

## **Participles and (non-)finiteness: the case of Akhvakh**

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*ABSTRACT. In Akhvakh, a Nakh-Daghestanian language belonging to the Andic branch of the Avar-Andic-Tsezic family, dependent clauses may involve subordination mechanisms of types commonly applied to clauses headed by independent verb forms, or the use of strictly dependent verb forms (infinitive and converbs). But Akhvakh also has verb forms that question the notion of finiteness by being used both as heads of typical participial relative clauses, and as independent verb forms. On the other hand, there is no correlation between the morphological characteristics of Akhvakh verb forms (in particular with respect to argument indexation) and their ability to head independent clauses. In order to eliminate the inconsistencies following from the use of current terminology in the description of Akhvakh verb inflection, the idea of a necessary correlation between the morphological characteristics and the syntactic abilities of verb forms must be abandoned, and the definition of the type participle must be reformulated in a way making it logically independent from the type non-finite verb form. This means that the negative conditions implied by the notion of non finiteness as it is currently understood must be eliminated from the definition of participle, and participles must be defined exclusively with reference to their ability to occur in constructions constituting a particular type of relativization strategy, in which they behave at the same time as verbal heads and as adjectival dependents of a head noun.*

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. The aim of this paper**

Participles are currently defined as a subtype of the more general type *non-finite verb form*. The aim of this paper is to show that this position is untenable for a language like Akhvakh, at least within the frame of current definitions of *participle* and *non-finite verb form*.

#### **1.2. Finite vs. non-finite**

The traditional presentation of the distinction between finite and non-finite verb forms relies on the idea that, (a) syntactically, heading independent clauses expressing

statements is the most typical function of verb, and (b) the ability to fulfill this function normally goes with some degree of morphological completeness: in their morphology, non-finite verb forms lack argument indexation and/or TAM distinctions obligatorily expressed by finite forms; syntactically, they head phrases whose internal structure can be recognized as clausal, but clauses headed by non-finite verb forms cannot function as independent sentences.

### 1.3. Participles

According to current definitions, participles are forms characterized by the following set of properties:

(a) participles are verb forms in the sense that, with respect to the internal structure of the phrases they head, they have the same properties as verb forms heading independent clauses;

(b) participles are non-finite verb forms, i.e., they cannot head independent clauses by themselves, and this inability is correlated with the lack of morphological distinctions characteristic of the independent verb forms of the same language;

(c) taken as a whole, phrases headed by participles are syntactically equivalent to adjective phrases; they can fulfill the roles of noun dependent and non-verbal predicate, or undergo nominalization, in the same way as adjective phrases;

(d) in all of the roles accessible to adjective phrases, the verb form heading a participle phrase shows the same behavior (in particular, the same inflectional characteristics) as the head of an adjective phrase fulfilling the same role;

(e) semantically, participle phrases modify the noun they depend on by identifying it to an unexpressed constituent of the participle phrase.

In this paper I will show that there are good reasons to consider the notion of participle relevant to the description of Akhvakh, but that at the same time, in order to be applicable to Akhvakh, the definition of the type *participle* must be limited to conditions (a), (c), (d), and (e).

## 2. The Akhvakh language: location and typological profile

### 2.1. The Akhvakh language: location and genetic affiliation

Akhvakh (*ašoʎi micʼi*, Russian *axvaxskij jazyk*, Azerbaijani *axax dili*) is a North-East Caucasian (or Nakh-Daghestanian) language belonging to the Andic branch of the Avar-Andic-Tsezic family, spoken in the western part of Daghestan and in the village of Axaxdərə (*ašoʎi hani*) near Zaqatala (Azerbaijan). This paper is based on the author's field-work carried out in Axaxdərə.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Judging from *Magomedbekova 1967* (which so far constitutes the main source of information on Akhvakh), the variety of Akhvakh spoken in Axaxdərə is very close to the Northern Akhvakh dialect spoken in the Akhvakhskij Rajon of Daghestan. Nearly all affixes identified by Magomedbekova occur in Axaxdərə Akhvakh with identical forms and functions, or with slight differences only, and most words

## 2.2. Akhvakh clause structure

Akhvakh clause structure is characterized by flexible constituent order. Case marking and gender-number agreement between the verb and its core arguments consistently follow ergative alignment: with the exception of a very limited number of verbs having non-canonical valency patterns, constructions that are not fully assimilated to the prototypical transitive construction include a noun phrase in the absolutive case controlling gender-number agreement in the same way as P in the transitive construction.

Person agreement, unique among Andic languages, is found in one tense only (the perfective positive) and follows an uncommon pattern, with the same verbal ending encoding 1st person in assertive clauses and 2nd person in questions – see section 3.2.1. below.

Akhvakh distinguishes three genders in the singular: *human masculine*, *human feminine*, and *non-human*. Gender is always predictable from the meaning of nouns. In the plural, the distinction *masculine* vs. *feminine* is neutralized, resulting in a binary opposition *human plural* vs. *non-human plural*. In accordance with common practice in descriptions of Daghestanian languages, the term *class* will occasionally be used to designate the five agreement patterns of Akhvakh: *singular human masculine* (M), *singular human feminine* (F), *singular non-human* (N), *human plural* (HP), and *non-human plural* (NP).

Ex. (1) and (2) illustrate core syntactic term marking and gender-number agreement with intransitive and transitive verbs in the perfective negative, marked by the suffix *-iλa*. The verbs appearing in these examples obligatorily bear one of the gender-number prefixes *w-* (M) / *j-* (F) / *b-* (N) / *b(a)-* (HP) / *r-* (NP), and they are in a tense (the perfective negative) in which an optional gender-number marker *-we* (M) / *-je* (F) / *-be* (N) / *-ji* (HP) / *-re* (NP) may follow the suffix *-iλa*, or merge with it according to the following rules:<sup>2</sup>

- *-iλa-we* → *iλo* (M)
- *-iλa-je* → *iλe* (F)
- *-iλa-be* → *iλe* (N)
- *-iλa-ji* → *iλi* (HP)
- *-iλa-re* → *iλe* (NP)

- (1) a. *ek'wa* / *de-ne* / *me-ne* *w-oq'-iλo*  
 man 1S-ABS 2S-ABS M-come-PFV.NEG.M  
 ‘The man / I (masc.) / You (sing.masc.) did not come’

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she gives in her lexicon have exactly the same form too. In particular, cases of replacement of native Akhvakh words or of integrated Russian loanwords by Azerbaijani loanwords are relatively rare, which suggests that the installation of Akhvakh migrants in Azerbaijan must be relatively recent, in spite of the fact that the Akhvakhs of Axaxdərə have kept no regular relations with Daghestanian Akhvakhs.

<sup>2</sup> Ex. (1) & (2) are given with gender-number suffixes merged with the perfective negative suffix, but variants of these forms with an agglutinated gender-number suffix, or devoid of gender-number suffix, would be equally acceptable.

b. *ak'i / de-ne / me-ne j-eq'-iλe*  
 woman 1S-ABS 2S-ABS F-come-PFV.NEG.F  
 'The woman / I (fem.) / You (sing.fem.) did not come'

c. *χwe / mašina b-eq'-iλe*  
 dog car N-come-PFV.NEG.N  
 'The dog / The car did not come'

d. *mik'eli / iλi / isi / ušti b-eq'-iλi*  
 child.PL 1PI 1P 2P HP-come-PFV.NEG.HP  
 'The children / We (incl.) / We (excl.) / You (pl.) did not come'

e. *χwadi / mašinadi r-eq'-iλe*  
 dog.PL car.PL NP-come-PFV.NEG.NP  
 'The dogs / The cars did not come'

(2) a. *ek'wa-sw-e jaše j-ič'-iλe*  
 man-OM-ERG girl F-push-PFV.NEG.F  
 'The man did not push the girl'

b. *ek'wa-sw-e mašina b-ič'-iλe*  
 man-OM-ERG car N-push-PFV.NEG.N  
 'The man did not push the car'

c. *jašo-de ek'wa w-uč'-iλo*  
 girl.O-ERG man M-push-PFV.NEG.M  
 'The girl did not push the man'

d. *de-de me-ne j-ič'-iλe*  
 1S-ERG 2S-ABS F-push-PFV.NEG.F  
 'I (masc. or fem.) did not push you (fem.)'

### 2.3. Nouns and noun phrases

Akhvakh noun phrases are strictly head-final. The last word of noun phrases (i.e., in canonical noun phrases, the head noun) is inflected for number and case.

Except for 1st and 2nd person singular pronouns, whose absolutive form is characterized by a non-void ending *-ne*, the absolutive case (used in the extra-syntactic function of quotation / designation and in S/P roles) has no overt mark. Case suffixes may attach to a stem identical with the absolutive form, or to a special *oblique stem*. The formation of the oblique stem of nouns may involve changes in the last vowel (indicated in the gloss as ' .O'), or the addition of a formative *-su-* (M) / *-λi-* (F/N) / *-lo-*

(HP) / *-le-* (NP). With nominalized noun dependents, the use of these formatives is general.

In addition to the absolutive case, Akhvakh case inflection consists of the following cases:

- ergative *-de*,
- dative *-la(je)*,
- genitive *-Ø* (M and HP) or *-li* (F, N, and NP),
- comitative *-k'ena*,
- causal *-kana*,
- fifteen spatial cases organized in five series with an essive *-e/i*, a lative *-a(je)* and an elative *-u(ne)* in each.

## 2.4. Adjectives

Like verbs, adjectives divide into those obligatorily including a gender-number prefix, and those devoid of it. However, in all other respects, Akhvakh adjectives are much more similar to nouns than to verbs. In particular, they cannot bear TAM inflection and they fulfill the predicate function like nouns, by combining with the copula or with the verb *<b>ik'uruλa* 'be'.<sup>3</sup>

Gender-number suffixes do not occur with adjectives in the role of noun dependent or in predicate function, but only with nominalized adjectives (i.e., adjectives occurring as the last word of a noun phrase).

Ex. (3) illustrates an adjective with a gender-number prefix (*<b>ašada* 'old') and an adjective devoid of gender-number prefix (*č'ida* 'new') in the role of noun dependent (a-b), in predicate function (c-d), and nominalized (e-h).

- (3) a. *de-de b-ašada mašina o-x-ada*  
 1S-ERG N-old car N-sell-PFV1/2  
 'I sold the old car'
- b. *de-de č'ida mašina b-eχ-ada*  
 1S-ERG new car N-buy-PFV1/2  
 'I bought a new car'
- c. *ha mašinadi r-ašada gedi*  
 DEM car.PL NP-old COP.NP  
 'These cars are old'
- d. *ha mašinadi č'ida gedi*  
 DEM car.PL new COP.NP  
 'These cars are new'

<sup>3</sup> In Akhvakh, non-verbal predications involving neither the copula nor the verb *<b>ik'uruλa* are marginal.

- e. *de-de b-ašada-be o-x-ada*  
 1S-ERG N-old-N N-sell-PFV1/2  
 ‘I sold the old one’
- f. *de-de č’ida-be b-eχ-ada*  
 1S-ERG new-N N-buy-PFV1/2  
 ‘I bought a new one’
- g. *b-ašada-λi-ga eq-a*  
 N-old-OF/N-LAT look at-INJ  
 ‘Look at the old one’
- h. *č’ida-λi-ga eq-a*  
 new-OF/N-LAT look at-INJ  
 ‘Look at the new one’

### 3. A survey of Akhvakh independent verb forms

#### 3.1. General remarks on verb inflection and verb stem allomorphy

In Akhvakh, most verbs build all of their forms by adding TAM suffixes to a unique stem invariably ending in a consonant. There is however a class of verbs characterized by an alternation between a ‘long’ stem ending in a consonant and a ‘short’ stem characterized by the loss of the final consonant. For example, the underlying form of the root of *ʃōruλa* ‘cry’ can be represented as  $|ʃa(b)-|$  to account for the fact that it appears as *ʃab-* in combination with some suffixes (for example, the injunctive form of this verb is *ʃab-a*), whereas in other forms *b* is not apparent (for example in the infinitive *ʃōruλa* <  $|ʃa(b)-uruλa$ ). The same kind of alternation concerns also the derived transitive verbs formed by means of a causative suffix whose underlying form is  $|-a(j)-|$ .

Since all of the verb suffixes of Akhvakh begin with a vowel, the selection of the short form of such verb stems implies interaction between the last vowel of the stem and the initial vowel of the suffixes attached to it:

a + a	→ ā	i + a	→ ē
a + i	→ ē	i + i	→ ī
a + u	→ ō	i + u	→ ū

The division of verb suffixes into those selecting the long form of alternating verb stems, and those selecting the short form, is not correlated with any phonological or semantic property, and must be considered as synchronically arbitrary.

Another important morphophonological process in Akhvakh verb inflection is nasalization: verb roots including a nasal vowel have a nasalization effect on affixes, resulting in alternations between oral and nasal vowels, *b* and *m*, or *r* and *n*.

## 3.2. Synthetic verb forms

### 3.2.1. Perfective positive

This tense is the only one in which verb morphology shows a mechanism of person agreement expressed by the choice between two suffixes: *-ada* (glossed PFV1D/2Q), used in the presence of a 1st controller in declarative clauses or a 2nd person controller in questions, and *-ari* (glossed PFV), used in the presence of a 2nd or 3rd person controller in declarative clauses, in the presence of a 1st or 3rd person controller in questions, or in the absence of any controller. Transitive verbs invariably agree with A, whereas intransitive verbs divide into two semantically motivated classes, those that agree with S in the same way as transitive verbs with A, and those that do not agree with S and invariably show the ending *-ari*. This intransitivity split is semantically transparent. The sample of intransitive verbs given in (4) shows that intransitive verbs with S representing a relatively agentive participant agree in person with S in the same way as transitive verbs do with A, whereas those whose S argument can be characterized as an undergoer do not show person agreement. Note that, among the components of the notion of prototypical agentivity, control is more important here than volition, since verbs describing involuntary bodily processes that however allow for some degree of control (such as *hīk'unuła* 'hiccup' or *ʒōruła* 'cry')<sup>4</sup> belong to the first subset.

- (4) a. Intransitive verbs agreeing in person with S like transitive verbs with A:

*badałuruła* 'laugh', *baχwaduuruła* 'play', *baʒuruła* 'speak', *beq'uruła* 'come', *beuruła* 'stand up', *bešquuruła* 'work', *beturuła* 'run', *bišuruła* 'win', *bišuruła* 'gather', *bołuruła* 'walk', *buquuruła* 'fight', *bužuruła* 'believe', *c'iriłilōruła* 'get vexed', *čak'uruła* 'urinate', *čōruła* 'wash', *damałilōruła* 'wonder', *(ka)duk'uruła* 'sit down', *hīk'unuła* 'hiccup', *hečuruła* 'sneeze', *hulōruła* 'scream', *ič'eł'uruła* 'dress', *kasuruła* 'jump', *kočilōruła* 'move', *k'ōnuła* 'lie down', *k'usuruła* 'squat down', *ʒōruła* 'cry', etc.

- b. Intransitive verbs that do not show person agreement:

*āłaxuruła* 'perspire', *āq'ažuruła* 'be thirsty', *aq'usuruła* 'suffocate', *bač'aq'uruła* 'to be late', *bał'arałuruła* 'to lose weight', *baqwarołuruła* 'become old', *baχililōruła* 'get jealous', *baχuruła* 'be surprised', *becołuruła* 'get blind', *beguluuruła* 'get drunk', *beχuruła* 'be glad', *bił'uruła* 'die', *buxuruła* 'fall down', *buχuruła* 'feel cold', *čakōnuła* 'get sick', *čarałuruła*

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<sup>4</sup> The ambiguous status of such verbs from the point of view of agentivity is apparent in the fact that, out of context, their imperative positive (e.g., *Cry!*) sounds somewhat strange, whereas their imperative negative (e.g., *Don't cry!* or *Stop crying!*) sounds perfectly normal.

‘get fat’, *č’afinōruła* ‘be bored’, *goč’uruła* ‘wake’, *hunuła* ‘recover’, *łuruła* ‘be afraid’, *makwačuruła* ‘be hungry’, etc.

Consequently, the choice between *-ada* and *-ari* can be described as person agreement at a superficial level only. Its functional motivation is not to encode a person contrast as such, but to mark that the A or S<sub>A</sub> argument (the controller of the event) is identical or not with the speech act participant in charge of the assertion (the speaker in declarative speech acts, the addressee in questions), which can be viewed as a particular type of evidentiality marking.

Ex. (5a-d) illustrate the choice between *-ari* and *-ada* in declarative and interrogative transitive clauses in which A is a speech act participant, and ex. (5e) shows that *-ari* is invariably selected (in declarative clauses as well as in questions) if A is not a speech act participant.

- (5) a. *eł’-ada* “*di-ła q’abuł-ere goła*”, *me-de-la eł’-ari* “*di-ła-la*”  
 say-PFV.1D/2Q(N) 1S-DAT agree-ICONV COP.NEG.N 2S-ERG-and say-PFV 1S-DAT-and  
 ‘I said “I don’t agree”, and you said “me too”’
- b. *de-de čũda eł’-ari ha-be?*  
 2S-ERG when? say-PFV DEM-N  
 ‘When did I say that?’
- c. *me-de čugu eł’-ada ha-be?*  
 2S-ERG why? say-PFV.1D/2Q DEM-N  
 ‘Why did you say that?’
- d. *me-de čũda b-eχ-ada hu šāł’e? –šuni b-eχ-ada*  
 2S-ERG when? N-buy-PFV1D/2Q DEM dress yesterday N-buy-PFV1D/2Q  
 ‘When did you buy this dress? –I bought it yesterday’
- e. *hu-sw-e čũda b-eχ-ari hu mašina? –šuni b-eχ-ari*  
 DEM-OM-ERG when? N-buy-PFV DEM dress yesterday N-buy-PFV  
 ‘When did he buy this car? –He bought it yesterday’

Ex. (6) illustrates the behavior of an intransitive verb agreeing with S in the same way as a transitive verb with A, whereas (7) illustrates the case of an intransitive verb invariably taking the ending *-ari*, irrespective of the nature of S.

- (6) a. *mene čũda w-ošq-ada? –šuni w-ošq-ada*  
 2S when? M-work-PFV1D/2Q yesterday M-work-PFV1D/2Q  
 ‘When did you work? –I worked yesterday’

e. *hu-we čũda w-ošq-ari? –šuni w-ošq-ari*  
 DEM-M when? M-work-PFV yesterday N-buy-PFV1D/2Q  
 ‘When did he work? –He worked yesterday’

(7) a. *mene čũda h-ēni? –šuni h-ēni*<sup>5</sup>  
 2S when? recover-PFV yesterday recover-PFV  
 ‘When did you recover? –I recovered yesterday’

e. *hu-we čũda h-ēni? –šuni h-ēni*  
 DEM-M when? recover-PFV yesterday recover-PFV  
 ‘When did he recover? –He recovered yesterday’

The two suffixes of the perfective positive vary in the following way:

– the initial *a* of these two endings merges with an underlying *i* belonging to the stem according to the rule  $i + a \rightarrow \bar{e}$  (for example, the perfective positive of *gũruŕa* ‘do’, whose root has the underlying form  $|gwi(j)-|$ , is *gw-ēri* ~ *gw-ēda*);<sup>6</sup>

– with stems that select nasalized variants of affixes, the perfective positive endings occur as *-ani* and *-ãda* (with the variants *-ēni* and *-ẽda* in the presence of an underlying *i*).

– if the S/P argument is human plural, the obligatory merging of a gender-number agreement mark results in variants of these endings *-iri* and *-idi*; <sup>7</sup> in the other classes, an optional class marker can be added to the suffix *-ada* or merge with it, whereas no class marker can be added to the suffix *-ari*.

In addition to that, with verbs that have stem allomorphy, agreement with a human plural S/P argument triggers not only the choice of the endings *-iri* ~ *-idi*, but also the choice of the ‘long’ allomorph of the stem.

### 3.2.2. Perfective negative

This tense is characterized by a suffix *-iŕa* (glossed PFV.NEG) to which a class marker can optionally be added. The class marker may be realized as a distinct suffix, but it may also merge with the perfective negative marker, giving rise to the complex suffixes *-iŕo* (M), *-iŕe* (F, N, or NP), and *-iŕi* (HP).

The following variations are phonologically conditioned:

– the initial *i* of this suffix merges with an underlying *a* belonging to the stem according to the rule  $a + i \rightarrow \bar{e}$  (for example, the perfective negative of *č’oruŕa* ‘burn’, whose root has the underlying form  $|č’a(b)-|$ , is *č’ēŕa*);<sup>8</sup>

– with stems that select nasalized variants of affixes, the perfective negative ending occurs as *-iŕa* or *-ēŕa* (for example, the perfective negative of *q’onuŕa* ‘eat’, whose root has the underlying form  $|q’ã(m)-|$ , is *q’ēŕa*).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *h-ēni* is the realization of the underlying form  $|hĩ(j)-ari|$ .

<sup>6</sup> The underlying *i* responsible for this variation is apparent in the injunctive form *gwij-a*.

<sup>7</sup> When realized as a distinct segment, the HP suffix appears as *-ji*.

<sup>8</sup> The underlying *a* responsible for this variation is apparent in the injunctive form *č’ab-a*.

- (8) a. *ek'wa w-oq'-iλo*  
 man M-come-PFV.NEG.M  
 'The man did not come'
- b. *ek'wa-sw-emašina b-eχ-iλe*  
 man-OM-ERG car N-buy-PFV.NEG.N  
 'The man did not buy the car'

### 3.2.3. Imperfective positive

This tense is characterized by a suffix (glossed IPFV) whose basic allomorph is *-ida*, with the following variations:

- the initial *i* of this suffix merges with an underlying *a* belonging to the stem according to the rule  $a + i \rightarrow \bar{e}$  (for example, the imperfective positive of *č'ōruλa* 'burn', whose root has the underlying form  $|\check{c}'a(b)-|$ , is *č'ēda*);
- with stems that select nasalized variants of affixes, the imperfective positive ending occurs as *-īda* or *-ēda* (for example, the imperfective positive of *q'ōnuλa* 'eat', whose root has the underlying form  $|q'ā(m)-|$ , is *q'ēda*);
- if the S/P argument is human plural, the obligatory merging of a gender-number agreement mark results in the variant *-idi*; in the other classes, an optional class marker may be added to the suffix *-ida* or merge with it.

This tense refers to habitual events, or permanent facts, or events obligatorily occurring under certain conditions; it is in particular used in proverbs and riddles, as illustrated by ex. (9).<sup>10</sup>

- (9) a. *rač'iχe č'-eda č'-eda č'or-ida*  
 iron burn-IPFV(PTC) burn-IPFV(PTC) strike-IPFV  
 'One strikes the iron when it is hot'
- b. *bek-oqe xwaj-ida, xwan-oqe ūk-ida (qalica)*  
 snake-like crawl-IPFV horse-like eat-IPFV scythe  
 'It crawls like a snake, it eats like a horse (the scythe)'

### 3.2.4. Imperfective negative

This tense is characterized by a suffix *-ika* (glossed IPFV.NEG) to which a class marker can optionally be added. This optional class marker may be realized as a distinct suffix, but it may also merge with the imperfective negative marker, giving rise to the complex suffixes *-iko* (M), *-ike* (F, N, or NP), and *-iki* (HP).

The following variations are phonologically conditioned:

<sup>9</sup> The underlying *a* responsible for this variation is apparent in the injunctive form *q'am-a*.

<sup>10</sup> Note that in ex. (8a), this verb form occurs not only as the main predicate, but also as a participle in secondary predicate function.

– the initial *i* of this suffix merges with an underlying *a* belonging to the stem according to the rule  $a + i \rightarrow \bar{e}$  (for example, the imperfective negative of  $\check{c}'\bar{o}ru\lambda a$  ‘burn’, whose root has the underlying form  $|\check{c}'a(b)|$ , is  $\check{c}'\bar{e}ka$ );

– with stems that select nasalized variants of affixes, the imperfective positive ending occurs as  $-\bar{i}ka$  or  $-\bar{e}ka$  (for example, the perfective negative of  $q'\bar{o}nu\lambda a$  ‘eat’, whose root has the underlying form  $|q'\bar{a}(m)-|$ , is  $q'\bar{e}ka$ ).

(10) a. *ha ek'wa w-ošq-iko*  
 DEM man M-work-IPFV.NEG.M  
 ‘This man (usually) does not work’

b. *keta-le-de žomi q'-ēke*  
 cat.PL-ONP-ERG grass eat-IPFV.NEG.N  
 ‘Cats do not eat grass’

### 3.2.5. Narrative positive

This tense, mainly used in story telling, is marked by a suffix  $-iri$  (glossed NAR) to which no class mark can be added. Nasalization and merging with an underlying *a* belonging to the stem give rise to the variants  $-ini$ ,  $-\bar{e}ri$ , and  $-\bar{e}ni$ .

(11) a. *ek'wa w-oχuλ'-iri*  
 man M-rejoice-NAR  
 ‘The man rejoiced’

b. *ek'wa-sw-e riλ'i b-eχ-iri*  
 man-OM-ERG meat N-buy-NAR  
 ‘The man bought meat’

In Magobedbekova’s description of the variety of Akhvakh spoken in the Akhvakhskij Rajon of Daghestan, this tense is identified as ‘present’ (*nastojasščee*). In the variety of Akhvakh spoken in Axaxdərə, apart from its use in story telling, it has been observed also in modal contexts, in particular, in deontic questions (as in *či dede gwīri?* ‘What should I do?’). Historically, it may well be that this tense is an ancient present subsisting only in marginal uses that have no direct semantic connection between themselves anymore, but it has no use that would justify the label *present* in a synchronic description.

### 3.2.6. Narrative negative

This tense is marked by a suffix  $-iki$  (glossed NAR.NEG) to which class marks cannot be added. Nasalization and merging with an underlying *a* belonging to the stem give rise to the variants  $-\bar{i}ki$ ,  $-\bar{e}ki$ , and  $-\bar{e}ki$ .

- (12) a. *ek'wa w-oq'-iki*  
 man M-come-NAR.NEG  
 'The man did not come'
- b. *ek'wa-sw-e riλ'i q'-ēki*  
 man-OM-ERG meat eat-NAR.NEG  
 'The man did not eat the meat'

### 3.2.7. Potential

This tense is marked by a suffix *-uwa* (M, N, NP) ~ *-iwa* (F) ~ *-oji* (HP), glossed POT. The HP variant triggers the use of the long allomorph of the verb stems that have stem allomorphy. The initial vowels of the variants *-uwa* and *-iwa* interact with underlying *a*'s according to the usual rules (for example, the potential of *č'ōruλa* 'burn', whose root has the underlying form  $|\check{c}'a(b)-|$ , is *č'-ōwa* ~ *č'-ēwa* ~ *č'ab-oji*). The initial vowel of all variants undergoes nasalization when combining with nasalizing stems.

- (13) a. *du-λa kūλ-e m-ič-ala, de-ne w-oq'-uwa*  
 2S-DAT want-PCONV N-occur-COND 1S-ABS M-come-POT.N  
 'If you want, I can come'
- b. *du-λa kūλ-e m-ič-ala, de-de hudu-sw-a eλ'-uwa*  
 2S-DAT want-PCONV N-occur-COND 1S-ERG DEM-OM-DAT tell-POT.N  
 'If you want, I can tell him'

In Magobedbekova's description of the variety of Akhvakh spoken in the Akhvakhskij Rajon of Dagestan, this tense is identified as 'future' (*buduščee*), but this label does not account for its value in Axaxdərə Akhvakh. In Axaxdərə Akhvakh, the only verb form qualifying as a future is an analytic form – see section 3.3.

The potential has no negative counterpart.

### 3.2.8. Injunctive

As illustrated by ex. (13), the injunctive is characterized by a suffix *-a* (glossed INJ) triggering the use of the long allomorph of stems having stem allomorphy. No class marker can be added to this suffix.

- (14) a. *(me-ne) čab-a*  
 2S-ABS wash-INJ  
 'Wash!'
- b. *(me-de) riλ'i q'am-a*  
 2S-ERG meat eat-INJ  
 'Eat the meat!'

### 3.2.9. Prohibitive

The prohibitive is characterized by a suffix *-uba* (glossed PROHIB) whose initial vowel shows the usual interactions with the verb stem. Contrary to its positive counterpart, the prohibitive does not trigger the use of the long allomorph of stems having stem allomorphy.

(15) a. *(me-ne) č-ōba*  
2S -ABS wash-INJ  
'Don't wash!'

b. *(me-de) riλ'i q'-ōba*  
2S -ERG meat eat-INJ  
'Don't eat the meat!'

### 3.2.10. Optative

The optative is formed by adding the suffix *-λ'a* (glossed OPT) to the injunctive (optative positive) or the prohibitive (optative negative).

(16) a. *di mina-λi-ga ič'a b-ux-a-λ'a*  
1S.O head-OF/N-LAT stone N-fall-INJ-OPT  
'Let a stone fall on my head!'

b. *alla-sw-e harig-ōba-λ'a*  
god-OM-ERG see-CAUS.PROHIB-OPT  
'Heaven forbid!' (lit. Let God not show [that]!)

The optative positive has a variant *-ũča(-λ'a)*.

### 3.2.11. Past evidential

The past evidential is marked by a suffix *-uwi* (M) ~ *-iwi* (F) ~ *-awi* (N, NP), glossed EVID. Morphologically, the paradigm of this tense is defective: it lacks a specific HP form, and in contexts in which a HP form of the past evidential would be expected (i.e., when somebody reports events (s)he has not witnessed), the HP form (*-i goli*) of the analytic perfect illustrated by ex. (17c) below is used instead. The initial vowels of the past evidential markers interact with underlying *a*'s or *i*'s according to the usual rules, and undergo nasalization when combining with nasalizing stems.

The negative marker *-iλ-* can be inserted between the verb stem and the past evidential marker.

- (17) *če-we w-uk'-uwi, če-we w-uk'-iλ-uwi,*  
 one-M M-be-EVID.M one-M M-be-NEG-EVID.M  
*če molla rasadi w-uk'-uwi*  
 one Molla Rasadi M-be-EVID.M  
 'Once upon a time there was a man called Molla Rasadi'

### 3.2.12. Interrogative verb forms

Verb forms different from those used in assertive utterances sporadically occur in interrogative contexts. They are relatively frequent in questions involving *čugu* 'why', but informants seem often reluctant to reproduce them systematically in elicitation. It seems probable that these forms are becoming obsolete, and that speakers maintain them mainly in ready-made sentences, without being able to use them in a productive way anymore.

### 3.3. Analytic verb forms

Analytic verb forms involve the copula<sup>11</sup> or the verb *<b>ik'uruλa* 'be' in auxiliary function. In the future form illustrated by ex. (18a), the auxiliated verb is in the imperfective form presented in section 3.2.3 above; in other analytic verb forms, the auxiliated verb is in a dependent form, imperfective converb in the present – ex. (18b) – or perfective converb in the perfect – ex. (18c).

- (18) a. *de-de mik'eli č-eda golidi*  
 1S-ERG child.PL wash-IPFV COP.HP  
 'I am going to wash the children'
- b. *de-de kitabi qwar-ere gwede*  
 1S-ERG book read-ICONV COP.N  
 'I am reading a book'
- c. *keto-de riλ'i q'am-e godi*  
 cat-ERG meat eat-PCONV COP.N  
 'The cat has eaten the meat'

## 4. Dependent verb forms

The infinitive (marked by a suffix *-uruλa* with a short variant *-u* and an extended variant *-uruλaje*) is a strictly dependent verb form in the sense that the phrases it heads have the same structure as independent clauses, but occur only as clausal constituents in complex structures.

<sup>11</sup> Akhvakh has a copula whose inflection is limited to gender-number and negation; this defectiveness is compensated by the use of *<b>ik'uruλa* 'be', which shows fully regular verb inflection.

The same can be said of converbs. Like other Daghestanian languages, Akhvakh has a large array of converbs. In addition to two converbs with very general meanings, the imperfective converb (glossed *ICONV*) and the perfective converb (glossed *PCONV*), Akhvakh has a number of converbs with more specialized meanings (several temporal converbs expressing various types of temporal relations between events, conditional converb, concessive converb, comparative converb, consecutive converb, and causal converb).

By contrast, the recognition of a masdar is problematic in Akhvakh. Akhvakh clearly has verbal nouns cognate with forms having the status of masdar in other Andic languages, but with the exception of the relative case (which is therefore better analyzed as having grammaticalized as a causal converb), they are used as ordinary nouns, and retain verbal properties very marginally.

## 5. Participles

If participles are defined as verb forms used in a particular type of relativization strategy,<sup>12</sup> there is no difficulty recognizing four participles in Akhvakh (perfective positive, perfective negative, imperfective positive, and imperfective negative). This means that these four verb forms can head pre-nominal relative clauses, showing at the same time the same characteristics as attributive adjectives with respect to their relation to a head noun.<sup>13</sup> Participle phrases can be used in predicate function or nominalized in the same way as adjective phrases, and participles take agreement suffixes and case inflection exactly like adjectives.

Like nominalized adjectives, participles occur in free relatives with class suffixes in the absolutive case, and with an oblique stem formative followed by a case suffix in other cases, as illustrated by ex. (19).

- (19) a. *di-λa kw-ĩda heresi m-ač-ika mik'eli*  
 1S-DAT like-IPFV lie N-tell-IPFV.NEG(PTC) child.PL  
 'I like children who do not tell lies'
- b. *di-λa kw-ĩda heresi m-ač-iki-ji*  
 1S-DAT like-IPFV lie N-tell-IPFV.NEG(PTC)-HP  
 'I like those who do not tell lies'
- c. *de-ne buž-ida heresi m-ač-ika ãdo-lo-ga*  
 1S-ABS believe-IPFV lie N-tell-IPFV.NEG(PTC) person.PL-OHP-LAT  
 'I believe people who do not tell lies'

<sup>12</sup> On participial constructions as a relative clause formation strategy, see in particular *Comrie & Polinsky 1999*.

<sup>13</sup> Akhvakh also has a correlative relative clause construction, but it is much less usual than the participial construction.

- d. *de-ne buž-ida heresi m-ač-iko-lo-ga*  
 1S-ABS believe-IPFV lie N-tell-IPFV.NEG(PTC) -OHP-LAT  
 ‘I believe those who do not tell lies’

The problem is that the verb forms used in relative clauses with a clearly adjectival behavior in their relation with the noun modified by the relative clause also occur in independent clauses with a behavior that does not distinguish them from the other independent verb forms.

As indicated by the gloss IPFV.NEG(PTC) ‘imperfective negative used as a participle’, the verb form illustrated in ex. (19) with a typically participial behavior is identical with the independent form of the imperfective negative presented in section 3.2.4, and the other three forms occurring in relative clauses in which they show exactly the same behavior coincide in the same way with one of the independent verb forms listed in section 3.2: the perfective positive – ex. (20), the perfective negative – ex. (21), or the imperfective positive – ex. (22).

- (20) a. *de-de lāga r-eχ-ada*  
 1S-ERG sheep.PL NP-buy-PFV1D/2Q  
 ‘I bought sheep’
- b. *di-λa harigw-iλa lāga r-eχ-ada ek’wa*  
 1S-DAT see-PFV.NEG sheep.PL NP-buy-PFV.PTC man  
 ‘I did not see the man who bought sheep’
- c. *eq-a lāga r-eχ-ada ek’wa-su-ga*  
 look at-INF sheep.PL NP-buy-PFV.PTC man -OM-LAT  
 ‘Look at the man who bought sheep’
- d. *di-λa harigw-iλa lāga r-eχ-ada-we*  
 1S-DAT see-PFV.NEG sheep.PL NP-buy-PFV.PTC-M  
 ‘I did not see the one who bought sheep’
- e. *eq-a lāga r-eχ-ada-su-ga*  
 look at-INF sheep.PL NP-buy-PFV.PTC-OM-LAT  
 ‘Look at the one who bought sheep’
- (21) a. *ha ek’wa w-ošq-iλa*  
 DEM man M-work-PFV.NEG  
 ‘This man did not work’
- b. *w-ošq-iλa ek’wa du waci gudi*  
 M-work-PFV.NEG(PTC) man 2S.O brother COP.M  
 ‘The man who did not work is your brother’

c. *ačĭ o-x-uba w-ošq-iłā ek'wa-su-ga*  
 money N-give-PROHIB M-work-PFV.NEG(PTC) man-OM-LAT  
 ‘Don’t give money to the man who did not work’

d. *w-ošq-iłā-we du waci gudi*  
 M-work-PFV.NEG(PTC) -M 2S.O brother COP.M  
 ‘The one who did not work is your brother’

e. *ačĭ o-x-uba w-ošq-iłā-su-ga*  
 money N-give-PROHIB M-work-PFV.NEG(PTC)-OM-LAT  
 ‘Don’t give money to the one who did not work’

(22) a. *di-łā kw-ĩda ha č'ili b-eχ-urułā*  
 1S-DAT want-IPFV DEM house N-buy-INF  
 ‘I want to buy this house’

b. *du-łā b-eχ-urułā kw-ĩda č'ili rešeda godi*  
 2S-DAT N-buy-INF want-IPFV(PTC) house nice COP.N  
 ‘The house you want to buy is nice’

c. *eq-a di-łā b-eχ-urułā kw-ĩda č'ili-łi-ga*  
 look at-INF 1S-DAT N-buy-INF want-IPFV(PTC) house-OF/N-LAT  
 ‘Look at the house I want to buy’

d. *du-łā b-eχ-urułā kw-ĩda-be rešeda godi*  
 2S-DAT N-buy-INF want-IPFV(PTC)-N nice COP.N  
 ‘The one you want to buy is nice’

e. *eq-a di-łā b-eχ-urułā kw-ĩda-łi-ga*  
 look at-INF 1S-DAT N-buy-INF want-IPFV(PTC)-OF/N-LAT  
 ‘Look at the one I want to buy’

Note however that, in the perfective positive, the form used as a participle is invariably the form with the suffix *-ada*, irrespective of person distinctions, whereas in independent clauses, this form implies the presence of a 1st person A / S<sub>A</sub> in declarative clauses, or of a 2nd person A / S<sub>A</sub> in questions. This is the reason why the suffix *-ada* is glossed PFV1D/2Q in independent clauses (in which it contrasts with *-ari* indicating the presence of a 3rd person controller or the absence of any potential controller), and PFV.PTC in participial relative clauses (in which *-ari* cannot occur).

But with this only reservation, the verb forms encountered in participial relative clauses are always identical with the forms that would occur in the corresponding independent clauses.

## 6. Discussion

Generally speaking, the notion of finiteness in its current meaning of a correlation between the degree of morphological completeness and the syntactic abilities of verb forms is hardly applicable to Akhvakh, since there is no clear-cut distinction between the morphological characteristics of the independent verb forms presented in section 3 and those of the dependent verb forms presented in section 4 (infinitive and converbs):

– independent verb forms show no homogeneity in their indexation properties (person agreement is found in one tense only, and some of the TAM suffixes characteristic of independent verb forms forbid the addition of gender-number suffixes), and suffixes expressing gender-number agreement are found in several converbs too;<sup>14</sup>

– concerning TAM inflection, given the variety of converbs in Akhvakh, in this respect too it is difficult to consider them to have reduced inflectional possibilities in comparison with independent verb forms.

Consequently, we must conclude that finiteness *in its current meaning of a correlation between the degree of morphological completeness and the syntactic abilities of verb forms* is not a universal notion.<sup>15</sup> In particular, it is not relevant to the description of Akhvakh.

But on the other hand, it follows from the data presented in section 5 that the notion of participle *in the sense of verb form involved in a particular type of relativization strategy* is undoubtedly relevant to Akhvakh. This results in a contradiction within the frame of the current conception according to which *participle* is a subtype of the more general type *non-finite verb form*, since the forms in question are not morphologically deficient, and occur not only within the frame of the participial relativization strategy, but also as heads of independent clauses.

The only way to resolve this contradiction is either to revise the notion of finiteness, or to reformulate the definition of *participle* in such a way that the status of participle can be recognized, in some of their uses, to forms otherwise able to act as heads of independent clauses. Whatever the decision concerning the definition of *finiteness*, given the Akhvakh data analyzed in this paper, it is certainly a sound decision to eliminate from the definition of *participle* the condition that forms having a typically participial behavior in at least some of their uses should be morphologically deficient and unable to head independent clauses.

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to show on the basis of Akhvakh data that the elimination of negative conditions from the definition of *participle* is made necessary by the

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<sup>14</sup> In this respect, the situation of Akhvakh is very different from that of languages like Turkish, in which the obligatoriness of person agreement in independent verb forms sharply contrasts with the absence of person agreement in converbs.

<sup>15</sup> I do not exclude the possibility to reformulate the definition of finiteness in a way that could make it applicable to all languages, including Akhvakh, but discussing this question would take us outside the scope of this paper.

existence of verb forms occurring both in complex constructions with a typically participial behavior, and in independent clauses in which nothing distinguishes them from independent verb forms devoid of participial uses. Such a decision is consistent with a more general principle according to which it is better to avoid negative conditions in the definition of categories, since they often forbid a satisfying account of situations in which the same words occur in some contexts with properties identifying them as members of a given category, but are also found in other contexts with properties typical of another category.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

1/2 : 1st/ 2nd pers. agreement marker  
1S : 1st pers. sing. pronoun  
2S : 2nd pers. sing. pronoun  
1PE : 1st pers. pl. (excl.) pronoun  
1PI : 1st pers. pl. (incl.) pronoun  
2P : 2nd pers. pl. pronoun  
ABS : absolutive  
CAUS : causative  
COND : conditional converb  
COP : copula  
DAT : dative  
DEM : demonstrative  
EL : elative  
ERG : ergative  
ESS : essive  
EVID : past evidential  
F : singular human feminine  
GEN : genitive  
HP : human plural  
ICONV : imperfective converb  
INESS : inessive  
INF : infinitive  
INJ : injunctive  
IPFV : imperfective  
LAT : lative  
M : singular human masculine  
N : singular non-human (neuter)  
NAR : narrative  
NEG : negation  
NP : non-human (neuter) plural  
O : oblique stem  
OF/N : oblique stem, singular feminine or neuter

OHP : oblique stem, human plural  
OM : oblique stem, singular masculine  
ONP : oblique stem, non-human plural  
OPT : optative  
PCONV : perfective converb  
PFV : perfective  
PL : plural  
POT : potential  
PROHIB : prohibitive  
PTC : participle  
(PTC) : used as a participle

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