Conjunction particles in Nakh-Daghestanian - topic, focus or something else?

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1. Introduction

Nakh-Daghestanian (Caucasus, Russia) languages make heavily use of conjunction particles. In this talk, I focus on two languages from different subbranches, Hinuq (particle =*n(o)*) and Sanzhi Dargi (=*ra*). The data comes from natural texts collected by myself.

Previous accounts

- Polinsky & Potsdam (2001) analyze Tsez =*n* as topic marker
- Nichols & Peterson (2010) present a survey of several languages and list 'emphatic and/or contrastive focus' as one of the possible functions
- van den Berg (2004) 'additive focus marker'
- in Russian grammars described as 'discourse coherence particle', 'intensifying particle', 'emphatic particle'

2. Functions of conjunction particles in Nakh-Daghestanian

- non-derivational functions:
    1. coordination (phrase level)
    2. clause chaining
    3. additive function 'also, even'
    4. topic switch/contrastive function
- derivational uses:
    5. concessive converbs
    6. anterior converbs (Hinuq)
    7. indefinite pronouns
    8. collective numerals

and occasionally also
    9. direct cardinal numerals 2-10 (Hinuq, Tsez, Bezhta, Dargi languages)
    10. part of comitative marker (Godoberi, eventually Avar)

11. optative (in Avar imperative + conjunction particle)

Concessive clauses/converbs
- usually formed by adding the conjunction particle to the conditional converb (*also/even + if = even if, although, though*)

Indefinite pronouns
- WH-pronouns + conjunction particles
- positive polarity: universal indefinite pronouns (*who + also/even = everybody*)
- negative polarity: negative indefinite pronouns (*nobody, anybody*)

Collective numerals
- cardinal numeral + conjunction particle = both, all three, all four, etc.

3. Grammatical functions
3.1. Coordination
- at the phrase level, e.g. NPs

3.2. Clause chaining
- 'and/then' structures consisting of complex clauses with at least one adverbial clause (containing a converb) and one finite clause
- the conjunction particle occurs on an item in the adverbial clause
- the structure is semantically similar to coordination, but syntactically nevertheless subordination
- in Hinuq the chaining function is pretty much lexicalized and fixed (5a)
- in Sanzhi Dargi apparently less frequent (than in Hinuq)

(1)   Sanzhi Dargi

c'il = **ra**   hel-tːi   bahla.bahlal   ʁaj = **ra**   d-aχ-ur-re,
then = and   this-PL   slowly   language = and   NPL-know-PRET-CVB

bahla.bahlal   islužba = **ra**   b-iqː-ul …
slowly   service = and   N-carry.IPFV-ICVB
'And then slowly I got to know this language, and I did my (military) service.'

2

4. Functions related to information structure

4.1. Additive function 'also, even'

- similar to 'focus sensitive' additive particles, e.g. English *also* (cf. König 1990)

-> the speaker presupposes an alternative proposition in which the constituent in the scope of the additive particle is replaced by a contextually relevant alternative

- normally added to nominals, adverbials, adjectives, but in Sanzhi also to verbs (3b)

- 'pure type' fulfills the "identity requirement" (van Putten 2013)

- the pure type is only occasionally attested in texts (2a, b)

(2)   Hinuq [People joked with the two friends.]

    a. maxsara-mo-z   hazey=**no**   maxsara-mo-ƛ'o-ɬun   žawab

       joke-OB-DAT   1pl.ERG=and   joke-OBL-SPR-AS   answer

       toƛ-o   zoq'we-n

       give-ICVB   be-UWPST

       'And they also answered a joke with a joke.'

    b. Sanzhi Dargi [Was grandfather the oldest son?]

       atːa-jar   χula-te=**ra**   b-irχ-i

       father-AS   big-ATTR.PL=and   HPL-be.IPFV-PST.HAB

       'There were also older ones than grandfather.'

- for Hinuq or Sanzhi there does not seem to be an identity requirement (the same for other languages, e.g. Avatime, van Putten 2013)

- it is rather a more general requirement of similarity or compatibility

- the meaning of =*n* and =*ra* is broader and less specific than the meaning of 'also'

(3)   Hinuq [the stepmother sends the witch in order to poison the stepdaughter]

    a. hibadu   iši=**n**   b-iž-o=ƛen   eƛi-n   hayɬuz

       this   apple(III)   III-take-IMP=QUOT   say-CVB   3sg.F.DAT

       'And take also this apple for her!'

       - there is nothing else that she should take

       -> do this (=go there) and do that (=bring her the apple)

b. Sanzhi Dargi [a man and an official discuss a matter]

il   q:ulluq:=**ra**   arz-aq-an=da

this   matter=and   solve.IPFV-CAUS-OBLG=1

'We will also solve this matter.'

- in the context there is no other matter that was or needs to be solved

-> we have always solved problems, we will also solve this one

- scope: over the word to which it is added, or if this is the head of a phrase, then over the whole phrase

(3)   Hinuq [the house of the youngest sister turned to ashes (i.e. burned down)]

a. yoλodemuni   essu-zo=**n**   beλe.s   y-iq-no   yoλu

middle   sister-GEN=and   house.GEN   IV-become-UWPST   ashes(IV)

'And also the house of the middle sister turned to ashes.'

-> 1) the same happened to another sister (scope: *middle sister*)

-> 2) the house of the middle brother burnt down (scope: *sister*)

b. Sanzhi Dargi [Grandfather did every work.]

libil-li-j   kumek   b-irq'-i=**ra**

all<HPL>-OBL-DAT   help   N-do.IPFV-PST.HAB=and

'(He) also helped everybody.'

- another 'focus sensitive' use: scalar additive particle, e.g. English *even*
- presupposes that there are alternatives to the item marked with the particle, and the marked item is the least likely among the set of alternatives
- interacts with polarity, i.e. in a negative clause the marked item is the most likely among the alternatives
- in Sanzhi Dargwa frequently in the combination with *hati* 'more'
- in Hinuq not very common (the language has another particle with this meaning)

(4)   Hinuq [A boy tries hard to learn the Quran by heart, but he fails.]

hes   roži=**n**   rok'-λ'o   r-iči-yo   gom

one   word=and   heart.OBL-SPR   V-be-ICVB   be.NEG

'He remembers not even one word.'

4.2. Topic switch/contrast

- the conjunction particles are used to switch the topic of the narration
- not very frequent in Hinuq and Sanzhi Dargi (Hinuq has other particles more commonly used in this function, but very often a simple topic switch is unmarked)
- despite a topic shift the utterance gets connected to the previous one by means of the particle (*X does something. And Y does something. ->* the action of X and Y are not disconnected, but relate to each other, e.g. because Y is the reaction to X, or Y is the result of X, etc.)

(5)   Hinuq [After that the horse flies away.]

a. uži=**n**   [ɣwede=n   qeši-n]   ø-aq'-o   iduddo
   boy(I)=and   day=and   become.bright-CVB   I-come-PRS   home
   'And the boy, when the day becomes bright, goes home.'

b. Sanzhi Dargi [The fox said to Patimat: Do such and such!]
   "ʔaˤħ-le"   r-ik'-ul=ca-r   Pat'ima=**ra**   razi
    good-ADVZ   F-say.IPFV-ICVB=be-F   Patima=and   agree

   r-iχ-ub=ca-r
   F-be.PFV-PRET=be-F
   'And Patima agreed saying "Good."'

- contrast: extreme case of a topic switch: the topic is not just simply switched (changed) but changed and contrasted
- contrast indicates the presence of alternatives (the present situation/referent is contrasted with an alternative situation/referent that is often already mentioned in the discourse) (Krifka 1999: 113)
- thus, semantically similar to additive particles
- contrast (Repp 2010): at least one identifiable alternative in the context available

(6)   Hinuq [The king is calling for all young heroes to come to his palace. Three
        brothers talk about this.]

a. elu-qo   gulu-be=**n**   gom,   elu-qo-zo   hayi
   1pl.OBL-AT   horse-PL=and   be.NEG   1pl.OBL-AT-ABL2   such

hunar = **no**   b-iq-me

ability = and   III-happen-NEG

'We do not have horses, and we do not have such an ability.'

- in contrast to the other men, the heroes

b. Sanzhi Dargi [the speaker talks about people from the neighboring village who have moved to the lowlands]

itːi   itwaj = **ra**   ʔuˤrusː-e   ʁunab-te = ca-b   hana = **ra**

3pl   like.this = and   Russian-PL   like-ATTR.PL = be-HPL   now = and

'And now also they are like Russians.'

-> they were earlier like Russians (as he described earlier in his narration)

- in contrast to us, we are different from them

5. Summary and cross-linguistic comparsion

- not really possible to give a unified account of all different functions (derivational, coordination, chaining, additive focus-sensitive use, topic switch/contrastive use)

- though the different functions seem to have a common core

- conjunction particles are not 'topic markers' or 'focus markers'

- the functional load is nearly identical in Hinuq and Sanzhi, but frequencies differ

    - Hinuq: 50 chaining examples, 17 'also/even' examples from 100 clauses

    - Sanzhi Dargi: 20 chaining examples, 33 'also/even' examples from 100 clauses

- similar particles are attested in a number of other languages of the world, but the exact functional range is variable

    - Turkish *-dA/-dE* (Haig 2001, Göksel & Özsoy 2003, Göksel & Kerslake 2005)

    - Amharic *-mm* (Demeke & Meyer 2008)

    - Central Kurdish *-īš* (Öpengin 2013)

    - Laz, Kurmanji, Zazaki (Haig 2001)

    - Persian *-hœm* (Stilo 2004)

    - Sanskrit *api*, Dravidian **-um* (Emeneau 1980, Lehmann 1993) (e.g. Tamil = *um*, Malayam = *um*, Kannada *u*)

    - Gooniyandi = *ngaddaya* (McGregor 1990: 478-482)

    - Avatime (Kwa) *tsyɛ* (van Putten 2013)

    - Karbi (Tibeto-Burman) = *tā* (Konnert 2013)

	coll. num.	indef.	concess.	'also'	topic switch	NP coordination	chaining
Hinuq, Sanzhi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Amharic	distr.	+	+	+	+	+	
Tamil	+	+	+	+		+	
Turkish		-	+	+	+	+ (also clause coordination)	
Persian		(+)		+	+	clause coordination	
Gooniyandi		+		+			
Avatime				+	+		
Karbi				+	+		

- the existence of such particles has been claimed to constitute an areal feature for India (Emeneau 1980) and East Anatolia (Haig 2001)
- in the light of the frequency with which such particles occur these claims are dubious

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