.PROX-LOC fight
 do-PURP 1s-LOC
 ‘You came here to fight with me.’ origin_myth.049
- b. *ama akka khai?-ya-?ã caklet khes-si*
 mother 1s go-1sS-NPST chocolate buy-PURP
 ‘Mother, I am going to buy a chocolate.’ CLS06.012

Both the embedded and the matrix clause can be focused with additive focus clitics and topicalizers (18).

- (18) *akka=yəŋ kok ca-si=na kuŋ-ŋa-?ã*
 1s=ADD rice eat-PURP=TOP come.down-1sS-NPST
 ‘I also come to have rice.’ CLLDCh1R11S03.279

Like in the simultaneous converbal clause, we have no clear example for *sa* 'who' questions in the purposive clauses. But the examples in (19a) and (19b) show that the *them* and *aŋ* questions can occur inside the embedded clause.

- (19) a. *them cop-si khad-e*
 what see-PURP go-PST
 'What did he go to see?'
- b. *aŋ num-si ti-e*
 What do-PURP come-PST
 'What did he come for?'

Person agreement can be expressed in the dependent clause, but it is quite different from independent clauses. In example (20), the P argument of the verb in the embedded clause is marked by a possessive prefix which expresses a different person from the one in the main clause.

- (20) *i-cop-si* *u-ti-a-ηs-e* *naŋ*
 2sPOSS-see-PURP 3nsS-come-PST-PERF-PST PTCL
 ‘They have come to see you.’ CLLDCh1R02S03a.108

2.2.1. Scope of Negation

As we do not have any clear evidence yet, we are not sure whether the scope of negation is extended over the embedded clause in purposive clauses.

But, we have some examples where it is possible to negate the embedded clause, as in (21). For this Chintang employs a different form of negation to code negative purpose.

- (21) *cuwa la-si* *maha khus-si khad-a-ηs-a=kha*
 water bring-PURP NEG steal-PURP go-PST-PERF-
 PST=BGR
 ‘He did not go to bring water, but to steal things.’

2.3. Negation converb

The negation converb is the third most frequent non-finite clause marker in Chintang. In the negation converb clause, the embedded infinitival form of the verb is marked with a regular negation marking prefix *mai-*. Thus, a combination of a *mai-* ‘NEG’ + *-ma* ‘INF’, makes an embedded negation converb clause, which is quite different from a mere negation of a converb. This is because if it were simply a negation of an infinitival form of the verb, it would have been possible to formulate the clause without a negation marker too. As the negation marking on the infinitival form of verb is obligatory, this makes it different from general negation.

Like the other converbal clauses, the negation converb clause is also nonfinite and fully dependent in nature. The negation converb indicates that an action takes place without being supported by an another event.

- (22) *mai-kham-ma=ta min-no*
 NEG-chew-INF=FOC swallow-NPST
 ‘He swallows without chewing.’

Unlike in *-saya* and *-si* nonfinite clauses, there is no obligatory correferentiality in negative subordinate clauses. A negative converb clause can take its own arguments which are not necessarily identical with the arguments of the matrix clause, as in (23).

- (23) *mai-pi-ma=ta akka pi-ŋa-ʔã-niŋ*
 NEG-give-INF=PTCL 1s give-1sA-NPST-NEG
 ‘I do not give it before (someone) gives me.’

According to Ebert (2003a: 31), all Kiranti languages except Camling have a negative converb. In a number of Kiranti languages, the regular negation marker also forms the negation converbal clauses. But unlike in other Kiranti languages which use *-sa/saya* to mark simultaneous converb, Hayu reserves *-sa* only for the negation converb (Ebert 2003a).

3. Summary

In this paper, we have dealt the three different types of converbal clauses in Chintang. Like in other Kiranti languages, the *-saya* converbal clause and *-si* purposive clause obligatorily share arguments between embedded and matrix clauses. But there is no obligatory control of any arguments in negation converb clause. Moreover, all types of converbal clauses do not allow an overt S/A argument in the embedded clause, but they do allow other arguments. All types of converbal clauses have in common that they all license some sort of focus marker on the embedded clause. Like in Puma and Belhare, the question and negation scope is extended to the embedded clause in Chintang as well. Furthermore, unlike

other languages, Chintang non-finite clauses can bear person and number marking in purposive structures.

Glossing & abbreviation: This paper follows the Leipzig Glossing conventions, with the addition of the following abbreviations: BGR 'background information', DIR 'directional', e 'exclusive', N.NTVZ 'noun nativizer', SEQ 'sequential', PTCL 'particle'

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