

Event structure of telic complex predicates in Hill Mari¹

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In Hill Mari, there are complex predicates — constructions that consist of two verbal forms: a converb, which denotes a situation (lexical verb), and a grammaticalized finite form, which somehow modifies the situation described by the converb (light verb). You can see the opposition between the combination of two lexical verbs (1) and a complex predicate (2):

(1) *pi opt-alal-ân ke-š*
 dog bark-ATT-CVB go-AOR[.3SG]
 ‘The dog went having barked’.

(2) *tädä amal-ân ke-š*
 that sleep-CVB go-AOR[.3SG]
 ‘He fell asleep’.
 #‘He went sleeping’.

In my talk, I will describe the event structure of complex predicates formed by light verbs *keäš* ‘to go’, *koltaš* ‘to send’, *šänzäš* ‘to sit’ and *šändäš* ‘to put, to seat’. These light verbs share the same grammatical function — telicization, i.e. they introduce or specify a telic interpretation of a lexical verb:

(3) a. *pört vâc minut/*minutâ-stâ jâl-en*
 house 5 minute/minute-IN burn-PRF[.3SG]
 ‘House burned for/*in 5 minutes’.

b. *pört vâc *minut/minutâ-stâ jâl-en ke-š*
 house 5 minute/minute-IN burn-CVB go-AOR[.3SG]
 ‘House burned in/*for 5 minutes’

I will analyze the structure of the complex predicates in the first phase syntax theory [Ramchand 2008]. This theory offers a syntactic decomposition of event structure, postulating three subevent projections: *initP* with *init* head setting causing subevent, *procP* with *proc* head setting process or change-of-state subevent and *resP* with *res* head setting result state. Each subevent projection also has its ‘subjects’: Initiator, Undergoer and Resultee respectively. In [Ozarkar&Ramchand 2018], this theory describes the syntactic structures of complex predicates in Marathi, where the event structure of the light verb defines selectional restrictions for lexical verb and interpretation of the complex predicate. There is an alternative event structure analysis of Hill Mari complex predicates [Kashkin&Dyachkov 2018], which I will also discuss in my talk.

Light verbs *koltaš* and *šändäš* combine only with transitive and unergative lexical verbs (i.e. the verbs having an *init* head), while light verbs *keäš* and *šänzäš* combine only with unaccusatives (i.e. the verbs lacking an *init* head):

(4) *tädä vedrä-m câm-al-Ø *ke-š/ ^{ok}kolt-âš.*
 that bin-ACC kick-ATT-CVB go-AOR[.3SG] send-AOR[.3SG]
 ‘He kicked the bin’.

(5) *tädä sâlâk-lan-en *ke-š/ ^{ok}kolt-âš*
 that sad-VBZ-CVB go-AOR[.3SG] send-AOR[.3SG]
 ‘He became sad’.

(6) *väd kâlm-en ^{ok}ke-š/ *kolt-âš*
 water freeze-CVB go-AOR[.3SG] send-AOR[.3SG]
 ‘Water froze’.

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Light verbs *keäš* ‘to go’ and *koltaš* ‘to send’ form punctual complex predicates with converb taking the complement position of resP, while light verbs *šənzäš* ‘to sit’ and *šəndäš* ‘to sit down’ form degree achievement predicates with converb taking the complement position of procP. This structural difference implies difference in interpretations of the complex predicates and selectional restrictions on the lexical verb. First, complex predicates with *keäš* and *koltaš* denote entering the result state of a lexical verb, while complex predicates with *šənzäš* and *šəndäš* denote accumulation of an effect caused by the event denoted by the lexical verb:

- (7) *pört* *jəl-en* *ke-š*
house burn-CVB go-AOR[.3SG]
‘House burned (completely)’.
- (8) *pört* *jəl-en* *šənz-ə*
house burn-CVB sit-AOR[.3SG]
‘House suffered from fire (but has not burn)’.

Second, the light verb *koltaš* do not combine with verbs of creation, while *šəndäš* does. It is explained by the fact that verbs of creation are degree achievements taking created essence as a complement of procP [Ramchand 2008] and thus do not combine with punctual light verbs with resP:

- (9) *tädä* *pörtä-m* *stroj-en* *šənd-əš/* **kolt-əš*
that house-ACC build-CVB put-AOR[.3SG] send-AOR[.3SG]
‘He built a house’.

The first phase syntax approach could explain the distribution of saturative and accumulative meanings of the light verb *šəndäš*. So, the light verb always denotes accumulation of an effect on the Undergoer, and the saturative meaning appears when Undergoer is coindexed with Initiator:

- (10) *tädä* *pumaga-m* *kəšked-∅* *šənd-əš*
that paper-ACC tear-CVB put-AOR.3SG
‘He tore paper (for something)’.
- (11) *tädä* *ki-en* *šənd-əš*
that lie-CVB put-AOR[.3SG]
‘He lay as much as he wanted’.

It is notable that ingestive predicates like *kačkäš* ‘to eat’ also form complex predicates with saturative meaning. These data support the analysis of ingestive verbs in [Ramchand 2008], where agent (but not the patient) takes the role of Undergoer:

- (12) *tädä* *(lemä-m)* *kačk-ən* *šənd-əš*
that soup-ACC eat-CVB put-AOR[.3SG]
‘He was full after eating (the soup)’.

Thus, as we can see, the main factors that determine the selection restrictions of the light verbs and the interpretation of the complex predicates are presence/absence of an *init* head and position of the converb (it could be rheme complement of resP with punctual light verbs or path complement of procP with degree achievement light verbs). Light verbs *keäš* and *koltaš* thus belong to the Type A (punctual light verbs, see [Ozarkar&Ramchand 2018]), while *šənzäš* and *šəndäš* belong to the Type B (degree achievement light verbs).

References.

Kashkin&Dyachkov 2018 — Kashkin E., Dyachkov V. Complex verb constructions in Hill Mari: semantics and event structure // 51st Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea (29 August – 1 September 2018). Tallinn: Tallinn University, 2018. P. 129–130.

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