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Past habitual actions as relative future? On an unexpected use of the Konkani future participle and its likely origin

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In this paper we focus on the functions of the future participle in Goan Konkani. In addition to the more-or-less expected functions of a future participle, such as nominal attribution or marking a future or modal predicate in various subordinate and main clauses, the future participle in Konkani can also mark main predicates with a past habitual interpretation in a construction which we refer to as the “*promise-construction*”, as it is only found with a small class of main predicates such as *promise, intend, think*, etc., which take an object complement clause. We argue that the future participle originally denoted an atemporal event and later came to include habitual events with any temporal value (past, present or future), and that this has since grammaticalized with exclusively past habitual temporal reference in this one construction, as this was likely the most common environment in which habitual events of this semantic class of verbs occur.

Keywords: “promise-verbs”, past-habitual, future participle, relative future, grammaticalization

1. Introduction

In this paper we discuss the future participle in Standard Goan Konkani, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the state of Goa, located on the central western Indian coast. As is to be expected for a category referred to as a “future participle”, verbal predicates marked as future participles can be used as nominal attributes, to negate the future tense in a periphrastic construction, and are also found in different types of subordination involving events with relative-future reference, habitual/atemporal reference, or to express obligation in main clauses.

With a small class of predicates in main clauses, however, the future participle in Konkani expresses past habituality. These predicates denote *promise, intend, think*, etc.,

and take a complement clause denoting a subsequent event. We refer to these predicates as “*promise-predicates*” and the construction in which the main predicate is marked as a future participle with past habitual reference as the “*promise-construction*”, for the sake of brevity.

After providing a brief overview of the first five of the six functions of the future participle in Konkani, which are rather straightforward, we discuss the sixth function in detail, where we find what at first glance appears to be the “wrong” tense marker of the predicate of the main clause. We argue that the future participle originally denoted an atemporal event and later came to include habitual events with any temporal value (past, present or future) and that this has since grammaticalized with exclusively past habitual temporal reference in this one construction, as this was likely the most common environment in which habitual events of this semantic class of verbs occur.

The remainder of this study is structured as follows. In Section 2 we provide a brief overview of Standard Goan Konkani before turning in Section 3 to the first five functions of the future participle in Konkani which are all compatible with a future or habitual/atemporal interpretation of this form. The past habitual use of the future participle in the *promise-construction* is then presented in Section 4, with the analysis of this construction and how it likely arose discussed in Section 5. Section 6 then summarizes the discussion and mentions a number of open questions.

2. A brief overview of Konkani

This study deals with the status of the future participle in Standard Goan Konkani, referred to in the following simply as “Konkani”. The *Ethnologue* (Eberhard et al. 2022) lists Goan Konkani as an individual language of the macro-language ‘Konkani’, spoken along roughly half the Indian west coast by a user population of 3,630,000 in India and 3,707,000 in all countries in 2000.

Konkani is the official language of the state of Goa on the central western coast of India, the only region where it is spoken by a majority of the population. Outside of Goa it is spoken as a minority language throughout a narrow strip of land along the west coast from the state of Maharashtra in the north, through Goa and much of coastal Karnataka to the south. There are also small pockets of Konkani in and near Pune and Mumbai in Maharashtra and Cochin in the southwestern state of Kerala (cf. Almeida 1989: 5-7). Konkani is thus in close contact with the Indo-Aryan language Marathi in Maharashtra, and the Dravidian languages Kannada and Tulu in Karnataka and Malayalam in Kerala.

Despite its status as a scheduled language,¹ comparatively little descriptive work has yet been done on Konkani. One reason is that Konkani is a “macro-language”, defined by Eberhard et al. (2022) as “multiple, closely related individual languages that are

¹ The expression “scheduled languages” refers to the (at present) 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution which enjoy a privileged status in education and administration, etc.

deemed in some usage contexts to be a single language.² Hence much of the work which has been done on “Konkani” is not on the Standard Goan dialect but either on non-Goan Konkani varieties³ or on non-standard varieties of Goan Konkani.⁴ While many of these varieties do not differ greatly from Standard Goan Konkani, there are nevertheless differences with respect to lexicon and morphosyntax, so that the information they contain is not always applicable to Standard Goan Konkani. Also, the few works which have appeared on Standard Goan Konkani in English and which are widely available are generally either contributions to larger volumes and thus necessarily limited with respect to the amount of detail which they can discuss (e.g. Miranda 2003) or are books for language learners and written in Devanagari, such as Almeida (2004), so that they are not accessible to those who do not read this script. An exception here is Katre (1966), who provides an overview of the phonology, morphology and syntax of Konkani as a macrolanguage (in today’s terminology), covering three Hindu and three Christian dialects, including Goan varieties. Unfortunately for our purposes, such an overview is necessarily somewhat superficial with respect to any one particular variety. We hope that the present study will contribute at least somewhat to further documenting the standard dialect of Goa.

Konkani has a split ergative alignment system, with the “transitive subject” (A) appearing in the ergative in the simple past tense and in the perfect, while the “intransitive subject” (S) in these categories appears in the nominative. In all other finite verbal categories such as the present, future, and the past imperfective, S and A both appear in the direct case. The “object” (O) can either appear in the nominative or in the objective case, depending on the animacy and definiteness of O. Thus, Konkani has both differential agent marking (DAM) as well as differential object marking (DOM). S also shows variable marking, as it appears in the ergative with certain nonfinite forms, such as the future participle, and in the nominative elsewhere.

With respect to verb agreement, and simplifying somewhat, the verb agrees in person, number and in some categories in gender with a nominative-case marked S or A, if present, or with the nominative-case marked O in the past, in the present / past perfect or with the future participle. If there is no nominative form with which it can agree, the predicate appears in the 3rd person singular, neuter, the default form.

All nouns in Konkani have two stems in both the singular and the plural, referred to here as the “direct stem” and the “oblique stem”. The direct stem is the citation form and also serves as the unmarked nominative case. The oblique stem is the stem to which case markers attach.⁵ There are at least 33 different nominal inflectional classes and

² <https://www.ethnologue.com/about/problem-language-identification#MacroLgsID> [last accessed: 18 March, 2022].

³ E.g. Almeida (1989) on Christian Karnataka Konkani or the various different forms of Konkani in Ghatage (1963; 1965; 1966; 1968) although some researchers view at least some of these varieties as Marathi dialects.

⁴ Such as Almeida (2012), dealing with the Christian Bardeshi dialect of North Goa or Ghatage (1972) and Karapurkar (1968) on the variety spoken by the Gauda tribe.

⁵ The difference between postpositions and case markers is that postpositions require the genitive, dative or ablative case whereas case markers always attach directly to the oblique stem of the noun.

subclasses with respect to the direct and oblique stems (cf. Peterson, 2022).⁶ (1)-(3) present a few simple examples of these stems. Nouns, adjectives and participles all mark for oblique/direct-stem status.

<u>Direct stem</u>	<u>Oblique stem</u>	<u>Oblique stem plus case marker</u>
(1) <i>far</i> ‘city’	<i>far-a</i>	<i>far-a=k</i> ‘to the city’ (=k ‘OBJECT marker’)
(2) <i>ghan</i> ‘rubbish’	<i>ghan-i</i>	<i>ghan-i=nt</i> ‘in the rubbish’ (=nt ‘INESS’)
(3) <i>fa a</i> ‘school’	<i>fa e</i>	<i>fa -e=k</i> ‘to the school’

Simplifying somewhat, Konkani has ten cases, all encoded enclitically.⁷ These are given together with their respective markers in Table 1. As noted above, with the exception of the unmarked nominative, all case markers attach to the oblique stem. The various genitive markers given in Table 1 agree with the noun they refer to in terms of gender, number and direct/oblique-stem status.

3. The relative-future and habitual/temporal functions of the future participle in Konkani

The morpheme that derives future participles from verbs in Konkani is homophonous with, and derives from, the enclitic genitive marker =c + number/gender marking. The use of a morpheme homophonous with, and deriving from, the genitive to form participles from verbs is also found in other languages of the region such as neighboring Kannada and many other Dravidian languages, where the marker of the relative participle derives from the homophonous genitive marker.⁸ It is thus likely that this form has been “copied” from Kannada into Konkani by bilinguals in long-term, stable bilingualism (cf. e.g. the discussion in Peterson, 2022). This form is referred to by Miranda (2003: 747) as the “simple participle”, however as its main function at least in the modern Goan Standard is to denote (relative) future tense (see below), we follow Almeida (1989: 191) and also Katre (1966: 156, §289)⁹ in referring to it as the future participle.

⁶ For the sake of intelligibility, these oblique markers will simply be glossed in this study as ‘OBL’, and gender and number will only be included in the respective gloss where they help clarify the example.

⁷ The case system is actually more complex than shown here, but the ten cases given in Table 1 will suffice for our discussion in this study. Also, the number of cases assumed depends on the definition of “case” used in the respective study. This topic will be discussed in more detail in Peterson & Mopkar (forthcoming).

⁸ Cf. e.g. Kittel (1903: 119, §185) on Kannada and Caldwell (1856: 414-416) on Dravidian languages in general. There are differences however; the genitive marker in Konkani attaches either directly to the stem or to the stem extended by the semantically empty linker /ū/, whereas e.g. in Kannada the genitive marker attaches to the stem plus TAM marking. On the influence of Kannada on Konkani, see e.g. Nadkarni (1975); Peterson (2022) and Peterson and Chevallier (2022).

⁹ Katre (1966: 156, §289) refers to this form as the “future and obligatory” participle. See Function 5 below in this section.

Table 1: The case system of Konkani (based on Almeida 2004: 48; 65-66; 78)

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative (= direct stem)	–	–
The following enclitic case markers attach to the oblique stem:		
Objective (\approx Accusative / Dative)	= <i>k</i>	= <i>k</i>
Ergative / Instrumental	= <i>n</i>	= <i>ni</i>
Inessive ('in')	= <i>nt</i> (=n) ¹⁰	= <i>ni</i>
Supressive ('on')	= <i>r</i> / = <i>cer</i>	= <i>r</i> / = <i>cer</i>
Familiessive ('at the home of')	= <i>ger</i>	= <i>ger</i>
Ablative	= <i>san</i> / = <i>sun</i> / = <i>savn</i> = <i>cyan</i>	= <i>san</i> / = <i>sun</i> / = <i>savn</i> = <i>cyan</i>
Genitive (general) ¹¹	= <i>c-ɔ</i> / = <i>c-i</i> / = <i>c-ẽ</i> = <i>l-ɔ</i> / = <i>l-i</i> / = <i>l-ẽ</i>	= <i>c-ɔ</i> / = <i>c-i</i> / = <i>c-ẽ</i> = <i>l-ɔ</i> / = <i>l-i</i> / = <i>l-ẽ</i>
"Kinship genitive" ('belonging to the household of')	= <i>gel-ɔ</i> / = <i>gel-i</i> / = <i>gel-ẽ</i>	= <i>gel-ɔ</i> / = <i>gel-i</i> / = <i>gel-ẽ</i>
Vocative	–	= <i>no</i>

The marker of the future participle either directly follows the verb stem, as is shown in the examples in (4), or follows the verb stem marked for the linker with the underlying form /ũ/, as shown in the examples in (5).¹² The presence vs. absence of a linker is to some extent lexically determined, although there is a strong tendency for verb stems ending in a consonant not to take the linker before the marker of the future participle and those ending in a vowel to take it.

(4) <u>Stem</u>	<u>Future participle (neuter, singular)</u>
<i>kør</i> ¹³ 'make; do'	<i>kør=cẽ</i>
<i>vøc</i> / <i>ve</i> / <i>vøi</i> 'go'	<i>vøi=cẽ</i> / <i>ve=cẽ</i>
<i>vag</i> 'behave'	<i>vag=cẽ</i>

¹⁰ While the standard form of the inessive singular is =*nt*, it is often realized as =*n* in colloquial speech, resulting in such speech in the total syncretism of the ergative/instrumental and the inessive cases in both singular and plural.

¹¹ Almeida (2004: 66) writes that the genitive forms with <c> (realized as /ʃ/ before high front vowels and as /ts/ elsewhere) can be used with all types of nouns, whereas the /l/-forms are only used with nouns denoting personal names of human possessors.

¹² Katre (1966: 156, §289) notes that the genitive marker originally attached to the infinitive form. Note also that one of the infinitives of (Goan) Konkani is /ũ/, which is homophonous with the linker mentioned above in the main text and from which the latter derives.

¹³ Verb roots and stems in Konkani can stand alone in various constructions, including but not restricted to the 2nd person, singular, imperative. We therefore write them as free-standing morphemes, not as bound roots.

(5) <i>di</i> ‘give’	<i>dīv=cē̃ (< di-ũ=cē̃)</i>
<i>ṭhəɾəy</i> ‘decide’	<i>ṭhəɾō=cē̃ (ṭhəɾəy-ũ=cē̃)</i>
<i>ye / yɔ</i> ‘come’	<i>yēv=cē̃ (< ye-ũ=cē̃)</i>
<i>yevj</i> ‘think; come to mind’	<i>yevj-ũ=cē̃</i>

Like the genitive, the future participle inflects for the number and gender of the noun that it refers to, as well as the direct/oblique status of that noun. There are two numbers in Konkani, singular and plural, and three grammatical genders, masculine, feminine and neuter. The respective forms of the future participle for the direct stem are illustrated in Table 2 for the verb *kəɾ* ‘do’. When there is no noun with which the future participle can agree, the participle takes default marking, i.e., the neuter, singular, in =*c-ē̃*.

Table 2: The gender/number forms of the future participle in Konkani (only the direct stem is shown here)

Singular			Plural		
M	F	N	M	F	N
<i>kəɾ=c-ɔ</i>	<i>kəɾ=c-i</i>	<i>kəɾ=c-ē̃</i>	<i>kəɾ=c-ε</i>	<i>kəɾ=c-yo</i>	<i>kəɾ=c-ĩ</i>

1. We have to date identified altogether six functions of the future participle in Konkani:

2. The future participle is used attributively to modify nouns.

3. It is used in a periphrastic construction to negate the future tense.

4. It is found in subordination with a small number of postpositions referring to future or habitual/atemporal events.

5. It serves as the predicate in other subordinate constructions with a relative-future or atemporal interpretation.

6. As the predicate of a main clause, it expresses obligation.

7. With a small number of verbs in one construction, the future participle refers exclusively to a past habitual action.

The first five of the above-mentioned functions are discussed individually in the remainder of this section. As the sixth function is quite distinct from the others, it will be discussed separately in Sections 4 and 5.

3.1. The attributive function of the future participle

The future participle can be used attributively to modify a noun, either with a future meaning, as in (6), with a future or habitual/atemporal interpretation as in (7), or only with a habitual/atemporal interpretation, as in (8)-(10).

(6) a. <i>yēv=c-ya</i>	<i>vəɾs-a</i>	b. <i>yēv=c-ya</i>	<i>somar-a</i>
<i>ye-ũ=c-ya</i>		<i>ye-ũ=c-ya</i>	
come-LNK=FUT.PART-OBL	year-OBL.SG	come-LNK=FUT. PART-OBL	Monday-OBL.SG
‘next year (lit.: the coming year)’		‘next Monday (lit.: the coming Monday)’	

- (13) *mhaka* *khãvcẽ* *pan* *jay*.
 kha-ũ=c-ẽ
 1SG.OBJ eat-LNK=FUT.PTCP-N.SG betel.leaves.N be.wanted
 ‘I want to chew some betel leaves (lit.: eating betel leaves are wanted to me).’
(elicited)

Further work on both Goan and non-Goan Konkani is required to determine to what extent this construction is productive both in Goan and non-Goan varieties, as it appears to be considerably more productive farther to the south, in the Konkani dialects of Karnataka, than in Goa itself. By contrast, in future negation the use of the future participle is entirely productive, to which we now turn.

3.2. The future participle in negation

All TAM categories in Konkani are negated periphrastically, generally through the use of the negative copula – *na* in the present tense and *nasl-* in the past tense. Table 3 from Peterson and Chevallier (2022: 39) provides a non-exhaustive overview of this for a number of different TAM categories for the verb *rig* ‘enter’. The bold-face print above the respective negative form gives the schematic structure of the relevant periphrastic negative form. All forms are given here in the 1st person, singular; for those categories where gender is also marked the form given is that of the masculine singular.

Table 3: Affirmative and negative strategies in Goan Konkani
 (Peterson & Chevallier 2022: 39)

	Affirmative form	Negative form
		Simple finite verb plus negative copula
Simple Past	<i>rig-l-õ</i> [enter-PST-1SG.M]	<i>rig-l-õ nã</i>
		Future participle (=cõ) plus negative copula
Future	<i>rig-tõl-õ</i> [enter-FUT-1SG.M]	<i>rig=cõ nã</i>
		Stem plus negative copula
Present	<i>rig-tã</i> [enter-IPFV.1SG]	<i>rig=nã</i>
Past imperfective	<i>rig-ta-l-õ</i> [enter-IPFV-PST-1SG.M]	<i>rig naslõ</i>
		Infinitive 2 (-ũk) plus negative copula
Present perfect	<i>rig-lã</i> [enter-PERF.1SG.M]	<i>rig-ũk nã</i>
Past Perfect	<i>rig-lõl-õ</i> / <i>rig-ill-õ</i> [enter-PST-PERF-1SG.M]	<i>rig-ũk naslõ</i>
		Infinitive 1 (-ũ) plus specialized form of negative copula
Imperative	<i>rig</i>	<i>rig-ũ naka</i>

As Table 3 shows, the affirmative future tense in Konkani is expressed by the suffix *-təl* followed by a marker of person/number/gender (PNG). The full inflection of the (synthetic) affirmative future is given in Table 4.¹⁴

Table 4: Affirmative future in Konkani (*kər* ‘do’, from Almeida 2004: 77)

	Singular			Plural		
	M	F	N	M	F	N
1	<i>kər-təl-ṣ</i>	<i>kər-təl-ĩ</i>	<i>kər-təl-ḗ</i>	<i>kər-təl-ε</i>	<i>kər-təl-yo</i>	<i>kər-təl-ĩ</i>
2	<i>kər-təl-ɔ</i>	<i>kər-təl-i</i>			/	
3					<i>kər-təl-i</i>	

(14) provides an example of a sentence with an affirmative future-tense form, *vətəli* ‘it (i.e., the rubbish) will go’, with the future-tense marker *-təl* followed by the feminine singular, which agrees with the subject *ghan* ‘rubbish’.

Affirmative future

- (14) *səgəl-ya=n[t]*¹⁵ *pəyl[ĩ]* *mhənje* *hi* *səgəl-i* *ghan* *vətəl-i*.
 all-OBL=INESS first that.is this.F.SG all-F.SG rubbish.F go-FUT-F.SG
 ‘First of all, that is, all of this rubbish will go.’

[Murkuṇḍe 2015: 5]

In contrast, as mentioned above, the future is negated periphrastically through the future participle followed by the present-tense negative copula/auxiliary. Table 5 provides an overview of this auxiliary. The plural form can be realized as either *nant* or *nat*, the latter form being much more common.¹⁶

Table 5: The present-tense negative auxiliary in Konkani

Person	Singular	Plural
1	<i>nã</i>	<i>na(n)t</i>
2	<i>na</i>	<i>na(n)t</i>
3	<i>na</i>	<i>na(n)t</i>

¹⁴ Other allomorphs of the finite future marker /təl/ which we will encounter below include *-təl* and *-təhəl*, where the initial plosive assimilates to the place of articulation of the preceding retroflex consonant, as well as with respect to aspiration.

¹⁵ This author generally uses non-standard spelling to portray colloquial pronunciation. For ease of interpretation, we have adapted all colloquial spellings to the standard forms in brackets.

¹⁶ The plural can also be realized colloquially as *na*.

(15)-(16) provide examples of the negative future tense: *vagcĩ nat* ‘(we) will not behave’ in (15) and *ƒøkce nat* ‘they will not be able’ in (16).

Negative future

- (15) *dekhun ami kaka=k lej ja-ta øf-ẽ kenna=c*
 therefore 1PL paternal.uncle=OBJ embarrassment become-PRS.3SG such-N.SG when=FOC
vag=c-ĩ¹⁷ nat.
 behave=FUT.PTCP-N.PL NEG.PRS.COP.PL
 ‘Therefore we will not behave at any time such that Uncle feels shame (lit.: such [that] shame becomes to Uncle).’

[Murkuᅇ 2015: 8-9]

- (16) *tumi haᅇa khe[-ũk lag-l-ya upørant lok haᅇa*
 2PL here play-INF start-PST-OBL after people.M.PL here
hɔ øs-ɔ kɔyøŕ uɔo-vøk ƒøk=c-ε na[t].
 this.M.SG such-M.SG rubbish.M throw-INF be.able=FUT.PTCP-M.PL NEG.COP.PRS
 ‘After you start to play here, people will not be able to throw such rubbish here.’

[Murkuᅇ 2015: 5]

These forms can be best understood through their literal translations, i.e. ‘we are not ones who will behave’ in (15) and ‘they are not ones who will be able’ in (16).

3.3. The use of the future participle in subordination with postpositions

The future participle is also found with a few postpositions, such as *pøylĩ* and *adĩ*, both of which mean ‘before’ ((17)-(18)), or *bødla(k)* ‘instead of’ in (19). The action denoted by the clause with a future participle as its predicate generally refers to an event which takes place after that of the main clause, as in (17)-(18), but it can also have an atemporal interpretation, as in (19).

- (17) *col. vot cøq=c-e¹⁸ pøylĩ vac-ũ=ya.*
 go sunlight increases=FUT.PTCP-OBL before go-IMP.1PL=HORT
 ‘Come on (lit.: go). Let’s go before it gets hotter (lit.: before the sunlight increases).’

[Almeida 2004: 146]

¹⁷ The predicate in (15) is marked as neuter as it refers to both males and females.

¹⁸ Participles and nouns often appear with the oblique marker *-e* as the object of a postposition, which is likely a fossilized form of an older category. This “postpositional *-e*” appears to be unrelated to the homophonous feminine oblique marker *-e*.

One speaker said that the past habitual finite form (*yevjtalī*) in (33) denotes that this habitual event of thinking “definitely took place in the past” and as such that there was no way of knowing whether the subject still feels that way, whereas the future participle (*yevjūcē*) expresses a “continuity of action”, so that the subject can be assumed to still regularly think of fasting in the present as well. In other words, the past habitual event denoted by the finite past imperfective is seen as a series of real events which took place in the past, whereas the future participle, although also explicitly referring to a past series of events, is seen more as a general state of affairs which held in the past but also still holds at the moment of speaking.

Similarly in (34), the past imperfective places the habitual event firmly in the past, making it unclear if it still holds at the moment of speaking, whereas the use of the future participle for the *promise*-predicate means that the woman referred to at the time of speaking still intends to fast regularly, again despite the explicitly past habitual interpretation.

- (34) *apuŋ pəncəm dhər-təl-ī əf-ē ti=ŋē sədā=c*
 LOG *panchami* hold-FUT-1SG.F this.way-N.SG 3SG.F=ERG always=FOC
cīt=c-ē. / *sədā=c cīt-tal-i.*
 think=FUT.PTCP-N.SG always=FOC think-PST.IPFV-1SG.F
 ‘I will uphold the *panchami* fast, thus she always thought / intended.’

(elicited)

Another example with the *promise*-predicate *uttər di* ‘give one’s word’ in paraphrases, once as a future participle and once in the past perfect, produced similar results. This is shown in example (35). Here as well, the speaker felt that the use of the future participle implied that the series of *promise*-events was not yet over. In contrast, the use of the past perfect denoted that the habitual events were “totally in the past” and that the promise had now been carried out.

- (35) *apuŋ pəncəm dhər-təl-ī əf-ē ti=ŋē sədā=c*
 LOG *panchami* hold-FUT-1SG.F this.way-N.SG 3SG.F=ERG always=FOC
uttər dīvcē. / *tiŋē sədā=c uttər dī-ll-ē.*
dī-ūv=c-ē.
 word give-LNK=FUT.PTCP-N.SG 3SG.F=ERG always=FOC word give-PST.PERF-3SG.N
 ‘I will uphold the *panchami* fast, thus she always promised.’

(elicited)

In summary, *promise*-predicates in paraphrases of the *promise*-construction with two main clauses can be marked as either a finite verb in the past perfect or past habitual with a past habitual interpretation, or they can be marked as future participles, again with a past habitual interpretation. The difference between them is that the use of the future participle portrays this past habitual event as a non-changing state, thus a past state

continuing into the present. By contrast, the past finite forms are seen as having held in the past, but no longer (past perfect), or having held in the past, but it is not clear if they continue to hold in the present (past habitual).

While neither of the finite verbs in these paraphrases nor the future participles can be considered narrative forms or foregrounded, those forms marked as future participles are “less narrative” and more backgrounded than finite forms. For Fleischmann (1990: 157), a narrative clause is “one that contains a unique event that, according to the narrative norm, is understood to follow the event immediately preceding it and to precede the event immediately following.” Clearly, none of these forms (finite or future participle) fits this description, although the finite forms – especially those in the past perfect – come much closer to it, as they explicitly refer to a series of events which have ended, whereas the events denoted by the future participle continue on.

This backgrounding, non-narrative function of the future participle fits in well with the other forms of the future participle discussed in Section 3, none of which can be considered narrative or foregrounding, with the possible exception of the negative future, at least in some cases.²⁴ But even allowing for some cases in which the future participle can be used in narration, these are clearly marginal cases and do not approach the productive use of the future in other languages in narrative function.²⁵

5.2. Suggested development of the “*promise-construction*” with the future participle

What remains to be explained is how predicates marked as what are now future participles came to have past habitual reference in the *promise-construction*. Although the habitual interpretation of the future participle is attested in other functions as well, above all in its attributive function (cf. e.g. examples (7)-(13)), it is only in the *promise-construction* that we find past-tense reference with these forms.

We noted in Section 3 that the attributive function of the morpheme marking the future participle, =cẽ, with an atemporal interpretation, was likely its original function since this marker derives from the genitive marker. We can also assume that with the passage of time, this atemporal meaning expanded to include first habituality and later (relative) future time, as examples (6a,b) above show.

We therefore believe that *promise-verbs* marked by the future participle originally referred to any habitual situation, past, present or future. I.e., with *promise-predicates* this marker denoted only habituality and was not restricted temporally, thus including past, present and future reference. While this awaits confirmation through corpora,²⁶ we also assume for these *promise-predicates* that a habitual interpretation referring to past events is far more common in actual speech than those with non-past reference, and that this led to the future participle in the *promise-construction* becoming restricted entirely to a past habitual interpretation. Thus, statements of the type *I always said that you would*

²⁴ Cf. Fleischmann (1990: 159).

²⁵ Cf. e.g. Nau and Spraunienė's (2021) study of the narrative use of the future tense in three Baltic languages.

²⁶ We are currently in the process of compiling an annotated corpus of Konkani to test this and other hypotheses.

one day become famous will likely have been considerably more common than statements such as *I always say that you will one day become famous* and more common still than future statements of the type *I will always say that you will one day become famous*. This is not to say that habitual past actions are in general more common than present or future habitual actions. We simply suggest that a past habitual situation was so common with this small group of *promise*-predicates with the (earlier) atemporal morpheme =cẽ that its use grammaticized with this class, and only with this class, to denote past habituality. This would then explain why only these predicates take the future participle with a habitual-past interpretation.

The only non-elicited example we have is thus quite typical of this group of predicates in our opinion: Consider once again example (25), repeated here as (37). This example was embedded in the past context given in (36), which explains why the woman in question repeatedly decided to fast on the *panchami*, as she was a devotee of God, despite her craving for fish. After (37) the text goes on to relate how she never succeeded in her fast if good fish was available on the day of fasting (text not shown here). In our view, it is the presumed preponderance of such past-tense habitual scenarios with these predicates which become so firmly established with the future participle in the *promise*-construction so that its use is now obligatory.

- (36) *mhoj-i aji ek kañi sañ-tal-i: ti=c-ya*
 1SG.POSS-F.SG grandmother one story say-PST.IPFV-F.SG 3SG.F=GEN-OBL
gãv-a-nt ek bayol as-l-i. tika dev-a=c-i bhakti
 village-OBL-INNESS one woman.F COP-PST-F.SG 3SG.F.OBL god-OBL=GEN-F.SG devotion.F
as-l-i ani nust-ya=c-ẽ piẽ as-lol-ẽ.
 COP-PST-F.SG and fish-OBL=GEN-N.SG obsession.N COP-PST.PERF-3SG.N

‘My grandmother used to tell a story: In her village there was a woman. She was a devotee of God and craved fish (lit.: to her, God’s devotion was and fish’s obsession had been).’

- (37) *ti=ñẽ sodã=c thõrõvcẽ apuñ põncõm dhõr-tol-ĩ.*
thõrõy-ũ=c-ẽ
 3SG.F.OBL=ERG always=FOC decide-LNK=FUT.PTCP-N.SG LOG *panchami* hold-FUT-1SG.F
 ‘She_i always decided that she_{i,sj} would uphold the *panchami* fast.’

[Almeida 2004: 168 – gloss and translation added]

6. Discussion and outlook

In the present study we show that five of the six functions of the future participle in Standard Goan Konkani which we have been able to identify are all compatible with a future and/or habitual/atemporal interpretation of this form. We note that this participle, whose marker derives from the genitive, was likely first used in nominal attribution with

an atemporal interpretation and later spread first to habituality and then to future reference, with the latter now its primary interpretation.

However, this participle is also found in the modern language in what we refer to here as the *promise*-construction. In this construction, the main predicate is one of a small class of predicates denoting *promise*, *intend*, *think*, etc., which take a complement clause referring to an event which follows that of the main clause temporally. In this construction, the main predicate is marked as a future participle but has a past habitual interpretation. With the help of paraphrases of this construction we show that the future participle portrays the past habitual events of saying, promising, intending, etc., as a non-differentiated, non-changing state which continues from the past into the present. In contrast finite past-tense forms in these paraphrases express events which are portrayed as purely past tense. The future participle forms thus signal that the clause of which they are the predicate is not narrative and only provides background information for the content of the complement clause.

With respect to its origin, we assume that the *promise*-predicate marked by the future participle originally referred to any habitual situation – past, present or future – and that the past habitual usage was likely the most common environment in which it occurred with these predicates, so that it eventually became restricted to a past interpretation in this construction.

There is still much work which needs to be done on the future participle; the present study is merely a first attempt to capture the basic traits of this construction, its semantics, and what predicates belong to the class of *promise*-predicates, and our list of six such predicates is likely not exhaustive. The future participle is also used in other constructions which require further study. For example, Katre (1966: 156, §289) notes that Konkani-speaking women regularly use this form when speaking with their husbands in the traditional “impersonal manner”, where “these future and obligatory participles take the place of the present and future indicative and present imperative.” To our knowledge no research has yet been undertaken on this usage, which could also potentially shed more light on the historical development of this form, in addition to its intrinsic value from a sociolinguistic perspective. Finally, the use of the future participle in attributive function, at least for many speakers of Goan Konkani, appears to be quite restricted, suggesting that there are further semantic-pragmatic factors at work which are not yet fully understood.

Thus, as with so much of the grammar of Standard Goan Konkani and other varieties of this macro-language, the future participle requires much further study, ideally based on large, annotated corpora. It is our hope that the present study will at least serve as one further small step in this direction.

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Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	– person
APPROX	– approximative
BEN	– benefactive
COP	– copula
CVB	– (sequential) converb
ERG	– ergative
F	– feminine
FOC	– focus
FUT	– future
GEN	– genitive
HON	– honorific
HORT	– hortative
IMP	– imperative
INESS	– inessive
IPFV	– imperfective
LNK	– linker
LOG	– logophoric (pronoun)
M	– masculine
N	– neuter
NEG	– negative
OBJ	– objective (case)
OBL	– oblique
OBLIG	– obligation
PERF	– perfect
PL	– plural
PNG	– person, number and gender
PRS	– present
PST	– past
PTCP	– participle
QUOT	– quotative
SG	– singular
TAM	– tense, aspect and mood
v2	– “vector” verb, denotes aktionsart.

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