Converbs are infinite verb forms, the main function of which is to express adverbial subordination [1, p. 3]. The purpose of this paper is to analyze Northern Selkup converbs from a synchronic functional-typological and areal perspective. The most frequent of Northern Selkup converbs is the contextual monofunctional varying-subject converb -lä, which denotes not only manner, but also means, temporal simultaneity, concomitance, close anteriority, purpose, reason and condition, e.g. (1) süryl'-lä ‘hunting, by hunting, when hunting, having hunted (etc.)’ < ‘hunt-CONV’. The analytic converbal construction -lä pülä prototypically denotes anterior action, but it can have an implicational causative or conditional meaning as well: (2) äsä-n-y qu-lä pülä man aps-qa qu-mpak ‘after my father died, I almost starved to death’ < ‘father-GEN-POSS.1SG die-CONV after I-NOM food-TRANSL die-NARR’ [2, p. 257]. There is a negative converb with the ending -ku. It prototypically denotes negative concomitance: (3) kty-künc qu-lyk tů pįył-pa ‘he turned away without saying a word’ < ‘say-CONV PREV turn.away-NARR’ [2, p. 257]. Previously only these three have been regarded as converbs [2, 3, 4]. Yet, infinite expressions of purpose, being optional adverbial modifiers in the clause, can also be defined as converbs. The purposive converb of Northern Selkup has been called a (possessive) infinitive [2, 3, 4]. It is formed by adding a possessive suffix and the translative case suffix to the basic infinitive, which is also marked with a transitive case suffix: (4) mě-qa-no-qa ‘in order (for me) to do’ < ‘do-INF-POSS.1SG-TRANSL’ [5, p.142]. There is overlap between the functions of the two infinitives, but the reinforced form appears more often in a purposive function, less frequently as a complement and never as a subject. The verbal noun -ptä is used to express adverbial subordination in inflected forms or with adpositions. Also the verbal noun -ku appears adverbially with several different adpositions. These constructions can be considered as converbs despite their compositionality. The locative case form of -ptä expresses simultaneity, e.g. (5) qu-ptä-qyt ‘while dying’ < ‘die-VN-LOC’; the translative case form expresses reason, e.g. (6) ući-ptä-nō-qa ‘because I worked’ < ‘work-VN-POSS.1SG-TRANSL’; simultaneous time is expressed with the adposition kunty, e.g. (7) sum-ptä-ŋty kunty ‘during his singing’ < ‘sing-VN-GEN-POSS.3SG’ [2, p. 392]. The verbal noun -ku expresses terminative temporality with the adposition tōnty, e.g. (8) ācy-s-ak quky-n-y tōnty ‘I worked until death’ < ‘work-PAST-1SG die-vn-GEN-POSS.1SG until’ [2, p. 253]. Selkup belongs to the Eurasian type of subordination having a rich system of converbs [see 6]. The areal tendency may also explain why the five participles of Selkup do not seem to be used adverbially, unlike the participles of European languages which often function as converbs [see 7]. Narrative use of converbs, typical to some Eastern languages [8, p. 109], is not found in Northern Selkup, probably due to the lack of major Turkic influence.

Abbreviations: 2/3 = 2nd and 3rd person, CONV = converb suffix, GEN = genitive case, INF = infinitive suffix, LOC = locative case, NARR = past narrative tense, NOM = nominative case, PAST = past tense, POSS = possessive suffix, PREV = preverb, TRANSL = translative case, VN = verbal noun suffix, SG = singular.
REFERENCES


