Bi-absolutives in Archi.

Updated version following comments and questions.

1. Introduction.
In Archi some verb forms license a bi-absolutive construction:

(1) Butːa buq’ b-e-r-k’u-r-ši w-i
   Butta(0)[SG.ABS] grain(III)[SG.ABS] III.SG-IPFV-sort-IPFV-CVB I.SG-be.PRS
   ‘Butta is sorting grain.’

The auxiliary wi agrees in gender and number with the agent (Butta, a man’s name), the main verb berk’urši ‘sort’ agrees in gender and number with buq’ ‘grain’. This is a morphosyntactic condition on agreement; the aspectual characteristics of the (lexical) verb allow the unusual case alignment which, in turn, requires unusual agreement.

Compare (1) to the ergative-absolutive alignment in (2):

(2) Butːa-mu buq’ b-e-r-k’u-r-ši b-i
   Butta(I)-SG.ERG grain(III)[SG.ABS] III.SG-IPFV-sort-IPFV-CVB III.SG-be.PRS
   ‘Butta is sorting grain.’

In (2) the subject (Butta)1 is in the ergative case and both parts of the periphrastic form agree with the absolutive buq’ ‘grain’. The bi-absolutive variant is available for periphrastic forms where the lexical verb is a converb produced by the suffix -ši from the imperfective stem (they roughly correspond to English progressives). My informant says the bi-absolutive is the preferred, more natural variant. The synthetic forms do not allow the bi-absolutive construction.

From Harvard: 1. All your examples involve the converb in -ši. Are the data with the other converbs the same or not?

Another converb connected with bi-absolutive construction is the converb produced by the suffix -mat. When it attaches to the imperfective stem it requires the bi-absolutive; ergative-absolutive alignment is ungrammatical. The meaning of the converb is ‘the action/state goes on longer than anticipated’:

(3) Pat’i gyzjt b-o-r-klim-mat d-i
   ‘Pati is still reading the newspaper.’

When, however, -mat attaches to the perfective stem, the bi-absolutive construction is not possible. The speakers prefer to use this converb in a clause which does not contain the ergative (4a) but an overt ergative is grammatical (4b), though all such examples have to be elicited specifically (i.e. I have to present the speaker with the overt ergative and ask whether it’s grammatical):

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1 In this document, I use term “subject” for the argument which in the Ergative-Absolutive alignment will be in the Ergative and “object” for the argument which in the Ergative-absolutive alignment will be in the Absolutive.
(4)a. aqaltekən χːa-mat i
   shoes(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]take.PFV-CVB [IV.SG]be.PRS
   ‘These shoes are (still) bought.’

This can be understood as: “The shoes have not been worn at all, I can return them to the
shop”.

b. zari inχ χːa-mat i
   1SG.ERG butter(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]take.PFV-CVB [IV.SG]be.PRS
   ‘I have taken some butter but haven’t touched it.’

4b would be understood to imply that the speaker received the butter from somebody else and
the comment was: “I haven’t used the butter at all, and can return it any time”. There are
some examples of -mat further on, but I need to check more contexts in the village.

Kibrik’s account: in (1) there are two clauses Butːa wi and buq’ beːrʃi urši each of which has
its own absolutive and so the agreement is not problematic.

Most of the following examples are based on tests suggested by the Harvard team.

2. Noun incorporation tests.

   2.1. Determiner on the object – allowed:

(5)a. Pat’i ja-b gyzijt b-oːr-klin-ši d-i
    Pati(II)[SG.ABS] this-III.SG newspaper(III)[SG.ABS] III.SG-<IPFV>read-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is reading this newspaper.’

b. Pat’i ja-b gyzijt b-oːr-klin-mat d-i
    Pati(II)[SG.ABS] this-III.SG newspaper(III)[SG.ABS] III.SG-<IPFV>read-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is still reading this newspaper.’

2.2. Dislocation of the object – allowed:

Right dislocation is always allowed but note that the rightmost position can also be the
afterthought (pronounced after a pause in natural speech, but hard to assess in an elicited
examples):

(6) Pat’i b-oːr-klin-ši d-i gyzijt
    Pati(II)[SG.ABS] III.SG-<IPFV>read-CVB II.SG-be.PRS newspaper(III)[SG.ABS]
    ‘Pati is reading a newspaper.’

Left dislocation is allowed but my informant added the determiner on the object and the
particle -wu ‘and’ on the subject for naturalness:

(7) ja-b gyzijt Pat’i-wu b-oːr-klin-ši d-i
    this-III.SG newspaper(III)[SG.ABS] Pati(II)[SG.ABS]-and III.SG-read<IPFV>-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is also reading this newspaper.’
2.3. Expression of the object by a pronoun – allowed:

(8)a. Pat'i ja-b b-o-rklin-ši d-i
    Pat'i(II)[SG.ABS] this-III.SG III.SG-‹IPFV›read-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is reading it.’

b. Pat'i ja-b b-o-rklim-mat d-i
    Pat'i(II)[SG.ABS] this-III.SG III.SG-‹IPFV›read-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is reading it.’

2.4. Object – Adverb – Verb or other intervening material between object and verb – allowed:

(9) Pat'i q"ib o:kurši b-o-rklin-ši² d-i
    Pati(II)[SG.ABS] potato(III)[SG.ABS] slowly III.SG-‹IPFV›dig-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is digging potatoes slowly.’

3. (Multi)-clausality tests

3.1. Negation
In usual converbial clauses, the negation is on the converb:

(10)a. kummul kunne-ši q'u-wdi-li w-i gudu
    food(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]eat.POT-NEG-CVB LSG-be.PRS gudu that(1)[SG.ABS]
    ‘He is sitting without eating the food.’

From Harvard: 2. You have a good minimal pair between ex 11 and 12. Is there a minimal pair to ex. 10? Can you have negation on both verbs there?

I need to check the following:

b. kummul kunneši q'u-wdi-li w-i-t'u gudu
    food(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]eat.POT-NEG-CVB LSG-be.PRS-NEG gudu that(1)[SG.ABS]
    ‘He is sitting without eating the food.’

c. kummul kunne-ši q'u-wdi-li w-i-t'u gudu
    food(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]eat.POT-NEG-CVB LSG-be.PRS-NEG gudu that(1)[SG.ABS]
    ‘He is sitting without eating the food.’

In the bi-absolutive construction, however, the negation is only allowed on the auxiliary:

(11) pat'i k'ob or-c'u-rši d-i-t'u
    Pati(II)[SG.ABS] clothes(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]‹IPFV›wash-IPFV-CVB II.SG-be.PRS-NEG
    utu or-klin-ši d-i
    iron(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]‹IPFV›iron-CVB II.SG-be.PRS
    ‘Pati is not washing the clothes, she is ironing.’

² This verb can mean ‘read’, ‘learn’ or ‘dig up’, ‘take out’
Compare:

(12)*pat'i k'ob o-r-c'u-r-t'u-ši d-i 
Pati(II)[SG.ABS] clothes(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]wash-IPFV-NEG-CVB LSG-be.PRS
‘*Pati is not washing the clothes.’

Following Kibrik’s account, (12) should be possible with the structure ‘Not washing the clothes Pati is’. The way the negation is formed indicates monoclausality.

3.2. Position and the agreement of the adverbs and pronouns.

(13)a. tu-w q'onq' o-r-klin-ši w-i ditaːt'ʊ 
that-t-LSG-Abs book(IV)[SG.ABS] IV.SG.read-IPFV-CVB LSG-be.PRS early(IV.SG) 
‘He is reading a book early.’

b. tu-w q'onq’ o-r-klin-ši ditaːt'ʊ w-i 
that-t-LSG book(IV)[SG.ABS] IV.SG.read-IPFV-CVB early(IV.SG) LSG-be.PRS 
‘He is reading a book early.’

The adverb ditaːt'ʊ ‘early’ agrees with the object while its location is in the main clause if we take this construction to be biclausal. In other biclausal constructions the adverb can only agree within its clause, compare:

(14)a. zon ditaːt'ʊ d-aq’a-šaw maršrutka oq’a
1.SG.Abs early(II.SG) II.SG-come.PFV-CONC minibus(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]leave.PFV

b. *zon ditaːt'ʊ d-aq’a-šaw maršrutka oq’a
1.SG.ABS early(IV.SG) II.SG-come.PFV-CONC minibus(IV)[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]leave.PFV
‘*Although I came early, the minibus has gone.’

(15)a. tu-w q'onq’ o-r-klin-ši w-i ez
that-t-LSG-Abs book(IV)[SG.ABS] IV.SG.read-IPFV-CVB LSG-be.PRS [IV.SG]1SG.DAT
‘He is reading a book for me.’

b. tu-w q'onq’ o-r-klin-ši ez w-i
that-t-LSG book(IV)[SG.ABS] IV.SG.read-IPFV-CVB [IV.SG]1SG.DAT LSG-be.PRS
‘He is reading a book for me.’

The pronoun ez ‘for me’ agrees with the object while its location is in the main clause if we take this construction to be biclausal. Also, semantically ez seems to be the argument of the verb ‘reading’ rather than the verb ‘to be’.

3.3. Emphatic particle – only allowed to agree in a “small clause”:

(16)lo χilibχ‘i-j-b-u bu-kan-ši e-r-di 
child(II)[SG.ABS] porridge(III)[SG.ABS]-EMPH III.SG.eat.PFV-CVB <II.SG>be.PST
akl’ kummu-s kilaw
meat(IV).[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]eat.PFV-FIN than
‘The girl was eating the porridge, she likes it better than eating meat.’
In (17) the agreement with the subject is ungrammatical. This can be an argument for biclausality as the emphatic particle does not agree across the clause border in other cases, compare:

(18) *lo χilibχˁi-jɾ-u bu-kan-ši eɾ-di
  child(II)[SG.ABS] porridge(III)[SG.ABS]-EMPH(III.SG) III.SG-eat.IPFV-CVB II.ISG-be.PST
  akl’ kummu-s kilaw
  meat(IV).[SG.ABS] [IV.SG]eat.IPFV-FIN
  ‘The girl was eating the porridge, she likes it better than eating meat.’

In (17) the agreement with the subject is ungrammatical. This can be an argument for biclausality as the emphatic particle does not agree across the clause border in other cases, compare:

(18) lo jamu-t bankːa-jt’u oχːa-li uqˤa
    lad(I)[SG.ABS] this-IV.SG jar(IV)[SG.ABS]-EMPH(IV.SG) [IV.SG]take.PFV-CVB I.SG.leave.PFV
  ‘Having taken this jar, the lad left’ (lo here means ‘lad’ (I) rather than ‘child’ (IV) since the agreement with it is uqˤa left.I.SG).

(19) *lo jamu-t banka-jw-u oχːa-li uqˤa
    lad(I)[SG.ABS] this-IV.SG jar(IV)[SG.ABS]-EMPH(IV.SG) [IV.SG]take.PFV-CVB I.SG.leave.PFV
  ‘*Having taken this jar, the lad left.’

Here the clause structure is as follows: the main clause is lo uqˤa ‘lad left’ (‘leave’ is an intransitive verb which takes absolutive), the dependent clause is jamut bankaj t’u oχːali ‘having taken that jar’ (the verb ‘take’ is transitive and takes ergative-absolutive, the ergative here is omitted and coreferential to the argument of the main clause). The emphatic particle belongs to the dependent clause and cannot agree with the absolutive of the main clause (16). Another example of the same phenomenon:

(20) gudu kummul-ijt’u kunne:t’u-mat qˤu-w-di bec’u-qi
    that(I)[SG.ABS] food(IV)[SG.ABS]-EMPH(IV.SG) [IV.SG]eat.POT-NEG-CVB IV.SG-sit.PFV be.able-POT
  ‘He can sit without eating food (=he can spend long time hungry).’

(21) *gudu kummul-ijw-u kunne-t’u-mat qˤu-w-di bec’u-qi
    that(I)[SG.ABS] food(IV)[SG.ABS]-EMPH(IV.SG) [IV.SG]eat.PFV-NEG-CVB IV.SG-sit.PFV be.able-POT
  ‘*He can sit without eating food’ (=he can spend long time hungry).

From Harvard: 3. Do you get the bi-absolutive construction with affective verbs (where DAT --> ABS)

MC: No, but I cannot find a good example, I will continue looking. What I do know is that the imperfective converb in -mat can be used with the dative:

(22) tu-w-mi-s to-r d-oko-r-mat d-i
    that.I.SG-SG.OBL-DAT that-II.SG.AB II.ISG-hear-IPFV-CVB II.ISG-be.PRS
  ‘He does hear her.’

Bulbul’s comment: this can be said when he hears her (for example, on the phone), but does not answer.

Note that here both parts of the periphrastic construction agree with the absolutive (tor ‘she’).