

Complex verbal predicates in Hindi-Urdu

There are two complex verbal constructions in Hindi-Urdu that share many properties with serial verbs described in [Aikhenvald 2006]: they are monoclausal, have common grammatical values, each component of them may occur on its own, there are no overt markers of coordination, subordination, or any sort of syntactic dependency between the parts of verbal sequences, components cannot be negated or questioned separately from the whole construction, verbal sequences share prosodic properties with monoverbal constructions.

The first verbal complex (usually referred to as ‘compound verb’) consists of the main verb conveying the basic meaning and the so called ‘vector’ or ‘polar’, or ‘light’ verb). The light verbs are usually analyzed as focusing either on the initial (the verbs *paṛnā* ‘fall’, *denā* ‘give’, etc) or on the final stage of the event (the verbs *lenā* ‘take’, *ḍālnā* ‘throw’, etc). [Hook 1974; Kachru 1980; Liperovsky 1984; Singh 1990; Nespital 1997; Mohanan 1994; Butt 1995 et al.]. It will be shown in the paper that this statement is true only statistically, because inceptive (versus completive) meaning of a compound verb depends not on the semantics of the light verb, but on the feature of ‘telicity’ in the main verb. The compound verbs formed from non-telic stems usually imply the inceptive meaning, while those produced from telic stems may have completive or (rarely) conative sense. The conative sense of aorist forms generated from compound verbs has not been described in literature as there exists general belief that light verbs always signify culmination of the event in its natural endpoint [Hook 1974; Liperovsky 1984; Nespital 1997; Porizka 1967 – 1969; Montaut 2004 et al.].

It will be shown in the paper that aorist forms from compound verbs may not denote the completion of the action under the condition that the theme of the utterance is incremental. Three types of verbs with incremental theme denote an incomplete action when combined with the light verbs. In case of incremental theme the event’s temporal terminus may be achieved: (1) by progressing incrementally through the object; (2) by progressing incrementally along the ‘path object’; (3) by progressing along measurable degrees of change in some property central to the verb’s meaning. The internal argument (1) is created or consumed over time; (2) remains unchanged; (3) undergoes some change in its properties over time [Krifka 1989; 1992; Ramchand 1997; Tenny 1992, 1994]. In contexts when the speaker considers his goal achieved (in spite of the fact that the action has remained incomplete), the meaning of the compound verb is intermediate between conation and completion. The aorist forms from compound verbs cannot denote the incomplete action if the state of the object changes instantly or if there exists a conative component in the verbal meaning.

It has never been discussed previously that the light verb constructions share a number of properties with the asymmetrical serial verbs: both include a ‘major’ verb belonging to an unrestricted class and a ‘minor’ verb from a restricted verb class. Similar to the ‘restricted’ class verbs in serial verb constructions, the light verb in Hindi-Urdu may occur in the sentence in its basic meaning; bleached into a light verb it may express various grammatical categories, such as direction, orientation, aspect, change of state, etc., but unlike the ‘minor’ components of the asymmetrical serial verbs, light verbs cannot express adding an argument and increasing valency. Each of the constituents of a compound verb may imply different argument structures (by, e.g., combining transitive and intransitive stems), but the argument structure of the total verbal complex is determined by the main verb valency.

Contrary to the existing general opinion that compound verbs cannot be used in progressive aspect (because of their implying either inceptive or completive meanings), the samples on usage of compound verbs in progressive aspect will be demonstrated in the paper,

and an attempt to solve the semantic contradiction between completive and progressive meanings will be undertaken.

The second type of verbal constructions that are discussed here consists of two verbs which fully preserve their semantic properties. Unlike the compound verbs discussed above, these verbal sequences have not received adequate attention in literature. There is, e.g., a paper describing only motion verb sequences in Urdu [Annette Hautli-Janisz 2013]. Errors in the presented Urdu data make the results of the author's analysis not quite reliable. The paper by A. M. Raina [Raina 2011] suggests a short but thought provoking analysis of verbal sequences termed 'co-eventual verbs', wherein the author includes verbs of different semantic classes. A. Hautli-Janisz claims that motion verb sequences described by her are different from serial verbs as 'the verbs in the sequence do not contribute delimited subevents of the overall event, but the subevent of the root verb ...merges with the subevent denoted by the finite verb'. We will show in our paper that in many cases co-eventual verbs present delimited subevents of the overall event exactly in the same way as serial verbs described by various authors [Aikhenvald 2006; Ogie 2003; Wechsler 2003; Coelho 2012 et al.] See, e.g.: *mālī* (gardener) *ne* (Erg) *bandar* (monkey) *ko* (Acc) *mār* (beat) *bhagāyā* (make run away. Aor.M.Sg) 'The gardener chased away the monkey by beating it.' Here the verbs *mār-* 'beat' and *bhagā-* 'make run away' are subevents of the overall event 'chase away'. It seems that co-eventual verbs share most properties with symmetrical serial verb constructions that 'consist of two or more verbs chosen from semantically and grammatically unrestricted verb classes'. Their semantics covers sequences of sub-actions or concomitant actions related to each other; the order of components tends to be iconic [Aikhenvald 2006]. However, co-eventual verbs do not share with serial verbs one very important property: both verbs in the serial structure should be finite whereas co-eventual complex has only one finite verb.

The problem of components order either in compound or in co-eventual verbs deserves special attention. Reversed sequences of compound verbs were studied by P. Hook [Hook 1974] who showed that reversal is used to express anger, contempt, fear, surprise which lead to extreme suddenness or indeliberateness in the performance of the action. Our preliminary research of co-eventual verbs showed that out of four main semantic relations between the components of co-eventual verbs described in [Raina 2011]: cause, manner, precursion and concurrent result, only manner relations allow reversed sequences, like: *pakṣī* (bird.M) *cal* (move) *urā* (fly.Aor.M.Sg) = *pakṣī* (bird.M) *ur* (fly) *calā* (move.Aor.M.Sg) 'The bird flew away'.

Compound and co-eventual verbs differ also in their argument structure: while compound verb may include both transitive and intransitive components, parts of co-eventual verbs can have only similar argument structures.

Causal modification shows different results when applied to compound and co-eventual verbs. In compound sequences it is the main verb that determines the argument structure of the whole predicate and bears causative morphology: *rām* (Ram) *ne* (Erg) *naukar* (servant) *se* (Instr) *bhikhārī* (beggar) *ko* (Acc) *bhagvā* (cause to run) *diyā* (give.Aor.M.Sg) - 'Ram asked the servant to drive away the beggar'. In co-eventual verbs the causative marker is usually taken by the second component: *gāⁿvvāloⁿ* (villager.M.Pl.Obl) *ne* (Erg) *śer* (tiger) *ko* (Acc) *mār* (beat/kill) *girvāyā* (make to fall/knock down. Caus.Aor.M.Sg) - 'The villagers hired someone to kill a tiger' (lit. organized tiger's killing). Adding causative marker to different components of co-eventual verb is possible in case of changing the argument structure of the sentence. Compare, e.g.: '*rakeś* (Rakesh) *ne* (Erg) *ciṭṭhī* (letter.F) *likhvā* (write.caus) *bhejī* (send.Aor.F) - 'Rakesh asked somebody to write the letter/dictated the letter and then sent it (himself)' and *rakeś* (Rakesh) *ne* (Erg) *ciṭṭhī* (letter.F) *likh* (write) *bhijvāī* (send.caus.Aor.F) - 'Rakesh wrote the letter (himself) and asked someone to send it'.

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