6 Complex verbal constructions

6.0 Preview

In the previous chapter we discussed inflectional morphemes that ‘ground’ the events expressed by the verbal stems within a discourse world by establishing its relative time, by expressing the internal temporal organization of the event, by indicating the type of action the speaker wants to achieve through the sentence, and similar information. Syntactically, it is these inflectional morphemes that help a verbal stem form the predication of a sentence. One might have noticed that all the verbal predicates we have considered so far are simple in that they consist of a single word – both phonologically and grammatically. The following example illustrates such a simple predication.

6-1  an k\textsuperscript{\textdagger}amani-k\textsuperscript{k}ou mau-k\textsuperscript{k}an-t\textsuperscript{\textdagger}ar-bai-mun = nuw.  
1SG  work-OBJ work-finish-really-PERF-PAST=FOC  
’I almost finished the work for real.’

The predicator of the above clause consists of the verb \textit{mauk\textsuperscript{k}an\textsuperscript{\textdagger}arba\textit{m}un\textsuperscript{n}}\textsuperscript{nu}, which consists of six different morphemes, three of which including the root have very specific lexical meanings. Phonologically speaking, the word \textit{mauk\textsuperscript{k}an\textsuperscript{\textdagger}arba\textit{m}un\textsuperscript{n}}\textsuperscript{nu} is a single \textbf{phonological word} in that it is pronounced with a single intonation contour with a single stressed/accelerated element placed on the root \textit{mau} ‘work’. Syntactically speaking, the string of six morphemes in \textit{mauk\textsuperscript{k}an\textsuperscript{\textdagger}arba\textit{m}un\textsuperscript{n}}\textsuperscript{nu} behaves like a single word in that we cannot break this string of morphemes into smaller rearrangeable syntactic units. Thus, we cannot insert other lexical items (from a different word class) inside this string to break it apart.

In this chapter we will discuss predications that involve multi-word predicates. We will refer to the verb complexes with multiple words as \textbf{complex verb constructions}. For our purposes, such a construction consists of two verbs (one lexical and the other grammaticalized) or an adjective or a noun with a grammaticalized verb. We will describe a range of complex verb constructions of different types. The complex verb constructions under consideration are (i) auxiliary verb constructions, (ii) vector verb constructions, and (iii) conjunct verb constructions. These constructions are characterized by some semantic-
syntactic features that distinguish them from ordinary multi-word phrases. We will talk about these features under appropriate sections below.

6.1 Auxiliary verb constructions

One of the complex verb constructions in Bodo is the auxiliary verb construction, which consists of a lexical verb and a grammaticalized verb. The lexical verb adds the content meaning and the grammaticalized verb adds a grammatical meaning/function of progressive aspect. There is disagreement as to what kind of multi-verb constructions count as auxiliary verb constructions, especially with regard to the extent of notional and functional domains such constructions express (Anderson 2006: 7). However, scholars seem to agree that auxiliary verb constructions code at least aspectual meaning. Combining this semantic feature along with language specific formal features of Bodo, we will distinguish the auxiliary verb constructions from vector verb constructions (see Section 6.2).

The notable formal properties of the auxiliary verb construction in Bodo are the following: (i) the lexical verb precedes the auxiliary verb and the order is fixed; (ii) the lexical verb is marked with one of two inflectional morphemes -bai ‘perfect’ and -gasin ‘progressive’. The morphological marking on the auxiliaries varies depending on the individual auxiliary verb, which seems to be due to the historical source of the auxiliary verb. The auxiliary verb dog/don-u/don-a/don-u seems to have derived historically from the existential copula which is identical in form. As we had occasion to point out in Section 5.2.1 of Chapter 5, the morpheme -tv on the copula expresses a sense of affirmation as opposed to a habitual event interpretation of the morpheme -tv on the lexical verbs. The morpheme -tv on the auxiliary don/daug expresses the same function of affirmation, even though we are now dealing with a verbal predicate, not non-verbal predicate. Thus, the morpheme -tv on the Auxiliary don is not a habitual morpheme -tv.

We will treat it as an affirmative marker on auxiliary don. Auxiliary don takes only a few inflectional morphemes, notably the past/irrealis -mun, and the dubitative -gum. The other auxiliary verb t'lu is also transparently related to the lexical verb t'lu ‘stay, live’. This auxiliary verb takes a whole range of inflectional suffixes that the lexical verb t'lu can take.
This is probably due to fact that auxiliary ㄹ Enlightenment historically derives from the lexical verb ㄹ Enlightenment ‘stay, live’.

There are two auxiliary verbs, namely ㄹ tối and ㄹ Enlightenment, and four auxiliary verb constructions in Bodo. Both of these auxiliaries express a progressive meaning. However, they are distributionally different. The auxiliary verbs have a complementary distribution in that they do not share any of the major inflectional suffixes.

First, ㄹ tối can take the past tense marker -mum directly on the auxiliary. ㄹ Enlightenment, on the other hand, cannot take the past tense marker -mum directly on the stem. Another inflectional morpheme is needed between auxiliary ㄹ Enlightenment and -mum in order to get a past tense interpretation; otherwise we get a counterfactual interpretation. (It should be remembered that only nominal and the copula can take the past tense marker -mum directly on the stem). This is another piece of structural evidence that ㄹ tối/toLowerCase is copulative in origin, not verbal.) The auxiliary ㄹ tối does not take any other tense marker, whereas ㄹ Enlightenment does.

Second, auxiliary ㄹ tối does not take any aspectual or modal morphology. It is noteworthy that the morpheme -w in ㄹ tối-w is not a habitual aspect marker since (i) it has no habitual meaning and (ii) it can be left out without affecting the meaning (in Standard dialect), which we cannot do with habitual -w. Rather, it is something that got fixed on the auxiliary when it changed its status from a copula to an auxiliary. The auxiliary ㄹ Enlightenment takes all of the aspectual and modal morphology with their usual meanings except for a few, such as the perfect ㄹ Enlightenment which seems to have a different meaning in the auxiliary constructions.

Third, the auxiliary ㄹ tối also does not take any negative morphology. (As a copula also ㄹ tối does not take any negative morphology. It is the negative existential 꼪 Enlightenment that takes the negative morphology.) Finally, auxiliary constructions with ㄹ tối are found only in the indicative mood, whereas the auxiliary constructions with ㄹ Enlightenment are also found in the imperative mood.
Although, *dog* and *tʰa* are complementary in their occurrence with the major inflectional morphology, they do share some of the categories of the non-core verbal morphology (see Section 5.3 in Chapter 5), such as the dubitative *day/zap*. This appears to be due to the fact that those morphemes are not strictly verbal but rather, sentential in scope.

We have identified four different auxiliary verb constructions in Bodo. They are listed in Table 6.1.

*Table 6.1*

**Auxiliary verb constructions with their forms and functions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auxiliary constructions (CN)⁸</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Meaning / function</th>
<th>Dialect / style</th>
<th>Frequency in our database</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CN1</td>
<td><em>Verb-bai dog</em></td>
<td>‘progressive’</td>
<td>Central (Kamrupia, Sanzari)</td>
<td>35 (7.48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN2</td>
<td><em>Verb-gasinu dog</em></td>
<td>‘progressive’</td>
<td>Western (Standard)</td>
<td>433 (92.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN3</td>
<td><em>Verb-bai tʰa</em></td>
<td>‘progressive’</td>
<td>All dialects</td>
<td>2141 (95.92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN4</td>
<td><em>Verb-gasinu tʰa</em></td>
<td>‘progressive’</td>
<td>Western (Standard)</td>
<td>91 (4.07%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the above auxiliary constructions are attested in our corpus, and they all express continuous, iterative events. The major differences in the above auxiliary constructions lie in their regional use and frequency. CN1 and CN2 are mainly regional variations. CN1 is predominantly used in the Kamrupian and Sanzari dialect. CN2 is not used/preferred at all in those dialects. CN2 is predominantly used in the Standard variety of Bodo, and the speakers of the standard dialect do not prefer CN1. The difference in percentage between CN1 and CN2 reflects the non-preference of CN1 in the standard dialect (as our corpus consists of mainly texts from the standard variety). CN3 is common and preferred in all dialects. CN4 is both regional and infrequent. It is used only in the standard dialect with a

---

⁸ CN here stands for Construction.
very small frequency. tʰa auxiliary constructions constitute only 4.07% of our corpus. The reason for the low frequency is unknown to us at this point.

In the following sections we will describe the use of each of the above auxiliary constructions.

6.1.1  **CN1: Verb-bai dog**  
(dog/donga/donj/donj1)

This construction is found mostly in the central dialects, such as the Kamrupia and Sanzari dialects spoken in the districts of Kamrup, Udalguri and Darrang. An unmarked instance of this construction is used to code a **present progressive event** – an event which is on-going or iteratively taking place at the time of speech.

6-2  (a) *alasi-ja pʰai-baidong-ut.*  
guest-SUB  come-PROG  AUX-AFF  
‘The guest is coming.’

(b) *bi-sur be sannuisua gohati-au tʰañ-bai dany-ut.*  
3-PL this a.few.days PN-LOC go-PROG AUX-AFF  
‘They are visiting Guwahati last few days (multiple times).’

We have a single event of coming in progression in 6-2(a) and a multiple iteration of the same event in 6-2(b). Both these events are simultaneous with the time of speaking. The morpheme -bai on the lexical verb pʰai ‘come’ is identical in form with the perfect -bai. It is not clear whether they are the same morpheme or not. We have glossed them differently based on the semantics of this construction, namely as progressive.

As mentioned before, this auxiliary construction can take only a few inflections, such as the past tense marker -mum, dubitative -gum and the non-core verb morphology. Consider the following examples.

6-3  (a) *alasi-ja tʰañ-baidonj-um.*  
guest-SUB  go-PROG  AUX-AFF-PAST  
‘The guest was going (to some place).’

(b) *alasi-ja pʰui-bai  donj-ugum.*  
guest-SUB  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-DUB
‘The guest is probably on his way.’

(c)  *alasi-ja unjk^am  za-bai  do^n-ur-danp.*

guest-SUB  rice  eat-PROG  AUX-AFF-DUB

‘The guest is perhaps taking (his) meal.’

We have a past progressive event in 6-3(a), and progressive events whose factuality is uncertain in 6-3(b-c). We cannot use this construction with any other inflectional morphology as illustrated by the following ungrammatical examples.

6-4  *alasi-ja  p^ui-bai  do^n-ur-bai.*

guest-SUB  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-PERF

6-5  *alasi-ja  p^ui-bai  do^n-ur-dau^n.*

guest-SUB  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-REAL

6-6  *alasi-ja  p^ui-bai  do^n(-ur)-a.*

guest-SUB  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-NEG

6-7  *alasi-ja  p^ui-bai  do^n-ur-gum.*

guest-SUB  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-FUT

The above examples serve to indicate that the auxiliary construction CN1 does not take the perfect -bai, the realis -dau^n, the negative -a, or the future (not dubitative) -gum.

6.1.2  CN2: VERB-gasinu  do^n  (do^n/do^n/o/do^n/da^n/du^n)

This construction is equivalent to construction CN1 in the Standard dialect. It expresses a present progressive event. This construction has the same inflectional restrictions as CN1. The following example illustrates the use of this construction.

6-8  ai^n  t^a^n-gasinu  do^n-o.*  dose  ne-t^o.*

1SG  go-PROG  AUX-AFF  a.little.while  wait-for.a.while

‘I am on my way, just wait a little.’

6-9  bi-sur  lama-za^n  p^ui-gasinu  do^n-o-mun.*

3-PL  road-INSTR  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-PAST

‘They were coming by the road.’
6-10  *bi-sur pʰwaį-gasinu  doŋ-o-duŋ.

3-PL  come-PROG  AUX-AFF-DUB

‘They are perhaps coming/one their way.’

In all examples above we have a progressive sense – present progressive in (6-8), past progressive in (6-9) and a progressive event with uncertain factuality in (6-10). As with CN1, CN2 also cannot take any other TAM morphology, as illustrated by the following ungrammatical examples.

6-11  *bi tʰaŋ-gasinu  doŋ-o-duŋ.

3SG  go-PROG  AUX-AFF-REAL

6-12  *bi tʰaŋ-gasinu  doŋ-o-bai.

3SG  go-PROG  AUX-AFF-PERF

6-13  *bi tʰaŋ-gasinu  doŋ-o-a.

3SG  go-PROG  AUX-AFF-NEG

The above sentences are ungrammatical due to marking doŋ with the realis -duŋ, perfect -bai, and negative -a.

6.1.3  CN3: Verb-bai  tʰa

We have seen that the above two auxiliary constructions (CN1 and CN2) involve the auxiliary verb doŋ and they express mostly present and past progressive events. The current auxiliary construction and the following involve the auxiliary verb tʰa. They express progressive events with a wide range of additional shades of meanings contributed by the TAM and Mood markers on the Auxiliary tʰa. As mentioned above, auxiliary construction with tʰa can take all inflectional morphemes (though perhaps not directly on the stem). The inflectional morphemes and their concatenations on the auxiliary constructions involving tʰa contribute the same meanings that they contribute to single-verb predicates (discussed in the previous chapter). However, there is at least one inflectional suffix, namely the perfect -bai that has a changed meaning on the auxiliary
verb constructions, which will be seen below. We will illustrate the use of this auxiliary construction with the major TAM and mood markers below.

6.1.3.1 Occurrence with zero

Without any inflection on the auxiliary tə, we have an imperative interpretation of the sentence, as illustrated below.

6-14  núŋ-sur   be   lama-zunŋ-nuŋ   təaŋ-bai   tə-a
2-PL    this   road-INSTR-EMPH   go-PERF   stay
‘You (all) keep going on this road.’

6.1.3.2 Occurrence with -tər ‘habitual’

We have a habitual interpretation of an event when we have -tər on the auxiliary, as illustrated in 6.15a. Moreover, it has a sense of persistence or iterative action, which we do not find in an ordinary habitual expression as in 6.15b.

6-15  (a)  bi-sur  bui  zaiga-jao  təaŋ-baitəa-jiu.
3-PL    that   place-LOC   go-PROG   AUX-HAB
‘They keep going to that place all the time.’

 (b)  bi-sur  bui  zaiga-jao  təaŋ-utə.
3-PL    that   place-LOC   go-HAB
‘They go to that place.’

6.1.3.3 Occurrence with -daŋ ‘realis’

The addition of the realis -daŋ on this construction expresses various shades of meaning.

First, we can express an on-going event which is simultaneous with the act of speaking, as illustrated in 6-16a.

6-16  (a)  abo-wa  zi  da-bai  təa-dəŋ.
elder.sister-SUB cloth   weave-PROG   AUX-REAL
‘My sister is weaving cloth.’
6-16(a) can be used to refer to an on-going event which is simultaneous with the time of speech. Moreover, it has additional semantic nuances, which distinguish it from the present progressive meaning expressed by CN1 or CN2, as in Example 6-16(b) below.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(b) } & \text{abo-wa} & zi & \text{da-bai/gasimu} & \text{duŋ}/\text{doŋ-ŋu.} \\
\text{elder-sister-SUB} & \text{cloth} & \text{weave-PROG} & \text{AUX-HAB} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘My elder sister is weaving cloth.’

The precise semantic characterization of the difference between Example 6-16(a) and Example 6-16(b) is that 6-16(b) allows the speaker a more specific and local perspective by focusing on a part of the situation, as opposed to 6-16(a) which allows a generic, global perspective on the overall situation, but their semantic difference can be demonstrated by their use in the following imaginary context: I meet my friend on the way and ask him what his elder sister is doing. He replies that she is weaving cloth (as we speak). In this context, we can use only Example 6-16(b), not Example 6-16(a).

The most common use of the auxiliary construction CN3 with the realis -\textit{duŋ} is to describe an event or a situation in the narratives, stories, and personal accounts. The following examples illustrate.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{6-17 (a) } & \text{hor} & t^b\text{ou-za-se} & \text{sanui-zunŋ} & \text{sanse} \\
\text{night} & \text{deep-happen-until} & \text{two-COM} & \text{one.day} \\
\text{raizlai-bai} & t^b\text{a-dunŋ.} \\
\text{talk-PROG} & \text{AUX-REAL} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘The two talked until late night one day.’

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(b) } & \ldots & \text{bi-sur-k}^b\text{ou} & \text{nu-nanwi} & \text{dausin} & \text{daula-ja} \\
3\text{-PL-OBJ} & \text{see-NF} & \text{birds} & \text{REDUP-SUB} \\
\text{goloolo} & \text{nai-dau-bai} & t^b\text{a-dunŋ.} \\
\text{ONOM} & \text{look-up-PROG} & \text{AUX-REAL} \\
\end{align*}
\]

‘Seeing them, the birds are looking up.’ (108: 2.34)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(c) } & t^b\text{ik} & \text{be} & \text{som-au} & \text{aŋ} & \text{nu-bai} & \text{mase} & \text{mauzi-a} \\
\text{exactly} & \text{that} & \text{time-LOC} & \text{1SG} & \text{see-PERF} & \text{one} & \text{cat-SUB} \\
\text{romola-ni} & \text{dajeri-k}^b\text{ou} & \text{la-nanwi} & \text{gele-bai} & t^b\text{a-dunŋ.} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Example 6-17(a) expresses a past event and emphasizes on the continuity of the event of talking late night. In Example 6-17(b), the writer describes a scene in a narrative which involves birds staring continuous at something. In Example 6-17(c), the author describes a cat playing with a diary in this narrative.

This construction is also frequently used for events that have started in the past and continued to the present, as illustrated by the following examples.

6-18 (a) \textit{raizau-p\textsuperscript{h}ur-a agul-ni p\textsuperscript{h}rai = nuu sorkar-ni}  
\texttt{public-PL-SUB past-GEN from=FOC government-GEN}  
\textit{ser-au aroz gab-bu-bai t\textsuperscript{h}a-duaj}  
\texttt{before-LOC prayer cry-PROX-PROG AUX-REAL}  
‘The public has been requesting the government since long time ago.’  
[322: 4.270]

(b) \textit{be melem-ni sa-jau = nuu guvuk\textsuperscript{h}uari-p\textsuperscript{h}ur-a dinui-sim}  
\texttt{this brain-GEN on-LOC =FOC scientist-PL-SUB today-till}  
\textit{gubaij san bizirsoj-bu-bait\textsuperscript{h}a-duaj,}  
\texttt{many day research-PROX-PROG AUX-REAL}  
‘Scientists are researching on this topic for a long time till today.’  
[185: 108.3]

The above sentences express events that started long time ago, and still on-going.

6.1.3.4 Occurrence with perfect \textit{-bai}

The addition of the perfect \textit{-bai} to the auxiliary construction adds a sense of present relevance to the event, such that it seems incomplete to end a conversation with a sentence with this construction marked with \textit{-bai}, unless the sentence has an intended implicature.
We no longer have the sense of ‘completed event’ here, since we are talking about events in progression.

6-19  bi-sur  bidi=nuu  tʰay-baitʰa-bai.

3-PL that.manner=FOC go-PROG AUX-PERF
‘They kept going in that manner.’

6.1.3.5 Occurrence with -ut-mum ‘past habitual’

A past habitual sense is expressed when the past tense marker -mum is added in addition to the habitual marker -ut, as illustrated in Example 6-20. It has also the sense of iteration.

6-20  ada  pʰui-ba  zuŋ  zo  sinema  nai-bai  tʰa-ju-mum.

elder.brother come-when 1PL together movie see-PROG AUX-HAB-PAST
‘We used to go to the movie together all the time, when my brother visited.’

It becomes obvious from the description of the use of CN-3 with various TAM and mood markers that CN-3 has a wide range of use than CN-1 and CN-2, auxiliary constructions which involve the auxiliary dop.

6.1.4 CN 4: Verb-gasinur  tʰa

This construction is used mainly in the Standard dialect. It is not used at all in the Kamrupian dialect. This construction has a very similar function as CN3, and they are often interchangeable. This construction also has the same range of inflectional possibilities as CN3. We will illustrate the use of this construction with the following examples.

6.1.4.1 Occurrence with zero

6-21  nuŋ-sur  be  lama-zuŋ =nuu  tʰay-gasinur  tʰa.

2-PL this road-INST=FOC go-PROG AUX
‘All of you keep going on this road.’

6.1.4.2 Occurrence with -ut ‘habitual’

6-22  gohel-a  bisina  sa-jao  zo-nanui  bipʰa  buŋ-nai
PN-SUB  bed  up-LOC  sit-NF  father  say-NMLZ

bat'ra-k'ou  san-gasimu  t'a-jiu.

word-OBJ  think-PROG  AUX-AFF

‘Sitting on the bed, Gohel keeps thinking about his father’s words.’
[162: 2.195]

6.1.4.3  Occurrence with -mum ‘past’

6-23  zuŋ  undui-ba  ai-a  zi  da-gasimu  t'a-jiu-mum.

1PL  young-when  mother-SUB  cloth  weave-PROG  AUX-HAB-PAST

‘When we were young (my) mother used to weave cloth.’

6.1.4.4  Occurrence with -bai ‘perfect’

6-24  siri  mun-nanui = su  da = lubik'a-jadurp'bwa

be.awake-NF=FOC  now=FOC  heart-SUB  ONOM

durp'bwa  mao-gasimu  t'a-bai  aŋ-ha.

ONOM  move-PROG  AUX-PERF  1SG-POSS

‘Since I woke up, I kept feeling (my) heart beating even now.’
[127: 34.6]

6.1.4.5  Occurrence with -duŋ ‘realis’

6-25  bigrai-ja  gubaŋ  bat'ra  saik'b'el  salai-nanui = nuu

PN-SUB  much  matter  bicycle  ride-NF-FOC

san-laŋ-bai  t'a-duŋ.

think-DIST-PROG  AUX-REAL

‘While riding the bicycle, Bigrai kept thinking about a lot of things.’
[242: 3.5]

6.2  Vector verb constructions
Another complex verb construction that consists of two verbs is what is known as Vector verb constructions or Light verb constructions. One of the verbs in this construction is a lexical verb that contributes the lexical content and the other verb, called Vector verb or Light verb, provides a less lexical meaning. Modifying the cline suggested in Hopper and Traugott (1993: 108), Vector verbs can be represented as an (optional) intermediate stage between a lexical verb and an auxiliary verb in the verb-to-affix cline:

Full verb > (vector verb) > auxiliary verb > clitic > affix

The vector verbs in Bodo fit this kind of characterization in that they are less grammaticalized than the auxiliary verbs discussed in the above section. This fact can be observed in the fact that while a vector verb can precede or follow the lexical verb, an auxiliary verb has a fixed position with respect to the lexical verb, as illustrated by Examples 6-26 – 6-29.

6-26 (a) \( bi \ w\text{am}^k \ za-bai \) dog.
3SG rice eat-PROG AUX
‘He is eating rice.’

(b) \( \ast\ bi \ w\text{am}^k \) \( doj \ za-bai \).
‘He is eating rice.’

6-27 (a) \( bi \ t\text{ui-na} \ t\text{ag-bai} \).
3SG die-NF go-PERF
‘He passed away.’

(b) \( \ast\ bi \ t\text{ag-bai-t\text{ui-na}} \).
3SG go-PERF die-NF
‘He passed away.’

There are some other significant structural and semantic differences. First, the lexical verb in a vector verb construction is marked with a non-finite morphology, instead of the finite morphology seen in the auxiliary verb construction. These markers are the **non-final marker** \( -na/-nanui \) found in a **chained clause**, and the **infinitive marker** \( -nur \) found in complex clauses with clausal arguments. The non-finite status of these morphemes is illustrated in Examples 6-28 & 29.
6-28  

\[ \text{bi} \quad p^{hui-} \text{nau}^{\text{muk}} \text{um} \quad \text{za-bai}. \]

3SG come-NF  rice  eat-PERF

‘He came and ate rice.’

6-29  

\[ \text{aŋ} \quad \text{sansri-nu} \quad \text{birat} \quad \text{ruŋ-gou}. \]

1SG swim-INF  very  know-AFF

‘I know how to swim.’

In Example (6-28) we have two separate clauses ‘chained’ together, which express a sequence to two events. In Example (6-29), we have an embedded clause marked with the infinitive -\text{nur} functioning as the object argument of the verb ruŋ ‘know’. Neither the non-final clause, nor the infinitival clause can function as an independent clause on its own.

Second, the range of semantic interpretations of the vector verbs is very diverse, unlike that of the auxiliary verbs, and more specific. They are semantically compatible with a fewer number of lexical verbs than the auxiliary verbs. The vector verbs identified in Bodo are listed below.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Vector verbs} & \text{Lexical meaning} \\
\hline
t^{\text{ag}} & \text{‘go’} \\
\hline
\text{la} & \text{‘take’} \\
\hline
\text{mun} & \text{‘get’} \\
\hline
\text{huu} & \text{‘give’} \\
\hline
\text{hom} & \text{‘catch’} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Table 6.2

Vector verbs with lexical meaning

We will characterize the use of the vector verbs and illustrate their use with the help of specific vector verb expressions below. Moreover, we will provide a list of vector verb expressions under each vector verb.

6.2.1  

\textbf{Vector verb t^{\text{ag}} ‘go’}

The lexical verbs that occur with the vector verb t^{\text{ag}}, which lexically means ‘go’, is found in both infinitive form marked with -\text{nur} and non-final form -\text{na}. The meanings of various
vector verb expressions containing \( t^{\text{a}g} \) are very idiomatic, as such the vector verb \( t^{\text{a}g} \) is very unproductive. We have found three distinct senses that can be ascribed to the vector verb \( t^{\text{a}g} \).

First, it adds a sense of completeness to an event with the implicature that the event and its participants are no longer accessible or the event is no longer relevant at present. Some **vector verb expressions** with this meaning are illustrated below.

6-30 \( \text{bi-}t^{\text{a}g}-\text{a} = t^{\text{a}g} \text{-a} \) \( \text{mabalabanu} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-na} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-bai} \).

\( 3\text{SG-HON-SUB} = \text{FOC} \) \( \text{long.ago} \) \( \text{die-NF} \) \( \text{go-PERF} \)

‘He died long time ago.’ (and no longer among us)

6-31 \( \text{be} \) \( \text{zat}^{\text{a}g}\text{-ai-amabalabanu} \) \( \text{za-na} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-bai} \).

this \( \text{incident-SUB} \) \( \text{long.ago} \) \( \text{happen-NF} \) \( \text{go-PERF} \)

‘This incident happened long time ago.’ (and no longer relevant)

Second, another meaning of the vector verb \( t^{\text{a}g} \) is that something is no longer available. Some vector verb expressions with this meaning are illustrated below.

6-32 \( \text{be} \) \( \text{dau-}k^{\text{a}}\text{ou} \) \( \text{at}^{\text{a}g}\text{-ik}^{\text{a}}\text{-al-au} \) \( \text{nu-nu} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-la} \).

this \( \text{bird-OBJ} \) nowadays-LOC \( \text{see-INF} \) \( \text{go-DISCON} \)

‘(We) do not see this bird nowadays.’

6-33 \( \text{be} \) \( \text{domp}^{\text{a}g}\text{-k}^{\text{a}}\text{ou} \) \( \text{bazar-au} \) \( \text{mum-nu} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-la} \).

this \( \text{timber-OBJ} \) \( \text{market-LOC} \) \( \text{get-INF} \) \( \text{go-DISCON} \)

‘(We) do not find this timber in the market anymore.’

Third, yet another meaning of vector \( t^{\text{a}g} \) is to **project an alternative view** which is not generally held. Some vector verb expressions with this meaning are illustrated below.

6-34 \( \text{buq-nu} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-a}\text{-bla} \) \( \text{ag} \) \( \text{burai-bai} \).

\( \text{say-INF} \) \( \text{go-AFF-if} \) \( 1\text{SG} \) \( \text{get.old-PERF} \)

‘To speak the truth, I am quite old.’

6-35 \( \text{zud} = t^{\text{b}o} \) \( \text{bi-}k^{\text{a}}\text{ou} \) \( \text{sik}^{\text{b}o} \text{ao} \) \( \text{humna} \) \( \text{buq-nu} \) \( t^{\text{a}g}\text{-a}k^{\text{a}}\text{w} \).

\( 1\text{PL}=\text{FOC} \) \( 3\text{SG-OBJ} \) \( \text{thief} \) \( \text{as} \) \( \text{say-INF} \) \( \text{go-NEG.PERF} \)
‘We are not calling him a thief.’

The vector verb *tʰaŋ* in the above examples indicates that the views that ‘I am quite old’
and ‘He is a thief’ are alternative views to some other general views such as ‘X is not old’
or ‘X is not a thief’.

### 6.2.2 Vector verb *la* ‘take’

The vector verb *la* ‘take’ takes only a non-final -*na* marked lexical verb. This vector verb
adds a more transparent meaning to the vector verb expression, and therefore, it is very
productive. We can use it with any verb, as long as the predication meets the semantic
requirement – that is the subject argument is affected somehow by the event of the
predication.

6-36  *əŋ  akʰ-iə-jəo  dan-na  la-bai.*

1SG  hand-LOC  cut-NF  take-PERF

‘I cut my own hand.’

6-37  *nuŋ-suŋ  umkʰ-am-kʰou  za-na  la-kʰa-duŋ.*

you-PL  rice-OBJ  eat-NF  take-at.once-IMP

‘You all take your meal at once.’ (and be free to do anything you like)

The above examples have the entailment that the subject ‘I’ and ‘You all’ are affected by
the events of ‘cutting hand’ and ‘taking meal’. It is clear in 6-36 how the subject is
affected. In 6-37 the entailment is that once the addressees have taken their meal, they are
free to do whatever they liked.

### 6.2.3 Vector verb *mum* ‘to get’

The vector verb occurs with lexical verbs marked with -*nuŋ* and adds a sense of
permission, opportunity or chance to do something, as illustrated by the following verbs.

6-38  *əŋ  gohəti-jəo  tʰaŋ-nəməm-duŋ.*

1SG  PN-LOC  go-INF  get-REAL

‘I had a chance to go to Guwahati.’

6-39  *əŋ  bi-ni  gotʰ-o-kʰou  la-nu  mum-akʰui.*
1SG  3SG-GEN  child-OBJ  take-INF  get-NEG.PERF

‘I haven’t had a chance to take his baby in (my) arms yet.’

6.2.4  **Vector verb**  **hur** ‘give’

The vector verb  **hur** ‘give’ occurs with both  -nur marked and  -na marked lexical verbs.

With  -nur marked lexical verbs it adds a sense of permission, as illustrated below.

6-40  \( bi \)  an-j-\( b^{out} \)an-nahur-\( dun \).

3SG  1SG-OBJ  go-INF  give-REAL

‘He allowed me to leave.’

With the  -na marked lexical verb, it adds a sense of effect on the speaker or the patient participant, as illustrated below.

6-41  \( bi \)  an-j-\( b^{oudan-na} \)  hur-\( dun \).

3SG  1SG-OBJ  cut-NF  give-REAL

‘He cut me.’ (and I am affected)

6-42  \( bi \)  be  som-\( ao = nur \)  p\( h^{ui-nahur-bai} \).

3SG  this  time-LOC=FOC  come-NF  give-PERF

‘He arrived exactly at the same time.’ (and I was affected by that)

The vector verb  **hur** ‘give’ is highly productive like  **la** ‘take’ and can be used with any verb that fits the semantic requirement.

6.2.5  **Vector verb**  **hom** ‘catch’

This vector verb occurs with  -nur marked lexical verbs and indicates that an event has started and is in progress, as illustrated below.

6-43  mansi-p\( hur-a \)  t\( ay-nathom-bai \).

man-PL-SUB  go-INF  catch-PERF
‘People have started leaving.’ (are leaving at the time of speech)

6.3 Conjugate Verb constructions

The final complex verb construction is what is traditionally called conjugate verb
constructions. This construction is different from both auxiliary and vector verb
constructions in that it involves only one recognizable verbal element. The other element
is either a noun, an adjective, or a lexical element that is found only with the conjugate verb
and thus has no grammatical status outside the conjugate verb construction. Consider the
following examples.

6-44 (a)  
\begin{tabular}{llll}
ag & bi-nu & k'hut'a & huu -bai.
\end{tabular}

1SG 3SG-DAT word give-PERF

‘I promised him.’

(b)  
\begin{tabular}{llll}
ag & bi-k'ou & muzag & mun-uu.
\end{tabular}

1SG 3SG-OBJ good get-HAB

‘I love her.’

(c)  
\begin{tabular}{llll}
ag & da = su & siri & mun-bai.
\end{tabular}

1SG now=FOC wake.up-PERF

‘I just woke up.’

In Example 6-44(a), the expression k'hut'a huu ‘promise’ consists of the noun k'hut'a
‘word, matter’ and the verb huu ‘give’. Together they form a single syntactic and semantic
unit in that (i) they are very often inseparable (cannot insert any words), and (ii) have a
meaning that cannot be literally derived from the meanings of the individual lexical items.
Moreover, it is the non-verbal element rather than the verbal element that contributes the
content meaning to the predicate. These properties are true of most, if not all, conjugate
verb constructions. In Example 6-44(b), the expression muzag mun ‘love/like’ consists
of the adjective muzag ‘good’ and the verb mun ‘to get’. Together they also form a
single syntactic and semantic unit. Finally, in Example 6-44(c), the expression siri mun
‘wake up’ has the word siri which is not found as a word independent of the verb mun ‘to
get’. Thus, the word *siri* neither has a meaning nor a grammatical status outside the
conjunct verb construction *siri* *num*.

Certain verbs that take part in the conjunct verb constructions are given in the Table
6.8 below. The lexical meaning denotes the meaning of the verb when it is used as a
predicator by itself.

*Table 6.3*

*List of verbs used as conjunct verbs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conjunct verb</th>
<th>Lexical meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>za</em></td>
<td>‘happen, take place, become’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>huh</em></td>
<td>‘give’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gar</em></td>
<td>‘throw away’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nai</em></td>
<td>‘watch, look at’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>num</em></td>
<td>‘to get’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>za</em></td>
<td>‘eat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kʰa</em></td>
<td>‘to tie’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>tʰa</em></td>
<td>‘to stay’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kʰalam</em></td>
<td>‘do’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below we will provide a list of conjunct verb expressions for each of the above
conjunct verbs. The first column of the table below presents the conjunct verb expression.
The second column presents the lexical meaning of the noun, adjective, or the lexical item
that occurs with the conjunct verb. In case we have a lexical item that exists only as a part
of a conjunct verb expression, we will refer to this as **bound** in the second column. The
third column presents the grammatical category of the lexical item. In case of a bound
lexical item, we will indicate **no status**. We will briefly talk about one or two conjunct
verb expressions for each conjunct verb in order to show the semantic and syntactic
properties of the conjunct verb expressions.

**6.3.1 Conjunct verb expressions with *za* ‘happen, take place, become’**

Table 6.4 presents various conjunct verb expressions that involve the verb *za*
‘happen, take place, become’.
Table 6.4
Conjunct verb expressions with *za*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the lexical item</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *haba* *za*  ‘get married’ | *haba* ‘wedding’ | Noun | *bi*  *haba* *za-bai.*  
3SG  marry-PERF  
‘He has got married.’ |
| *got'o* *za*  ‘give birth’ | *got'o* ‘child’ | Noun | *bibari-a*  *got'o* *za-bai.*  
PN-SUB  give.birth-PERF  
‘Bibari delivered a baby.’ |
| *sak'\r'i* *za*  ‘get a job’ | *sak'\r'i* ‘job’ | Noun | *ada-ha*  *sak'\r'i* *za-bai.*  
brother-POSS  get.job-PERF  
‘My brother got a job.’ |
| *siman* *za*  ‘make confession’ | *siman* ‘confession’ | Noun | *bi*  *unao*  *siman* *za-bai.*  
3SG  later  confess-PERF  
‘He confessed later.’ |

The above conjunct verb expressions consist of the conjunct verb *za* and a noun. For example, in the expression *haba* *za* ‘get married’, *haba* is a noun meaning ‘marriage’ and *za* is the conjunct verb. There is no verb that denotes the meaning of ‘marrying’ all by itself in Boro. It is always a combination of *haba* and a verb. In such expressions, the content meaning, such as marriage, comes from the noun and the combination of the verb *za* to the noun indicates that we are talking about the event of getting married. Thus, together they form a new meaning. The nouns in the above conjunct verb expressions are morphosyntactically distinct. For example, it is usually not possible to mark the nouns in the conjunct verb expressions with any kind of case marking, unless it is some very marked construction.

6.3.2  Conjunct verb expressions with *hu* ‘give’

The following table presents the conjunct verb expressions that involve the verb *hu* ‘give’.

Table 6.5
Conjunct verb expressions with *hu*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the lexical item</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Meaning of the Lexical Item</td>
<td>Grammatical category of the lexical item</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰutʰa huu</td>
<td>kʰutʰa ‘word, matter’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>bi ay-nu kʰutʰa huu-bai. 3SG 1SG-DAT promise-PERF ‘He has promised me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sao huu</td>
<td>sao ‘curse’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>be mansi-a boi-kʰou-bu this man-SUB all-OBJ-also sao huu-ju. curse-HAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘This man curses everyone.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nimaha huu</td>
<td>nimaha ‘forgiveness’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>isur-a boi-kʰou-bu god-SUB all-OBJ-also nimaha huu-ju. excuse-HAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘God forgives all.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gusu huu</td>
<td>gusu ‘mind’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>gotʰ-a gusu huu-na child-SUB pay.attention-INF pʰorai-dang. read-REAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘The boy is reading attentively.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man huu</td>
<td>man ‘respect’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>pʰurungirí-kʰou boi-bu teacher-OBJ all-also man huu-ju. pay.respect-HAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Everyone respects a teacher.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above conjunct verb expressions consist of the conjunct verb huu which lexically means ‘to give’ and a noun. In kʰutʰa huu ‘promise’ the lexical element kʰutʰa ‘word, matter’ contributes the content meaning and the verb huu adds a metaphorical sense of transferring the entity named by the noun. However, the mere combination of the meanings of the individual words does not make up the whole of the meaning of the expression. Therefore, we consider the conjunct verb expression as a single semantic unit. The expression kʰutʰa huu is also a single syntactic unit in that it is usually not possible to add case markers on the nouns in a conjunct verb expression like ordinary nouns. These
semantic and syntactic observations are also true of the rest of the conjunct verb expressions given in the above table.

6.3.3 Conjunct verb expressions with nai ‘watch, look at’

The following table presents the conjunct verbs expressions that involve the verb nai ‘watch’.

Table 6.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item (LI)</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the LI</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hinzao nai ‘engage with a woman socially’</td>
<td>hinzao ‘woman’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>razen-a hinzao nai-bai. PN-SUB engage.socially-PERF ‘Rajen engaged with a woman socially.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lama nai ‘wait for someone/somethings’</td>
<td>lama ‘road’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>aŋ nunj-k’ou gubao 1SG 2SG-OBJ long.time lama nai-bai. wait-PERF ‘I waited you for long.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above conjunct verb expressions consist of the conjunct verb nai ‘watch, look’ and a noun, such as hinzao ‘woman’. These expressions form a single semantic and syntactic unit in that (i) as a whole they have a meaning which is different from the meanings of the component words, and (ii) they are single syntactic units such that we cannot modify the parts without modifying the whole. For example, we cannot add case markers to the nouns without changing the meaning. Consider the following examples.

6-45  razen-a  hinzao  nai-bai.

PN-SUB     woman     see-PERF
‘Rajen engaged with a woman socially.’

6-46  razen-a  hinzao-khou  nai-bai.
‘Rajen looked at the woman.’

The difference between the examples above is that *hinzao* ‘woman’ is case marked in the later but not in the former. This changes the meaning of the sentences dramatically.

6.3.4 **Conjunct verb expressions with *mum* ‘get’**

The following table presents conjunct verb expressions that involve the verb *mum* ‘to get’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item (LI)</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the LI</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>muzan</em> <em>mum</em></td>
<td><em>muzan</em> ‘love’</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>*laoga-*ja goisri-<em>k'ou</em> <em>muzan</em> *mum-*u. PN-SUB PN-OBJ love-HAB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘feel unhappy about someone’s action’</td>
<td><em>BOUND</em></td>
<td>No Status</td>
<td>*bi-sur zuq-<em>k'ou</em> <em>mumsa</em> *mum-*bai. 3-PL 1PL-OBJ be.unhappy-PERF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘They are unhappy about our actions.’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item (LI)</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the LI</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>siri mun ‘be awake’</td>
<td>BOUND</td>
<td>No Status</td>
<td>got&lt;b&gt;-a da-su siri mun-duŋ. child-SUB now=just be.awake-REAL. ‘The child woke up just now.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>got'o mun ‘deliver a child’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>sumsri-a got&lt;b&gt;o mun-bai. PN-SUB deliver-PERF ‘Swmsri delivered a child.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zumum mun ‘be born’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>bui som-ao nun</td>
<td>that time-LOC 2SG zumum mun-ak&lt;sub&gt;2&lt;/sub&gt;ui-mum. be.born-NEG.PERC-PAST ‘You were not born at that time.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gom mun ‘be aware’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>nung-sur k&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;int&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;o-nai-su su 2-PL tell-NMLZ-LOC=ONLY 1SG gom mun-duŋ. be.aware-REAL ‘I came to know about (it) only when you told me.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conjunct verb expression *muzan mun* ‘love/like’ consists of an adjective *muzan* ‘good’ and the verb *mun* ‘get’. There is single word expression to express the meaning of ‘loving’ or ‘liking’ someone in Boro. It can be expressed only through the conjunct verb expression *muzan mun* ‘love/like’. Thus they are a single syntactic and semantic unit. In a conjunct verb expression like *mumsa mun* ‘feel unhappy’, the lexical item *mumsa* does not occur all by itself without *mun*. Thus, the also form a single semantic and syntactic unit.

### 6.3.5 Conjunct verb expressions with *za* ‘eat’

The following table presents the conjunct verb expressions which involve the verb *za* ‘eat’.

Table 6.8

Conjunct verbs with operator *za*
The expression *alasi za* ‘visit a relative’ consists of the noun *alasi* ‘guest’ and the verb *za* ‘eat’. They both form a single semantic and syntactic unit in that they express a unique meaning and we cannot treat *alasi* like an ordinary noun. For example, we cannot add a case marker on the noun *alasi*.

### 6.3.6 Conjunct verb expressions with *kʰa* ‘tie’

The following table presents the conjunct verb expressions that involve the verb *kʰa* ‘tie’.

#### Table 6.9

Conjunct verbs with operator *kʰa*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the lexical item</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>bisigi kʰa</em> ‘tie’</td>
<td>friendship ceremony</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td><em>laodum-a orgo-zung</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>bisigi</em> ‘one’s socially accepted friend (male)*</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>bisigi kʰa-bai.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(male)’ | tie.friendship-PERF ‘Laodum tied friendship with Orga formally.’
---|---
**bilaqgu kʰa** ‘tie friendship ceremoniously (female)’ | **bilaqgu** ‘one’s socially accepted friend (female)’ | Noun | **laogi-ja** muzrzi-zuŋ PN-SUB PN-ASSOC **bilaqgu kʰa-bai.** tie.friendship-PERF ‘Laogi tied friendship with Munzri formally.’

| **radai kʰa** ‘make an agreement’ | **radai** ‘agreement’ | Noun | ... **raza-ja** britis-pʰur-nuŋ ...king-SUB British-PL-DAT **busur-ao zi ruza** year-LOC ten thousand **raŋ huo-nuŋ** money give-INF **radai kʰa-ju.** make.agreement-AFF ‘The king makes an agreement to pay ten thousand rupees to the British’ [46: 2.374]

All the above conjunct verb expressions form a single semantic and syntactic units. For example, the expression **bisisi kʰa** ‘tie friendship ceremoniously (male)’ is a single semantic unit in that the meaning of the expression cannot be expressed by a single word expression. We need both **bisisi** and **kʰa** to say ‘to form friendship ceremoniously’. This expression is also a single syntactic unit in that the noun **bisisi** is an integral part of the expression and cannot be modified like other ordinary nouns. For instance, we cannot add case marker on the noun.

### 6.3.7 Conjunct verb expressions with **tʰa** ‘stay’

The following table presents conjunct verb expressions that involve the verb **tʰa** ‘stay’.

**Table 6.10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the lexical item</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Conjunct verbs with operator **tʰa**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the lexical item</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ruat⁷i t⁴a ‘go to serve as a maid’ | ruat⁷i ‘maid’ | Noun | onzali-ja  odui-mum-n-ao  
PN-SUB  uncle-PL-GEN-LOC  
uuat⁷i t⁴a-hui-bai.  
serve.as.maid-DIST-PERF  
‘Onjali went to serve as a maid at uncle’s house.’ |
| dahuna t⁴a ‘go to serve as a male servant’ | dahuna ‘male servant’ | Noun | ap⁷-n-ao  zodi  
1SG-GEN-LOC  if  
dahuna t⁴a-juu-bla  
serve.as.servant-AFF-if  
rueat⁷i-zuug  railai-nuu  
maid-ASSOC  talk-INF  
mun-nai  noq-a.  
get-NMLZ  COP-NEG  
‘If you serve in my house you will not get to talk with the maid.’  
[211: 62.1] |
| hor t⁴a ‘to overnight’ | hor ‘night’ | Noun | ...gumsar-a  hor t⁴a-nuu  ha-ja  
...PN-SUB  overnight-INF  can-NEG  
gubun  k'amani  doŋ  bi-ha.  
other task  exist 3SG-POSS  
‘Gwmsar can’t overnight as he has got other task to do.’  
[493: 2.96] |
| bok⁶ali t⁴a ‘go to serve as a babysitter’ | bok⁶ali ‘babysitter’ | Noun | zanzi-jao  zi  gan-sliŋ-nuu  
waist-LOC  cloth  wear-somehow-INF  
rung-nai-nip⁷rai-nuu  
know-NMLZ-from-EMPH  
malai-n-ao  
other-GEN-LOC  
bok⁶ali t⁴a-buu-duŋ.  
serve.as.babysitter-PROX-REAL  
‘(she) has been serving as a babysitter at other’s house since she knew how to put dress on her waist.’  
[451: 6.3] |
| laok³ar t³a  | laok³ar  | Noun                | bima bata³ul-a  budai-k³ou |
| ‘go to serve as a cowboy’ | ‘cowboy’ | | step.mother-SUB PN-OBJ |
|                |          | | gubun-ni  no-oo   |
|                |          | | other-GEN house-LOC |
| laok³ar t³a-nu  | ha-zosim | serve.as.cowboy-INF can-till |
| p³³e-der-³u   | p³³u-lao-³u. | CAUS-be.big-AFF CAUS-be.long-AFF |
| ‘The step mother brought up Budai till he can serve as a cowboy at other’s house.’ | |
|          |          | | [100: 2.39] |

All the above conjunct verb expressions form a single semantic and syntactic units. For example, the expression hor t³a expresses a meaning that cannot be expressed with a single word expression. That is we need both elements. Moreover, hor does not allow to add any kind of case marking.

6.3.8 Conjunct verb expressions with k³alam ‘do’

The following table presents the conjunct verb expressions that involve the verb k³alam ‘do’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Meaning of the Lexical Item</th>
<th>Grammatical category of the lexical item</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>muihur k³alam ‘to hunt’</td>
<td>muihur ‘hunting’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>golo-a bursi duima ser ser PN-SUB PN river by.the.side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>t³a-nai zahar-ao muihur k³alam-nu stay-NMLZ forest-LOC hunt-INF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>t³an-³u. go-AFF ‘Golo goes to hunt in the forest nearby the river Bwrisi’ [107: 15.11]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hat³ai k³alam ‘do’</td>
<td>hat³ai ‘market’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>ay t³ab-³ai hat³ai k³alam-na ISG quick-ADVZ do.marketing-NF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mansi ḳalam ‘make a man’</td>
<td>mansi ‘man’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>...hep̣aazub ha-[wu]-baula nuŋ-ḳou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>udḍar ḳalam ‘to rescue’</td>
<td>udḍar ‘rescue’</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>aŋ ap̣a ajoŋ-mun-ḳou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gubauḳaalam ‘be late’</td>
<td>gubau ‘late’</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>biṭap̣a ofis-ao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ṭaŋlai p̣uailai ḳalam ‘to commute’</td>
<td>ṭanlai p̣uailai ‘come and go’</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>aŋ ofis-ao bas-zuŋ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the expression muịhuur ḳalam ‘to hunt’, the verb ḳalam ‘do’ hardly adds any semantic content. The idea of hunting comes from the noun muịhuur. All ḳalam does is that it expresses the idea of hunting as a verbal predicate. Once again, the meaning derives from the composite of the two expressions and the noun cannot be modified on its own.

So far we have talked about a set of conjunct verbs and conjunct verb expressions involving those conjunct verbs. We have briefly talked about one or two conjunct verb expressions for each conjunct verb to illustrate their semantic and syntactic properties that distinguishes them from expressions which are merely combinations of noun/adjective and verb. The properties of conjunct verb expressions we have emphasized are (i) semantic uniformity, i.e. the meaning of the whole is more than the sum of the meanings of the components, and (ii) syntactic uniformity, i.e. the component noun or adjective is
syntactically inherent part of the conjunct verb expression and therefore cannot be modified on its own.

In a way all conjunct verb expressions are idiomatic in that the non-verbal element and the conjunct verb form a single meaningful unit instead of a composite of two meaningful units. For instance, the meaning of the conjunct verb expression *muzaq mun* is not ‘good get’, which is what we get when we combine meanings of the individual words; instead it means ‘to love’. Nevertheless, some conjunct verb expressions have more transparent meaning (one can guess the meaning of the whole from the parts), while others are quite opaque (and culture bound perhaps). Consider the following examples.

*megon sa* ‘be jealous’ (< *megon* ‘eye’, *sa* ‘ache’)

6-47  *bi-sur zuun-kʰou megon sa-juw.*

3-PL  1PL-OBJ eye  pain-HAB

‘They are jealous of us.’

*gusuu tʰu* ‘love’ (< *gusuu* ‘heart’, *tʰu* ‘be enough’)

6-48  *bi-sur sanuui-zuun gusuu tʰu-kʰuma-lai-duuŋ-mun.*

3-PL  two-COM heart  be.enough-secretly-RECIPI-REAL-PAST

‘They loved each other secretly.’

The following table presents a list of more opaque conjunct verb expressions. One feature of the opaque conjunct verb constructions is that the conjunct verb of such constructions is found only in single or couple expressions, unlike the ones found in the more transparent conjunct verb constructions. In other words, the verbs in the opaque conjunct verbs are less productive than the ones found in more transparent conjunct verb expressions.

Table 6.12

Opaque conjunct verb expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form and meaning</th>
<th>Individual meanings</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>megon sa</td>
<td>‘be jealous’</td>
<td>bi zum-k’ou megon sa-ju. 1SG 1PL-OBJ be.jealous-HAB ‘He is jealous of me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gusutu t’iru</td>
<td>‘to love’</td>
<td>orga-ja muina-k’ou gusu t’iru-ju. PN-SUB PN-OBJ love-HAB ‘Orga loves Mwina.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megon nu</td>
<td>‘be literate’</td>
<td>megon ‘eye’, nu ‘see’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gont’oŋ ha</td>
<td>‘disgrace’</td>
<td>zung-ni gami-jao megon nu-nai 1PL-GEN village-LOC literate-NMLZ bara gui-ja. more exist-NEG ‘We don’t have many literates in our village.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p’hat’uulai bisi</td>
<td>‘break a relation’</td>
<td>p’hat’uulai ‘betel leaf’, bisi ‘tear’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oza hom</td>
<td>‘find a healer’</td>
<td>oza ‘a village healer’, hom ‘catch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k’ap’al geo</td>
<td>‘be fortunate’</td>
<td>bi-sr-a k’ap’al geo-bai binik’ai 3-PL-SUB be.fortunate-PERF so mahazum za-bai.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Form and meaning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Individual meanings</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lama nai</td>
<td>‘ wait’</td>
<td>lama ‘road’, nai ‘look at’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>megon k’eb</td>
<td>‘to like (as a mate)’</td>
<td>megon ‘eye’, k’eb ‘pinch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oza hom</td>
<td>‘find a healer’</td>
<td>oza ‘a village healer’, hom ‘catch’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k’ap’al geo</td>
<td>‘be fortunate’</td>
<td>bi-sr-a k’ap’al geo-bai binik’ai 3-PL-SUB be.fortunate-PERF so mahazum za-bai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages</td>
<td>meanings</td>
<td>example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|kõrõma huu ‘pay attention’| kõrõma ‘ear’ huu ‘give’| bi an-ni buñ-nai-k’ou
3SG GEN say-NMLZ-OBJ
never listen-NEG
‘They are lucky so they have become rich.’|
|kõuga k’eco ‘say a word’| kõuga ‘mouth’, k’eco ‘open’| bit’añ-a bi-ni samandtai
3SG.HON-SUB this-GEN about
zebu k’uga k’eco-wa-sui.
anything utter-NEG-CS
‘He never pays attention to what I say.’|
|kõuga nañ ‘be cursed’| kõuga ‘mouth’ nañ ‘get hit/touched’| got’o-wa k’uga nañ-dan’-dan’
child-SUB get.curse-REAL-DUB
biñik’ai ham-nu ruj-a-sui.
therefore get.well-INF know-NEG-CS
‘The child is cursed by someone perhaps, so he hasn’t recovered yet.’|
|gususu huu ‘do sincerely’| gususu ‘mind’ huu ‘give’| gususu huu-na p’orai-ja-ba nañ
do. wholeheartedly read-NEG-if 2SG
ut’ri-nu ha-nai noq-a.
pass-INF can-NMLZ COP-NEG
‘You won’t succeed unless you work sincerely.’|
|megon huu ‘see attentively’| megon ‘eye’, huu ‘give’| zan-ñi k’amanik’h’ou ese
1PL-GEN task-OBJ a.little
megon huu-duu sar.
pay.attention-IMP sir
‘His lecture could draw attention of everyone.’|
|k’ut’ōa dan ‘deny’| k’ut’ōa ‘word’, dan ‘cut’| añ ap’a-ni k’ut’ōa dan-nu
1SG father-GEN deny-INF
ha-nai noq-a.
can-NMLZ COP-NEG
‘I won’t be able to disobey my father.’|
|rosa nañ ‘starve’| rosa ‘starve’, nañ ‘be touched’| añ undui-ao rosa nañ-nañ-ua-mun.
1SG young-LOC starve-NEED-HAB-PAST
‘I had to starve when child.’|
The list of conjunct verb expressions we have provided is but a small portion of the expressions available in the language. A more thorough research of such expressions still waits.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we looked in detail at various types of complex verb constructions. We divided the complex verb constructions broadly into (i) Auxiliary verb constructions (ii) Vector verb constructions and (iii) Conjunct verb constructions. Auxiliary verb constructions and Vector verb constructions consist of two verbal elements, whereas Conjunct verb expressions consist of a nominal/adjectival element and a verbal element. Thus, Conjunct verbs differ greatly from the rest. Both Auxiliary and Vector verb constructions consist of a lexical verb and a grammatical verb. The difference between the two constructions is that the grammaticalized verb in the Auxiliary verb construction is more grammaticalized than the grammaticalized verb of the Vector verb construction. An evidence of the different degrees of grammaticalization can be seen in the word order of the lexical verb and the grammaticalized verb. While in an Auxiliary construction the order is fixed, the order can be changed in a Vector verb construction. Thus, Auxiliary verb construction is more schematized than the Vector verb construction.

With respect to the auxiliary verb construction, we talked about two different auxiliary verbs *dog* and *tôa*, both of which take part in a progressive construction. We identified four different progressive auxiliary verb constructions that are semantically very close, differing among themselves more in their regional use and frequency. With respect to the vector verb constructions, we looked at five different vector verbs and several expressions that involve those vector verbs. Finally, we looked at conjunct verb constructions and illustrated the use of nine different conjunct verbs along with some instances of these verbs that are more idiomatic and less productive.