

## Finiteness in Hinuq – Converbs, participles and other beasts

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### 1. Introduction

At least two different views on finiteness can be distinguished: (i) finiteness as a morphological (i.e. mostly inflectional) property of the verb, and (ii) finiteness as a property of the clause in discourse.<sup>1</sup> The second view seems to be more widespread. It has been explicitly advocated by Givón (1990: 853) who states that “finiteness is the systematic grammatical means used to express the degree of integration of a clause into its immediate clausal environment”. That means that the less finite a clause is the more it needs syntactic and semantic/thematic integration into its context. Givón takes the “prototype transitive main clause” as reference point for finiteness. The more a clause deviates in its morphology, syntax and semantics/pragmatics from a transitive main clause the more it is nonfinite.

Hinuq is the smallest of the five Tsezic languages spoken in western Daghestan (Russia) in the Caucasus, by about 600 speakers. It belongs to the Avar–Ando–Tsezic subbranch of the Nakh–Daghestanian language family.

The language is Ergative case-marking. The most frequent word order is SOV, but other orders are also possible. As is typical for these languages Hinuq has a gender system with five genders that are used to mark agreement between nouns in the Absolutive case and the majority of vowel-initial verbs (table 1)

Table 1: Agreement prefixes

gender/number	I	II	III	IV	V
SG <sup>2</sup>	Ø	ɣ-	b-	ɣ-	r-
PL	b-	b-	r-	r-	r-

<sup>1</sup> The recent book entitled “Finiteness: Theoretical and empirical foundations” edited by Irina Nikolaeva (2007) gives an expansive introduction to the notion of “finiteness” in various linguistic theories, in individual languages and in language acquisition (see also the review by Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2009).

<sup>2</sup> I – V gender classes ABL1 first Ablative ABST Abstraction ALOC location ‘animate’ ANTIP Antipassive AT location ‘at’ CAUS Causative CONC Concessive converb COND Conditional converb CVB Converb DAT Dative DIR Directional EL elicited ERG Ergative GEN1 first Genitive GEN2 second Genitive GT General tense HAB habitual HPL Human Plural ILOC Inanimate Location IN location ‘in(side)’ INF Infinitive INFUT Intentional future IMP Imperative IPFVCVB Imperfective converb IRR Irrealis LAT Lative MSD Masdar NEG Negation NPL Nonhuman plural OBL Oblique PL Plural POT Potential PROH Prohibitive PRS Present PST Past PTCP Participle PURP Purposive converb Q Question QUOT Quotative REFL Reflexive RES Resultative SG Singular SIM Simultaneous converb SR location ‘on’ TERM Terminative converb UWPST Unwitnessed past WPST Witnessed past

## 2. Verbal morphology

Verbs consist of a root that can be preceded by an agreement prefix and followed by various endings. Hinuq verbs do not show person agreement. Categories marked on the verb are: tense, aspect, mood, evidentiality, polarity, gender and number. Hinuq has several simple and periphrastic verb forms that express absolute and relative time reference.

Aspect is part of the tense system, e.g. the Habitual Unwitnessed Past combines habitual aspect with past time reference (and the evidentiality value “unwitnessed”). Similarly, evidentiality is part of certain tense forms with past time reference. Hinuq distinguished witnessed (i.e. the speaker has seen the event with his/her own eyes) from unwitnessed past. Unwitnessed past tense forms can usually not be used with 1<sup>st</sup> person.

### 2.1. Forms traditionally classified as “finite”

Hinuq has seven analytic TAM forms (five indicative and two that are not indicative) (table 2), 22 periphrastic TAM forms (table 3), and two TAM forms that cannot be attributed clearly to one of these groups (table 4).

Table 2: Analytic TAM forms of *-iλi-* ‘go’

Label	affirmative	negative
General Tense	<i>-iλi</i>	<i>-iλi-me</i>
Simple Present ( <i>-o, -ho, -yo</i> )	<i>-iλ'i-yo</i>	#
Simple Witnessed Past ( <i>-s, -š, -iš</i> )	<i>-iλ'i-š</i>	<i>-iλ'i-š-me</i>
Definite Future	<i>-iλ'-as</i>	#
Intentional Future	<i>-iλ'-an</i>	<i>-iλ'-amin</i>
Imperative	<i>-iλ'i</i>	<i>-iλ'i-yom</i>
Optative	<i>-iλ'i-λo</i>	<i>-iλ'i-yom-λo</i>

Table 3: Formation of periphrastic verb forms in independent clauses

	PRS	WPST	UWPST
affirmative / negative	<i>goʔ / gom</i>	<i>zoq'wes / zoq'wesme</i>	<i>zoq'wen / zoq'wen gom</i>
<b>Suffix</b>			
Imperfective converb ( <i>-o, -ho, -yo</i> )	+	+	+
Narrative converb ( <i>-n, -no</i> )	(+)	+	+
Resultative Participle ( <i>-s, -š, -iš</i> )	+	+	+
Habitual Participle ( <i>-λ'os</i> )	+	+	+
Infinitive ( <i>-a</i> )	+	+	+
Masdar ( <i>-nu</i> )	(+)	(+)	(+)
Intentional ( <i>-aru</i> )	+	+	+

All periphrastic verb forms built by using the auxiliary *zoq'we-s* 'be.PST-WPST' have the evidentiality meaning “witnessed by the speaker”. All forms containing *zoq'we-n* 'be.PST-UWPST' have the evidentiality meaning “not witnessed by the speaker” and are predominantly used when telling fairy tales or legends.

Table 4: Heterogeneous TAM forms

Label	affirmative	negative
Simple Unwitnessed Past ( <i>-n, -no</i> )	<i>-iλ'i-n</i>	<i>-iλ'i-n gom</i>
Still not Present	#	<i>-iλ'-anu (goʔ)</i>

### 2.3. Forms traditionally classified as “nonfinite”

As typical for Nakh-Daghestanian languages Hinuq has a great number of verb forms that occur in subordinate clauses. These verb forms are called converbs, participles, Infinitive and Masdar

Table 5: Converbs, participles and other “nonfinite verb forms

Label	Affirmative	Negative
<b>Converbs</b>		
Posterior Converb	<i>-iλ'i-λ'o-r</i>	#
Terminative Converb	<i>-iλ'-a-če</i>	#
Simultaneous1 Converb	<i>-iλ'i-λ'o</i>	<i>-iλ'i-me-λ'o</i>
Simultaneous2 Converb	<i>-iλ'-a-ʔi</i>	<i>-iλ'-a-me-ʔi</i>
Progressive Converb	<i>-iλ'i-yo -ičin</i>	#
Reduplicated Narrative Converb	<i>-iλ'-an(no) -iλ'i-n</i>	#
Simple Anterior Converb	<i>-iλ'i-nos</i>	#
Immediate Anterior Converb	<i>-iλ'i-yorun</i>	#
Narrative Converb	<i>-iλ'i-n</i>	#
Imperfective Converb	<i>-iλ'i-yo</i>	#
Conditional Converb	<i>-iλ'i-yo</i>	<i>-iλ'i-yo-me</i>
Concessive Converb	<i>-iλ'i-on(o)</i>	<i>-iλ'i-yon-me</i>
Purposive	<i>-iλ'i-ya-z</i>	<i>-iλ'i-me-z</i>
<b>Participles</b>		
Local Participle	<i>-iλ'i-ya</i>	<i>-iλ'i-ya-me</i>
Present Participle	<i>-iλ'i-yo goʔa</i>	<i>-iλ'i-yo goyomeru</i>
Past Participle	<i>-iλ'i-yoru</i>	<i>-iλ'i-yo-me-ru</i>
Habitual Participle	<i>-iλ'i-λ'os</i>	<i>-iλ'i-me-λ'os</i>
Resultative Participle	<i>-iλ'i-š</i>	<i>-iλ'i-š-me</i>
<b>Other verb forms</b>		
Nominalized Infinitive	<i>-iλ'-a-li</i>	#
Masdar	<i>-iλ'-anu</i>	#
Infinitive	<i>-iλ'-a</i>	#

### 3. Finiteness in Hinuq

#### 3.1. Verbal forms and clause types

The distribution of verbal suffixes and clause types has been summed up in table 6. Three endings (*-o*, *-n*, *-s*) occur in both independent and dependent clauses with differing, but related meanings/functions. Therefore it has been resigned to give them a unique label which would favor one function over the other. In the glossing of the examples the function has been indicated. That means that *-o* is glossed with PRS when it represents the Simple Present tense and IPFVCVB when it occurs as imperfective converb. The suffix *-n* is glossed with UWPST when it occurs as the only predicate of an independent clause with unwitnessed past meaning and CVB when it occurs as Narrative converb. Finally, *-s* can occur with witnessed past meaning (WPST) on the only verb of a main clause or as Resultative participle glossed with PTCP.RES.

There is no one-to-one match between verb suffixes/forms and clause types, i.e. the majority of the verb forms occur in more than one clause type. There are no verbal forms exclusively specialized for complement clauses or relative clauses.

Table 6: The distribution of verbal suffixes and clause types

clause type verbal suffixes	independent clauses		dependent clauses		
	simple verb	periphrastic verb	complement clauses	adverbial clauses	relative clauses
<i>-o</i> , <i>-yo</i> , <i>-ho</i>	✓	✓ + be	✓ + <i>-ʃi</i>	✓	✓ + <i>goʃa</i>
<i>-n</i> , <i>-no</i>	✓	✓ + be	✓ (+ <i>-ʃi</i> )	✓	
<i>-s</i> , <i>-š</i> , <i>-iš</i>	✓	✓ + be	✓ + <i>-ʃi</i>		✓
Masdar ( <i>-nu</i> )	✓	✓ + be	✓ (+ case)		✓
Habitual Participle ( <i>-ʃos</i> )		✓ + be	✓ + <i>-ʃi</i>		✓
Infinitive ( <i>-a</i> )		✓ + be	✓	✓ + <i>-če/-ʃi</i>	✓ + <i>-li</i>
Local Participle, Past Participle (v)				✓ (+ <i>-n</i> / case)	✓
Definite, Intentional Future, Imperative, Optative (i)	✓		✓ + <i>-ʃi</i> / <i>-ʃen</i>		
Intentional ( <i>-aru</i> ) (vi)		✓			
specialized converbs (iv)				✓	

When looking in more detail at the distribution of the verbal suffixes across clause types the following picture arises:

- (i) four suffixes used only in simple affirmative clauses, two of them in indicative forms

- (1) *[debez r-eq'i-yoru-ho-r]* *r-uw-o*  
 you.SG.DAT V-know-PTCP.PST-ILOC-LAT V-do-IMP  
 'Do as you like (lit. know, can).' (EL)

- (ii) four suffixes used in dependent clauses, and also in independent clauses with or without an additional auxiliary (*-o*, *-n*, *-s* and Masdar)  
– examples with *-o* are (2a, b), (4a)

(2) *hibaytu-λ'o λ'ere ħalt'ezī Ø-iq-o goʃ hawsaʃat*

a. that.OBL-SR on work I-be-IPFVCVB be now

‘Currently I (masc.) am working on this.’

b. *b-aq'-o hayʃoder [haʃoy kiki-yo goʃa] coy*

III-come-PRS he.ALOC.LAT he.ERG feed-IPFVCVB be.PTCP eagle(III)

‘To him comes the eagle that he had fed.’

- (iii) two suffixes used in dependent clauses, and also in independent clauses with an auxiliary (Habitual Participle and Infinitive (3), (7), (10a, b)

(3) *me seda-qen rek'u-z Ø-eq'-a gom*

you.SG one.OBL-NEG man.OBL-DAT I-know-INF be.NEG

‘Nobody will recognize you.’

- (iv) a number of suffixes used only in adverbial clauses (specialized converbs, e.g. (11))  
(v) two suffixes are exclusively used for the formation of verb forms in adverbial and relative clauses (Local Participle, Past Participle) (1)  
(vi) the Intentional is used only in independent clauses together with an auxiliary. It is not used as the head of dependent clauses.

This picture is familiar from other Nakh–Daghestanian languages (see Kalinina and Sumbatova 2007 for Içari Dargwa, Bagwalal and Tsakhur and Kalinina 2001 for Avar and Lezgian).

### 3.2. Categories associated with finiteness

- tense
- evidentiality
- mood
- aspect
- polarity
- gender/number agreement
- case marking of arguments
- overt subjects
- word order
- CVB/PTCP markers, case marking on verbs
- clitics

### 3.2.1. Tense and evidentiality

All simple verb forms occurring in independent clauses express a temporal reference. In addition, *-s* and *-n* have the evidentiality meanings ‘witnessed’ and ‘unwitnessed’ respectively. In contrast, when these forms are used in dependent clauses they do not have an own temporal and evidentiality, but get these values from the matrix verb. For example, the event that the verb form *r-išer-ho* in (4a) describes is referred to as occurring in the past and being witnessed because the matrix verb carries the ending *-s* (“Witnessed Past”). If the verb *r-išer-ho* would occur as the head of an independent clause it would have present time reference. Similarly, in (4b) the speaker must be a witness of the event described because the main verb has the Witnessed Past ending. In contrast to this, the sentence *haytoy t’ek t’ot’erno* used as an independent main clause translates as ‘He apparently read the book’ with the evidentiality value “unwitnessed”.

- (4)    *[[xexbe    r-ah-yλ’o]    [hagbe    r-išer-ho]                    λexwe-s]-λen*  
       a. children    V-yell-SIM    these    NPL-feed-IPFVCVB    remain-WPST-QUOT
- eλi-yo        baru-y*  
       say-PRS    wife-ERG  
       ‘When the children cried, I remained feeding them, says the wife.’
- b. *haytoy    t’ek        t’ot’er-no    λaq’er-iš*  
       he.ERG    book    read-CVB    finish-WPST  
       ‘He finished reading the book.’ (EL)

The verb forms used adverbial clauses, but not in independent clauses (e.g. specialized converbs) lack evidentiality and absolute temporal reference. They express relative temporal reference in relation to the situation described by the matrix verb (5), or no temporal reference at all (11).

- (5)    *me        sira    [kwat’izi    y-iq-ače]                    λexwe-y-λen*  
       you.SG    why    be.late    II-happen-TERM    remain-Q-QUOT  
       ‘Why did you remain till you were late?’

### 3.2.2. Mood and aspect

Many mood and aspect values carry over from main clauses to subordinate clauses. Non-indicative moods such as the Imperative and the Optative occur also in indirect speech contexts:

- (6)    *xec-o        de-λen    eλi-yo*  
       let-IMP    I-QUOT    say-PRS  
       ‘He says, let me.’

Another non-indicative mood, the Irrealis conditional can be obtained from (almost) all TAM forms that also occur in independent clauses. Only in the apodosis of Irrealis

conditional clauses the occurrence of TAM forms is restricted to the General Tense plus the irrealis form of the copula (*goʔ*) or the future in the past forms (7).

- (7) *b-eq'i-š*      *q'ede* *b-iλ'-a*      *zoq'we-ye* *bazargambe* *yeme.λ'o*  
 III-know-WPST   IRR   HPL-go-INF   be-Q.WPST   merchant.PL   mill.SR  
 'If they would have known this, would the merchants have gone to the mill?'

The aspectual value of verb forms used in subordinate clauses (i.e. converbs or participles) often remains unclear. But there are two participles that clearly have the aspectual values of resultative and habitual, which carry over to the periphrastic TAM forms that are built up from them. Another example is periphrastic verb forms with the light verb *-iči-* 'be' (8a). These constructions refer to ongoing events whose do not have a result or whose results are not important. Similar constructions with the same light verb are available in adverbial subordination, and they have the same aspectual meaning of progressive (8b).

- (8) *sasaqo*   *nesa*      *t'ek*   *t'ot'er-ho*      *Ø-iči-yo*      *zoq'we-s*  
 a. morning   evening   book   read-IPFVCVB   I-be-IPFVCVB   be-WPST  
 'In the morning, in the evening I was reading books.'
- b. [*Ø-iλ'-i-yo*      *Ø-iči-n*]      *hayʔo-z*      *λ'oq'ar*      *keziyiq-o*      *ked*  
 I-go-IPFVCVB   I-be-CVB   he.OBL-DAT   towards   meet.II-PRS   girl(II)  
 'While he is going, he meets a girl.'

### 3.2.3. Polarity

Not all simple verb forms occurring in independent clauses can express negative polarity (table 2). In addition, three forms contain a negative marker that differs synchronically from the standard negative marker *-me*. All participles have a negative counterpart whereas the Infinitive and the majority of the converbs occur only with affirmative meaning.

### 3.2.4. Agreement and case assignment

All verb forms follow the same rules for gender and number agreement: they agree with the Absolutive argument of their clause.

With respect to case assignment verb forms follow the same case assignment patterns in all clause types. In other words, arguments in dependent clauses get the same cases assigned as arguments in independent clauses.

If clauses headed by a Masdar or a Past participle occur in argument position of verbs they get the same case assigned that a lexical noun in this position would get.

- (9) *de šak*      *Ø-iq-o*      *zekes*      *ywede*      *r-egi*      *r-iq-a-nu-λ'o*  
 I   doubtful I-be-PRS   tomorrow.GEN1   day(V)   V-good   V-be-INF-MSD-SR  
 'I doubt that tomorrow will be good weather (lit. a good day).' (EL)

### 3.2.5. Overt subject and word order

The majority of dependent clauses can have their own overtly expressed subject (9), (10a). Only a minority of complement taking verbs require the identity of main clause and dependent clause subject, e.g. the modal verbs *k'wezi -iq-* and *koλ'e-* ‘be able’ and the phasal verbs *baybik -u-* and *-uʔi-* (10b) ‘begin’, *ʔaq'e-* (intr.) and *ʔaq'er-* (trans.) ‘finish’, ‘end’ (4b). In case of identical subjects regularly equi deletion occurs: only one of the subjects is overtly expressed, mostly the main clause subject (8b), but occasionally also in the embedded clause (10b).

- (10) *haʔoz r-eti-yo [de kayat cax-a / cax-ayaz]*  
 a. he.DAT NPL-want-PRS I.ERG letter write-INF / write-PURP  
 ‘He wants me to write a letter.’ (EL)

- [ked-i uži zok'-a] γ-uʔi-š*  
 b. girl(II)-ERG boy beat-INF II-begin-WPST  
 The girl began to beat the boy.’ (EL)

Converb constructions allow overt identical subject in the main and the adverbial clause if one of the overt arguments is a reflexive pronoun (11). However, these constructions are marginal and hardly ever attested in texts. In general, coreferent arguments are deleted.

- (11) *ʔalí konfetbe r-aq'er-ho [zo Ø-aq'e-yo]*  
 Ali.ERG sweets NPL-bring-PRS REFL I-come-COND  
 ‘If he<sub>i</sub> comes Ali<sub>i</sub> brings sweets.’ (EL)

To sum up, there is no verb form that obligatorily requires the deletion of an overt subject.

The word order in dependent and independent clauses is roughly the same. The preferred order is SOV. Other orders are possible, but dependent clauses are almost exclusively verb-final. Relative clauses even prohibit any other than word-final word order.

### 3.2.6. Verb forms and clitics used in subordinate clauses

Case-marking on verbs and special verb forms not used in dependent clauses are properties associated with nonfiniteness. Hinuq has a number of specialized converbs and two participles that are only used in dependent clauses ((iv), (v)).

Synchronically at least the Posterior, the Simple Anterior and the Purposive converb clearly contain case endings. The Posterior converb contains the Lative marker *-r*, the Simple Anterior converb contains the Genitive/Ablative marker *-s*, and the Purposive converb the Dative marker *-z*. Arguably the ending *-ʔo* that is found in both the Posterior and the Simultaneous<sup>1</sup> converb is synchronically the Supressive marker, with which it is homophonous.



Furthermore, case endings can be added to the participles in order to use them in headless relative clauses or adverbial clauses.

Hinuq uses two clitics to mark certain forms of subordination. These are the Abstraction clitic *-ʔi* (12a, b) and the quotation clitic *-ʔen* (4a, 6). Both clitics occur on all analytic and periphrastic verb forms traditionally classified as “finite” (tables 3, 4 and 6) when they are used in subordinate clauses. Only the Abstraction clitic additionally occurs with the Habitual Participle, which cannot head an independent clause, to mark complements of verbs of knowledge (12b).

- (12) *hayʔoy [ʔerba-be b-aq'e-s-ʔi] di-qo c'aʔer-iʃ-me*  
 a. he.ERG guest-PL HPL-come-WPST-ABST I.OBL-AT tell-WPST-NEG  
 ‘He did not tell me that the guest came.’ (EL)

- [ac y-aʔi-me-ʔ'o-s-ʔi] r-eq'i-ʔ'o*  
 b. door(IV) IV-open-NEG-PTCP.HAB-ABST V-know-SIM  
 ‘when (he) understood, that (she) would not open the door...’

#### 4. Conclusion

“Finiteness” cannot be used to describe the morphological property of a verbal suffix or a verb form in Hinuq. The morphological categories that are most often employed when referring to finite vs. nonfinite verbs are tense and agreement inflection. The agreement properties of Hinuq verb forms do not differ from each other, that is, all verbal forms behave alike.

What concerns tense, the situation is more complicated. Suffixes/verbal forms can be distinguished as having (i) no temporal reference (e.g. non-temporal converbs (11), (ii) relative temporal reference (e.g. temporal converbs (5) and periphrastic verb forms such as the Compound Future in Witnessed Past used in the main clause of (7)), (iii) absolute temporal reference (e.g. Intentional Future), and relative or absolute time reference according to their occurrence (*-s*, *-o*, *-n*).

Another inflectional category of verbs, polarity, is present in most but not all verb forms that head independent clauses. Similarly, not all verb forms used in dependent clauses have a negative counterpart. In other words, polarity does not help us to distinguish clauses or constructions from each other with respect to their “finiteness”.

When taking Givón’s (1990) concept of “finiteness” as conformity or deviation from the independent clause pattern then it is possible to order the suffixes that have been grouped together in six groups along the following scale:

- independent clauses**
- (i) four suffixes that occur only in independent clauses
  - (ii) three suffixes used alone and in periphrastic verb forms of independent clauses, and in dependent clauses
  - (iii) two suffixes in periphrastic verb forms of independent clauses, and in dependent clauses
- dependent clauses**
- (iv) a number of specialized converbs used only in dependent clauses
  - (v) two participles used in dependent clauses

Maybe clauses formed with the help of suffixes of group (i) could be called “finite”, and in contrast clauses formed with suffixes of the groups (iv) and (v) could be called “non-finite, but what about (ii) and (iii). In addition, there is one suffix that occurs only in periphrastic verb forms (iv) does not really fit into this pattern because it does not head any clause type on its own.

To sum up, it seems that the notion of “finiteness” as proposed in the literature is not a substantial means for the analysis of Hinuq. This conclusion is similar to the conclusion drawn by Kalinina and Sumbatova (2007: 246ff.) after analyzing the data from Icari Dargwa, Tsakhur and Bagwalal, although those languages differ from Hinuq because they have predicative particles expressing tense, mood, polarity and even person (in Icari Dargwa).

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