

## **Compound Verbs in Ahirani Language: A Descriptive Study**

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**Abstract**

This paper presents a detailed description of Compound verb Structures in Ahirani Language. Ahirani Language is spoken in Khandesh region in Maharashtra state in India. This language belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family. Compound Verbs are made up of two verbs. The study delves into the syntactic, semantic, and morphological aspects of compound verb constructions, examining their structure. This paper is purely Descriptive in Nature.

**Keywords:** Ahirani Language, compound verbs, Indo-Aryan Language.

**Introduction**

Ahirani language is one of the most common languages spoken in Khandesh. Khandesh region mainly constitutes Dhulia, Jalgaon and Nandurbar districts (Patkar, Patil, Peddi - 2020). Ahirani is surrounded by Gujrati on the west and north-west, Rajasthani and Hindi in the north, Varhadi on the south and east (Chitnis, V. 1976). According to (Tarfe, O. S., & Bagul, M. 2024), Ahirani is one of the dialects of Marathi Language. They further said that “Ahirani is primarily spoken in the Ahirani region, which includes cities such as Dhule, Nandurbar, and Jalgaon in Maharashtra and certain parts of Gujarat. The region's notable Ahir community also speaks it. The dialect is influenced by the Ahir community's language, culture, and traditions, resulting in unique terminology and expressions. Ahirani Marathi features regional vocabulary, influenced by the Ahir community's language and lifestyle. The dialect may differ from mainstream Marathi due to unique phonetic traits, such as pronunciation and accent differences.” As per 2011 census, Ahirani has 16,36,465 speakers.

The objective of this paper is to look at the compound verb structure in Ahirani from the point of view of morphology, syntax and semantics and presents a descriptive analyses

## Methodology and Data Collection

The data for this paper has been collected from Dhule District of Maharashtra. A questionnaire was prepared in advance focusing on the compound verb construction in Ahirani verbs. The language consultants from whom this data was collected are Prof. Sharad Bhaviskar sir and Prof. Pradeep Shinde sir. After collecting the data, it was sorted and glossing was done to analyse the data.

### Compound Verb Construction in Ahirani:

The term Compound Verbs is usually used to refer to constellations of verbs that have the form  $[V_1 + V_2]$ , in which  $V_2$  loses its independent meaning to a large extent.  $V_1$  is referred to as the main verb and  $V_2$  is referred to as the Explicator verb or vector verb; (Singh, M. 1990). In simple terms, the compound verb is made up of two verbs that act as a single verb. The first verb or  $V_1$  is called as the main verb and  $V_2$  is called as the vector verb.

$$V_1 + V_2 = V$$

For Example:

- sita-ni          lakor          tor-i          taki  
sita-3FS-Erg   wood-3FS-Abs   cut- $V_1$ .sfm   put- $V_2$ .3FS-Perf  
'Sita cut the wood'

### Semantics in Ahirani Compound Verb Construction

“More or less in every language where it is possible to have  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  as forming a complex predicate, the semantics of the complex predicate is more or less uniform. It seems that (i.e., the polar verb) semantically dominates the meaning of the whole complex verb form. It is also as the part of the strategy of forming a complex verb by putting a constraint that if the combination of  $V_1$  and  $V_2$  cannot be attained by putting the single verb that is  $V_1$ , the compound made out of the combination is not accepted as the instance of a compound verb. The  $V_2$  ( the vector verb) is semantically bleached or what we technically call “has gone through a process of ‘grammaticalization’”. In other words, the meaning of the second verb seems to be laxicalized or bleached, meaning that is attested elsewhere in the language” (Das, P.K, 2006).

Examples:

2. ram-ni male rasta-ma t<sup>h</sup>ambar-i lina  
 ram-3MS-Erg i-1MS-Abs way-Loc stop-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm take-V<sub>2</sub>-Perf  
 ‘ram stopped me on my way’
3. tu pər-i gəya  
 you-2MS-Nom fall-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm go-V<sub>2</sub>-2MS-Perf  
 ‘you fell down’
4. ami səgya g<sup>h</sup>ər i gəut  
 we-1MPI-Nom all home-3S come-V<sub>1</sub> go-V<sub>2</sub>-1MPI-Perf  
 ‘we all came back home’
5. ram-ni sita-le čıtt<sup>h</sup>i d<sup>h</sup>ar-i dina  
 ram-3MS-Erg sita-3FS-Dat letter-3MS-Abs send-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm give-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS-Perf  
 ‘ram sent a letter to sita’

Now, it has become really clear that it is the main verb that contributes to the meaning of the compound verb construction in Ahirani. In example 2, the meaning ‘stop’ is contributed by the main verb, same is the case with examples 3,4,5 where the meaning of fall, come, send have been contributed by main verb only. It is also to be noted that the whole compound verb in the above examples can be replaced by V<sub>1</sub> only, yet it will give the same meaning.

### **Morphology in Ahirani Compound Verbs**

Morphology of the compound verb is explained by saying that the V<sub>1</sub> occurs in three different forms in a language.

- It can be in the bare form.
- It can be with some inflectional marker.
- It can be with a participle marker.

In Ahirani, the main verb is attached with a stem forming morpheme in compound verbs; the second verb takes the load of all kinds of inflectional markers of the sentence. These markers are the markers of the tense, aspect and the agreement morphology (Das, P.K. 2006).

## V<sub>1</sub> (Polar Verbs/ Main verbs):

In Ahirani, the V<sub>1</sub> occurs in bare form but with a ‘stem forming morpheme’, /i/, consistently. Some examples of V<sub>1</sub> occurring with the stem forming morpheme, also called the compounding marker are as follows:

6. mənə hat<sup>h</sup>                      **bə-i**                      gəya  
my    hand-3MS-Nom    burn-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    go-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS.-Perf  
‘my hand got burned’
  
7. rohən-ni                      tū-le                      **dek<sup>h</sup>-i**                      lina  
rohan-3MS-Erg    you-Abs    see-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    take-V<sub>2</sub>-Perf  
‘rohan saw you’
  
8. čiri                      **ur-i**                      gəyi  
bird-3FS-Nom    fly-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    go-V<sub>2</sub>-3FS.-Perf  
‘the bird flew’

In all the examples mentioned above, Main verbs are marked uniformly with the stem forming morpheme /i/. But the stem forming morpheme does not change the meaning of the Main Verb.

## Vector Verb

In Ahirani language, V<sub>2</sub> loses its original lexical meaning and functions as an auxiliary verb. But, it plays an important role in clarifying the meaning of the main or polar verb. For this reason, the compound verb is referred to as an explicator compound verb. Additionally, it is the vector verb (V<sub>2</sub>) that carries the inflectional markers (for instance, agreement markers such as person, number, gender, mood, and aspect markers) associated with various agreements in the sentence. (Das P.K, 2006). V<sub>2</sub> (vector verb, light verb etc.) must be grammaticalized or semantically bleached of its meaning in majority of the cases. (Das P.K, 2015).

9. To                      kurči-bər    bəs-i    **gəya**  
he-3MS-Nom    chair-loc    sit-V<sub>1</sub>    go-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS-Perf  
‘He sat on the chair’
  
10. tyā-ni                      rohən-le                      načən                      sīkar-i                      **dina**  
he-3MS-Erg    rohan-3MS-Dat    dance-3MS-Abs    teach-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    give-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS.-Perf  
‘He taught dance to Rohan’

11.   tya-ni           dusmān-le           mar-i           **ṭaka**  
       he-3MS-Erg   enemy-3MS-Abs   kill-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   put-V<sub>2</sub>-Perf  
       ‘He killed the enemy’

In all the above-mentioned examples, we have clearly seen that V<sub>2</sub> carries the inflectional marker and not the V<sub>1</sub>. V<sub>2</sub> doesn’t contribute to semantics but to the grammatical features like inflectional markers of person, number, gender, tense, aspect etc. we have also seen that V<sub>2</sub> is having markers agreeing with subject or object of the sentences the other markers.

### Syntax of the Compound Verb

“The syntax of the compound verb is relevant only for the languages which are classified as ‘ergative-absolutive’ types and also realizes the importance of the grammatical gender’ as the structure device to depict the grammatical agreement” (Das, P.K, 2006).

There can be following Sequence of V<sub>1</sub> ‘Polar verb’ and V<sub>2</sub> ‘Vector Verb’:

‘Compound Verb’ is formed by the combination of a ‘polar’ and a ‘vector’ verb in a sequence of V<sub>1</sub> + V<sub>2</sub>. This sequence of V<sub>1</sub> + V<sub>2</sub> can occur in the following combinations of V<sub>1</sub> and V<sub>2</sub>:

- 1) V<sub>1</sub> (+trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (+trans)
- 2) V<sub>1</sub> (+trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (-trans)
- 3) V<sub>1</sub> (-trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (+trans)
- 4) V<sub>1</sub> (-trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (-trans)

#### 1) Compound Verb with V<sub>1</sub> (transitive) + V<sub>2</sub> (transitive)

12.   rāmes-ni           ḍori           wār-i           lidi  
       ramesh-3MS-ERG   rope-3FS-Abs   put-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   take-V<sub>2</sub>-3FS-Perf  
       ‘Ramesh pulled the rope’

13.   tya-ni           paṇi           b<sup>h</sup>ār-i           didə  
       he-3MS-ERG   water-3M-Abs   fill-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   give-V<sub>2</sub>-3M-Perf  
       ‘he filled the water (in bucket)’

14.   neha-ni           kāpṛa           d<sup>h</sup>ū-i           ṭakat  
       neha-3FS-ERG   clothes-3MPI-Abs   wash-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   put-V<sub>2</sub>-3MPI-Perf  
       ‘Neha washed the clothes’

In the examples provided regarding compound verb constructions, the vector verb carries the inflectional markers related to tense, aspect, gender, number, and so on. Since both V<sub>1</sub> and V<sub>2</sub> are transitive verbs, the entire compound verb will be classified as a compound verb. It is noteworthy that in Ahirani, when the vector verb is transitive, the whole compound verb is transitive.

In this context, the subject takes the ergative case, while the object lacks any overt case marker. Thus, the verb V<sub>2</sub> agrees with the object and carries various inflectional markers such as number and gender. This agreement between the object and the verb may occur because the aspect is perfective. The perfective aspect is considered the default for a compound verb consisting of a transitive verb (V<sub>1</sub>) followed by another transitive verb (V<sub>2</sub>), since it is a typical feature of such compound verbs that if the second verb (V<sub>2</sub>) is transitive, the overall compound verb functions as a transitive verb phrase. The vector verb adds syntactic meaning to the entire compound verb, while the polar verb contributes the semantic meaning. It is important to highlight that when V<sub>2</sub> is transitive, the subject appears in the ergative case when in the perfective aspect.

#### Compound Verb with V<sub>1</sub> (transitive) + V<sub>2</sub> (intransitive)

15. to                    tena    g<sup>h</sup>ər        ek-i        ʈaka  
 He-3MS-Nom   his    home-3S   sell-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   put-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS-Perf  
 ‘he sold his home’
16. mi                    dilli-le        pəhuč-i        gəu  
 i-1MS-Nom   delhi-loc    reach-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   go-V<sub>2</sub>-1MS-Perf  
 ‘I reached Delhi’
17. porya                    dərbaja                    ugra-i        wəna  
 boy-3MS-Nom   door-3MS-Acc            open-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm   come-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS-Perf  
 ‘the boy opened the door’

In the above examples of V<sub>1</sub>(transitive) + V<sub>2</sub>(intransitive). The vector verb does not add anything to the meaning of the compound verb. V<sub>2</sub> has inflectional markers for tense, aspect and PNG. The V<sub>2</sub> is responsible for the syntactic meaning of the whole compound verb. So, here the whole compound verb is syntactically intransitive. And in this case, we don’t find subject to be ergative case marked even when the aspect is perfective and V<sub>1</sub> is transitive.

Ahirani has morphology similar to Hindi morphology as Hindi morphology does not permit an ergative case marker -‘ne’ with the intransitive verbs. So, the subjects are bare NPs. Therefore, the vector verb agrees with the Subject. It is shown in the examples above. It must be noted that the +/-transitivity of the compound verb depends on the +/-transitivity of the main verb.

### Compound Verb with V<sub>1</sub> (intransitive) + V<sub>2</sub> (transitive)

18. ti-ni            gost<sup>hə</sup>      aɪkisən    rər-i            didə  
 she-3FS-Erg    story-3S    after      cry-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    give-V<sub>2</sub>-Perf  
 ‘she cried after (listening) the story’

19. tū-ni            b<sup>hə</sup>rɪpur    bəl-i            lidə  
 you-2MS-Erg    much      speak-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    take-V<sub>2</sub>-Perf  
 ‘you spoke (too) much’

20. tyɑ-ni            jor-mɑ      ʃik-i            didə  
 he-3MS-Erg    force-ins    sneeze-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    give-V<sub>2</sub>-Perf  
 ‘he sneezed with force’

Here, V<sub>2</sub> is transitive, which causes the entire compound verb to become transitive, even if the polar verb is intransitive. While the polar verb conveys the overall meaning of the compound verb, the compound verb as a whole is considered transitive because the vector verb is transitive. The vector verb provides the syntactic meaning to the compound verb and adds additional meaning to V<sub>1</sub>. In this sequence, the vector verb clarifies the meaning of the entire compound verb.

Similar to Hindi, the subject takes the ergative case because the vector verb transforms the whole compound verb into a transitive form, and V<sub>2</sub> does not show agreement with the subject.

### Compound Verb with V<sub>1</sub> (intransitive) + V<sub>2</sub> (intransitive)

21. pore            uɽ<sup>h</sup>-i            gəyɑt  
 boy-3MPI-Nom    wake-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm    go-V<sub>2</sub>-3MPI-Perf  
 ‘the boys woke up’

22. poryɑ            pər-i            gəyɑ

boy-3MS-Nom fall-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm go-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS-Perf  
'the boy fell (down)'

23. to bəs-i gəya  
he-3MS-Nom sit-V<sub>1</sub>-sfm go-V<sub>2</sub>-3MS-Perf  
'he sat (down)'

Here also, both the polar verb and vector verb are intransitive. Thus, the compound verb functions as intransitive. The vector verb syntactically gives meaning to the whole compound verb as intransitive and bears all the tense, aspectual, PNG markers. But the polar verb semantically gives meaning to the whole compound verb.

### Conclusion

This paper draws the conclusion that Ahirani language exhibits the existence of the compound verbs. The compound verb is formed by the combination of the Polar and Vector verbs in the sequence of V<sub>1</sub> + V<sub>2</sub>. There is a difference between conjunct verb and compound verb. Conjunct verb is the combination of N/adj/adv + V. The compound verb is the combination of V<sub>1</sub>+V<sub>2</sub>.

If we look at the data of the Ahirani language, and when we look into the semantics, morphology, syntax of the compound verb. We can conclude that:

- Morphologically, V<sub>1</sub> occurs with the stem forming morpheme (SFM) /i/. The V<sub>2</sub> does not retain its lexical meaning. V<sub>2</sub> carries the aspectual, tense and Person, number, gender markers.
- Semantically, the V<sub>1</sub> gives the meaning to the whole compound verb. V<sub>2</sub> loses its meaning. The compound verb has the same meaning as that of polar verb and the whole compound verb is replaceable by V<sub>1</sub>.

Combinations of the compound verb (based on transitivity) in Ahirani are as follows:

➤ V<sub>1</sub> (+trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (+trans) ➤ V<sub>1</sub> (-trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (+trans)

➤ V<sub>1</sub> (-trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (-trans) ➤ V<sub>1</sub> (+trans) + V<sub>2</sub> (-trans)

- Syntactically, the vector verb decides the syntactic meaning of the compound verb. As the vector verb loses some of its specific meaning, it still determines whether the compound verb

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**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:2 February 2025

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will act as +/- trans. For instance, if the vector verb is transitive, the entire compound verb will also function as transitive. And if the vector verb is intransitive, then the whole compound verb will behave as intransitive. V<sub>2</sub> bears all the inflectional markers for the PNG, tense, aspect etc. So, when the vector verb is transitive with perfective aspect in Ahirani, it will have an ergative case with the subject.

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