Some Aspects of Transitive and Intransitive Verb Compounding in Bodo Language

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Abstract

The aim of the present paper is to describe different processes of transitive and intransitive verb compounding in Bodo language. Bodo belongs to Bodo-Garo sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman sub family of languages (Benedict, 1972). Compound is a word formation process where the words are formed by two or more roots. ‘Verb + Verb’ compounding is a very common in Bodo-Garo group of languages. The paper tries to focus on the compounding processes of transitive and intransitive verb in Bodo. Here will describe the verb compounding processes like ‘transitive + intransitive verb’, ‘transitive + transitive verb’, ‘transitive + transitive + transitive verb’, ‘transitive + intransitive + intransitive verb’, ‘intransitive + intransitive verb’. It will look into the description how the verbs are compounded in the ‘V1 + V2’ and ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ constructions. This analysis of verbal compounding in Bodo will help us understanding verb formation in Bodo in particular and other Bodo group in general.

Key words: Bodo, Verb compound in Bodo-Garo group, compounding processes of transitive and intransitive verbs.

1. The Bodo

Bodo is the major tribes of Assam; their language belongs to the Bodo-Garo subgroup of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. At present, Bodo is recognized as a scheduled language under the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution. The Bodo speakers are mainly found in Assam as well as some adjacent areas of West Bengal, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and neighboring country in Nepal. According to 2001 census of India the total population of Bodo speakers in Assam are 13, 52,771 having 61.3% literary rate. Bodo
language has some dialects, P. C. Bhattacharya (1977) mentioned four dialect areas, viz. (i) North-west Dialect area having sub-dialects of North-Kamrup and North-Goalpara, (ii) South-west dialect area comprising South-Goalpara and Garo Hills Districts, (iii) North-central Assam areas comprising Darrang, Lakimpur district and a few places of Arunachal Pradesh, (vi) the southern Assam dialect area comprising Nowgaon, North Cachar, Mikir Hills and Adjacent districts. Phukan Basumatary (2005) mentioned three dialects i.e. (i) Western Bodo dialect, (ii) Eastern Bodo dialect (**Sanzari**) and (iii) Southern Bodo dialect. Bodo has another dialect i.e. **Burdun** which are not mentioned by scholars. The **Burdun** is a famous dialect of Bodo which has very unique differences from the other dialects; its spoken areas include Bengtol, Tukhrajhar and Amthekha areas in Chirang district, north-western part of Kokrajhar district of Assam and the indigenous people who are residing in the state of West Bengal.

The present paper discusses transitive and intransitive verb compounding of the standard Bodo language which is spoken in the Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Chirang and Bongaigaon districts of Assam.

2. Definition of Compounding

Many linguists have discussed and given definitions regarding compound or compounding. Libben (2006: 2) “considers compounding a language universal, and in some languages compounding is repeated to be extremely productive”. According to Crystal (1980) compound is “a term used widely in descriptive linguistic studies to refer to a linguistic unit which is composed of elements that function independently in other circumstances”. Bauer (2003: 40) defines a compound as the formation of a new lexeme by adjoining two or more lexemes. Regarding Katamba (1994: 264), compounding is usually defined, perhaps rather loosely, as the creation of words made up of two independent words. But Lieber and Stekauer (2009: 4) mention that some languages have not free-standing words. Roots are bound form in some languages. Hence, we can say (followed by Crystal, Bauer, Plag, Lieber and Stekauer) compounding is a process of word formation where the words are formed by combining two or more roots (or words).
3. Verb Compounding


4. Verb Compounding Processes in Bodo

There are some verbal compounding processes found in Bodo i.e. ‘noun + verb’, ‘adjective + verb’, ‘verb + verb’ and ‘verb + verb + verb’ compounding (Brahma 2016). Bodo has transitive and intransitive verbs which are compounded each other in order to form compound verb in the language. The compounding processes of the transitive and intransitive verbs are-

(a) Transitive + Intransitive
(b) Transitive + Transitive
(c) Transitive + Transitive + Transitive
(d) Transitive + Intransitive + Intransitive
(e) Intransitive + Transitive
(f) Intransitive + Intransitive

4.1. Transitive + Intransitive Verb Compounding

The verb pʰɯi ‘come’ and sem ‘to lessen’ are an intransitive in Bodo. Both the verbs can take V2 position in the ‘V1 + V2’ compounding. The following examples (1a) to (1f) have shown the ‘transitive + intransitive root verbs’ compounding.
Transitive + Intransitive verb > Compound Verb

(1a) \( zá + p^{\text{bwi}} \) > \( zá-p^{\text{bwi}} \)  
**eat** + **come** > ‘come and eat’

(b) \( lũŋ + p^{\text{bwi}} \) > \( lũŋ-p^{\text{bwi}} \)  
**drink** + **come** > ‘come and drink’

(c) \( lαŋ + p^{\text{bwi}} \) > \( lαŋ-p^{\text{bwi}} \)  
**take away** + **come** > ‘come and takeaway’

(d) \( zá + sěm \) > \( zá-sěm \)  
**eat** + **to lessen** > ‘eat and make less’

(e) \( lũŋ + sěm \) > \( lũŋ-sěm \)  
**drink** + **to lessen** > ‘drink and make less’

(f) \( lαŋ + sěm \) > \( lαŋ-sěm \)  
**takeaway** + **to lessen** > ‘make less by taking away’

The following sentence examples show transitive, intransitive and compound verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitive Verb</th>
<th>Intransitive Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2a) ( aŋ \ wŋk^{b} \text{am} \ zá-bai )</td>
<td>(3a) ( aŋ \ p^{\text{bwi}} \text{-bai} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1SG rice eat-PERF</td>
<td>1SG come-PERF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I have eaten rice.’</td>
<td>‘I have come.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) ( aŋ \ dũi \ lũŋ\text{-bai} )</td>
<td>(b) ( bini \ udũi-ja sěm\text{-bai} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1SG water drink-PERF</td>
<td>his/her belly-NOM lessen-PERF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I have drunk water.’</td>
<td>‘His/her belly has become less, or’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) ( \text{minu-ja} k^{b} \text{ada-k}^{b} \text{wu laŋ-bai} )</td>
<td>(c) ( \text{minu-ja} k^{b} \text{ada-k}^{b} \text{wu laŋ-bai} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minu-NOM basket-ACC take away-PERF</td>
<td>Minu-NOM basket-ACC take away-PERF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Minu has taken away the basket.’</td>
<td>‘Minu has taken away the basket.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compounding Verb

(4a) \( aŋ \ \text{haba-jao} wŋk^{b} \text{am za-p^{bwi}} \text{-bai} \)  
1SG marriage-LOC rice eat-come-PERF  
‘I have come and eaten the rice at marriage (ceremony).’

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| (b) | aŋ haba-jao zũũ-kũũ-bũ  loŋ-pʰũi-dũũ-mũn |
|     | 1SG  marriage-LOC rice beer-ACC-INCL  drink-come-REAL-PAST |
|     | ‘I came to marriage (ceremony) and also drank the rice beer.’ |
| (c) | minu-ja kʰada-kũũ dohai  laŋ-pʰũi-bai |
|     | Minu-NOM  basket-ACC  just ago  take away-come-PERF |
|     | ‘Minu has come and taken away the basket a few times ago.’ |
| (d) | dabla-ja  wŋkʰam-kũũ  zá-sém-dũŋ |
|     | Dabla-NOM  rice-ACC  eat-lessen-REAL |
|     | ‘Dabla is making less rice by eating.’ |
| (e) | gobla-ja  zũũ-kũũ  loŋ-sém-bai |
|     | Gobla-NOM  rice beer-ACC  drink-lessen-PERF |
|     | ‘Gobla has made the less rice beer by drinking.’ |
| (f) | bi-jũ  goĩ-kũũ  laŋ-sém-ŋasĩnũ  donŋ |
|     | 3SG-NOM  betel nut-ACC  take away-lessen-PROG  be |
|     | ‘He is making less betel nut by taking away’ |

### 4.2. Transitive + Transitive Verb Compounding

There is a presence of double transitive verb compounding process in Bodo which has been shown in the examples (5a) to (5d).

| (5a) | Transitive + Transitive verb > Compound Verb |
|      | buŋ + hũi > buŋ-hũi |
|      | say + give (outside) > ‘go and say’ |
| (b)  | bu + so > bu-so |
|      | beat + make section > ‘beat and make section’ |
| (c)  | bũ + kʰũ > bu-kʰũ (bũ > bu) |
|      | pull + make loose > ‘pull and make loose’ |
| (d)  | dan + kʰa > dan-kʰa |
|      | cut + make separate > ‘make separate by cut’ |
4.3. Transitive + Transitive + Transitive Verb Compounding

Some of the transitive verbs can occur as triple transitive verb compounding in Bodo. The following examples (6a) to (6f) have shown the triple transitive verb compounding.

Transitive + Transitive + Transitive verb > Compound Verb

(6a) dan + kʰa + hor > dan-kʰa-hor
chop + make separate + give (distance) > ‘chop and make separate from distance’
(b) bɯ + kʰa + hor > bɯ-kʰa-hor
to pull + make separate + give (distance) > ‘make separate by pulling from distance’
(c) ha + so + hɯi > ha-so-hɯi
cut + make section + give (outside) > ‘go and cut into pieces’
(d) bu + so + hɯi > bu-so-hɯi
beat + make section + give (outside) > ‘go and beat and make pieces’
(e) bɯ + kʰa + laŋ > bɯ-kʰa-laŋ
pull + make separate + take away > ‘make separate by pulling and go away’
(f) zɯ́ + kʰa + laŋ > zɯ́-kʰa-laŋ
kick + make separate + take away > ‘make separate by kicking and go away’

4.4. Transitive + Intransitive + Intransitive Verb Compounding

Besides the transitive verbs, the intransitive verbs pʰɯi ‘come’, sém ‘to lessen’ and dér ‘to be big/to increase’ can occur in ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ construction. It is also noticed here that the verbs pʰɯi, sém and dér can take the V2 and V3 positions of the ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ compounding. For example:

Transitive + Intransitive + Intransitive verb > Compound verb

(7a) zá + pʰɯi + sém > zá-pʰɯi-sém
eat + come + to lessen > ‘come and eat and make less’
(b) lɯŋ + pʰɯi + sém > lɯŋ-pʰɯi-sém
drink + come + to lessen > ‘come and drink and make less’
(c) zá + pʰwi + dér > zá-pʰwi-dér
eat + come + to be big/ to increase> ‘come and eat jointly’

(d) zá + sém + pʰwi > zá-sém-pʰwi
eat + to lessen + come > ‘come and eat and make less’

(e) lɯŋ + sém + pʰwi > lɯŋ-sém-pʰwi
drink + to lessen + come > ‘come and drink and make less’

(f) lɯŋ + dér + pʰwi > lɯŋ-dér-pʰwi
drink + to be big/ to increase + come > ‘come and drink jointly’

4.5. Intransitive + Transitive Verb Compounding

Some of the transitive verbs follow the intransitive verbs in order to form compound verbs in Bodo. In the following examples, the intransitive verbs are V1 and the transitive verbs are V2 in ‘V1 + V2’ compounding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intransitive + Transitive verb</th>
<th>Compound Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hab + sɯ</td>
<td>hab-sɯ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enter + cause to put in</td>
<td>‘to enter deeply’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undu + sɯ</td>
<td>undu-sɯ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep + cause to put in</td>
<td>‘to sleep more time’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sansri + laŋ</td>
<td>sansri-laŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swim + take away</td>
<td>‘swim and go away’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undu + laŋ</td>
<td>undu-laŋ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep + take away</td>
<td>‘sleep and go in dreams or sleep without sense’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰar + so</td>
<td>kʰar-so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run + make section</td>
<td>‘run and cross (the field)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bir + so</td>
<td>bir-so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly + make section</td>
<td>‘fly and cross’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6. Intransitive + Intransitive Verb Compounding

It is also found that the double intransitive verbs compounding processes are permitted in the language. The following examples (9a) to (9f) show the double intransitive verb compounding.

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Intransitive + Intransitive Verb > Compound Verb

(9a)  kʰar  +  go  >  kʰar-go  
run  +  to out/to release  >  ‘run and be free’

(b)  bir  +  go  >  bir-go  
fly  +  to out/to release  >  ‘fly and become free’

(c)  mini  +  gu  >  mini-gu  
to smile+  to out/ loose  >  ‘to smile unexpectedly’

(d)  hasu  +  gu  >  hasu-gu  
urinate  +  to out/ loose  >  ‘to urinate unexpectedly’

(e)  só  +  pʰɯi  >  só-pʰɯi  
reach  +  come  >  ‘to reach (by coming)’

(f)  sansri  +  pʰɯi  >  sansri-pʰɯi  
swim  +  come  >  ‘come and swim’

4.7. Affix and Verb Compounding

Generally, V2 does not allow any affixes in the ‘V1+V2+V3’ compounding in Bodo language. However, there are a few causative verbs found in Bodo which can take prefix as a second member V2 compounding. For example-

Causative Verb:

(10a)  pʰɯ-  +  lao  >  pʰɯ-lao  
Caus.Pref.  +  to be long  >  ‘make long’

(b)  pʰɯ-  +  lɯm  >  pʰɯ-lɯm  
Caus.Pref.  +  to be full (cover)  >  ‘make full (cover)’

The causative verbs pʰɯ-lao ‘make long’ and pʰɯ-lɯm ‘make full (cover)’ are formed by adding prefix /pʰɯ-/. These two causative verbs can take prefix as V2 compounding as shown below. It is to be shown here that the pʰɯ-lao and pʰɯ-lɯm are shortened the syllable by deleting vowel /ɯ/ while they are compounded. For example-
V1 + V2 > Compound Verb

(11a) nar + pʰwlao > nar-pʰlao
push + make long > ‘push and make long’

(b) bɯ + pʰwlao > bɯ-pʰlao
pull + make long > ‘pull and make long’

(c) bɯ + pʰlɯm > bɯ-pʰlɯm
pull + make full (cover) > ‘pull and make full (cover)’

However the other causative verbs are not allowed to take prefix as a V2 compounding.

(11d) nar + pʰo-dob > *nar-pʰo-dob
(e) nar + so-kʰo > *nar-so-kʰo
(f) zá + pʰe-sém > *zá-pʰe-sém
(g) dan + pʰu-súŋ > *dan-pʰu-súŋ
(h) dan + si-pʰái > *dan-si-pʰái

A question can arise in these examples why other causative verbs cannot take prefix in V2 compounding. The reason is that those verbs begin with the lateral consonant phoneme /l/, only that causative verbs can take prefix as a V2 compounding in Bodo language. The other verb compoundings occur without prefixes in examples such as:

(12a) nar + dob > nar-dob
push + to bend > ‘push and make bend’

(b) nar + so-kʰo > nar-kʰo
push + cause to out > ‘push and make out

(c) zá + sém > zá-sém
eat + to lessen > ‘eat and make less’

(d) dan + súŋ > dan-súŋ
chop + to shorten > ‘chop and make short’
(e)  \( \text{dan} + \text{si-p\h^{\text{ái}}} \rightarrow \text{dan-p\h^{\text{ái}}} \)
chop + cause to break \( > \) ‘chop and break’

5. Difference between Verbs and Adverbial Suffixes

There are some kinds of root verbs which have same sound (homophonous) as well as closely related meanings that can occur with the adverbial suffixes. Functionally, it indicates a little difference between the root verb and adverbial suffix. The root verb \( \text{z\u^{\text{wb}}} \) ‘complete’, \( \text{b\u^{\text{w}}} \) ‘pull’ and \( \text{p\h^{\text{in}}} \) ‘answer’ are used as a single verb; on the other hand, the morpheme \( \text{z\u^{\text{wb}}} \) ‘all/whole/finish up’, \( \text{b\u^{\text{w}}} \) ‘come close’ and \( \text{p\h^{\text{in}}} \) ‘again/back’ are used as adverbial suffixes. The difference between root verbs and adverbial suffixes are given below in the sentence examples (13a) to (13j).

(13a)  \( \text{ɯŋk^{\text{h}}am-a} \text{ z\u^{\text{wb}}-b} \)
   rice-NOM complete-PERF
   ‘Rice has finished/ Rice has become empty.’
(b)  \( \text{ɯŋk^{\text{h}}am-a} \text{ z\u^{\text{wb}}-z\u^{\text{wb}}-b} \)
   rice-NOM complete-whole-PERF
   ‘Rice has finished up/ Whole the rice has become empty.’
(c)  \( \text{aŋ} \text{ ɯŋk^{\text{h}}am-k\u^{\text{w}u}} \text{ za-z\u^{\text{wb}}-b} \)
   1SG rice-ACC eat-whole-PERF
   ‘I have eaten whole rice.’
(d)  \( \text{bi-}\text{j\u^{\text{w}}} \text{ rina-ni } \text{ suŋnai-}\text{k\u^{\text{w}u}} \text{ p\h^{\text{in}}-b} \)
   3SG-NOM Rina-GEN question-ACC answer-PERF
   ‘He/she has answered Rina’s question.
(e)  \( \text{bina-ja} \text{ rina-ni } \text{ suŋnai-}\text{k\u^{\text{w}u}} \text{ k\h^{\text{eb-se-b}}o} \text{ p\h^{\text{in}}-p\h^{\text{in}}-b} \)
   Bina-NOM Rina-GEN question-ACC CL-one-more answer-again-PERF
   ‘Bina has answered once more again Rina’s question.’
(f) Ram-a rina-ni batʰra-kʰɯu buŋʰin-bai
   Ram-NOM Rina-GEN matter-ACC say-again-PERF
   ‘Ram has said again Rina’s matter.’

(g) aŋ tʰela bɯ-dɯŋ
   1SG cart pull-REAL
   ‘I am pulling (a) cart’

(h) aŋ tʰela-kʰɯu no-wao bɯ-bɯ-bai
   1SG cart-ACC house-LOC pull-come close-PERF
   ‘I have come at home by pulling a cart’
   (Literally: I have pulled a cart and come close in the house)

(i) nɯŋ aŋ-ni-sim kʰar-bɯ-dɯ
   2SG 1SG-GEN up to run-come close-IMP
   ‘Please, you run and come close up to me.’

(j) bi-jɯ no-sim tʰabai-bɯ-bai
   3SG-NOM house-up to walk-come close-PERF
   ‘He has come to house by walking.’
   (Literally: He has walked and come close up to house.)

In the above example (13a), we have shown the root verb zɯb that can occur as a single verb. The example (13b) has shown a difference between the root verb and adverbial suffix, i.e. zɯb-zɯb, the first morpheme zɯb is a verb root, which means ‘complete’ and the second morpheme zɯb is an adverbial suffix, which means ‘all’ or ‘whole’. The example (13c) has shown zɯb attaching to the transitive verb zá to show the adverbial function. The example (13d) shows pʰin as a root verb and (13e) shows a difference between the root verb pʰin and adverbial suffix pʰin. Similarly, the example (13g) has shown bɯ as a root verb while (13h) shows a
difference between the root verb \textit{bu} and adverbial suffix \textit{bu}. In addition, the examples (13i) and (13j) have shown the function \textit{bu} as an adverbial suffix.

6. Conclusion

On the basis of analysis undertaken, the following conclusions on Bodo transitive and intransitive verb compounding can be drawn:

a. Compounding is an important word formation process in Bodo language including the process of verbal compounding.

b. The verbal compounding processes in Bodo are ‘verb + verb’, ‘verb + verb + verb’, ‘noun + verb’ and ‘adjective + verb’ compounding (Brahma 2016).

c. The compounding processes of the transitive and intransitive verbs in Bodo are-

\begin{enumerate}
  \item Transitive + Intransitive (see the 4.1. sub chapter)
  \item Transitive + Transitive (see the 4.2. sub chapter)
  \item Transitive + Transitive + Transitive (see the 4.3. sub chapter)
  \item Transitive + Intransitive + Intransitive (see the 4.4. sub chapter)
  \item Intransitive + Transitive (see the 4.5. sub chapter)
  \item Intransitive + Intransitive (see the 4.6. sub chapter)
\end{enumerate}

d. Most of the verbs are semantically related those of which are compounded each other in ‘V1 + V2’ and ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ constructions.

e. There is compounding of double transitive verbs found in Bodo which has been shown in the examples (5a) to (5d) and also found triple transitive verbs compounding which has been shown in (6a) to (6f). The transitive verbs \textit{hor} ‘give (distance)’, \textit{hw}i ‘give (outside)’ and \textit{lay} ‘take away’ can be V3 in ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ compounding process.

f. The intransitive verbs \textit{phw} ‘come’, \textit{sem} ‘to lessen’ and \textit{der} ‘to be big/to increase’ can occur as a V2 and V3 in the ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ compounding (see the examples (7a) to (7f)).
g. Some of the transitive verbs follow the intransitive verbs in order to form compound verbs in Bodo. That is shown in the example (8a) to (8f).

h. Double intransitive verb compounding is also permitted which has been shown in (9a) to (9f).

i. Generally, V2 and V3 is restricted to take prefix in the ‘V1+V2+V3’ compounding in Bodo. But, those verbs that begin with a lateral consonant phoneme /l/ can take causative prefix as a V2 compounding (see the examples (11a) to (11c)). The other causative verbs are not allowed to take prefix as a V2 compounding in the language.

j. The root verb ʒɯb ‘complete’ and the adverbial suffix ʒɯb ‘all/whole’ are different morphemes in Bodo, although homophonous, which have been shown in the examples (13a) to (13c).

k. Similarly, the root verb ʃin ‘answer’ and the adverbial suffix ʃin ‘again/back’ are different morphemes although homophonous, which have been shown in the examples (13d) to (13f).

l. Furthermore, the root verb ɓw ‘pull’ and the adverbial suffix ɓw ‘come close’ are homonyms which are shown in the examples (13g) to (13j).

ABBREVIATIONS

1st Person Singular = 1SG       2nd Person Singular = 2SG

3rd Person Singular = 3SG       High Tone = ’

Level Tone = unmark            Low Tone = ’

Accusative Case = ACC.         Causative = CAUS

Causative Prefix = Caus. Pref. Classifier = CL

Dative Case = DAT.            Genitive Case = GEN

Habitual = HAB.             Imperative Mood = IMP

Inclusive Particle = INCL       Locative Case = LOC

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Nominative Case = NOM  Noun = N  
Past Tense = PAST  Perfective = PERF  
Progressive = PROG  Realis Aspect = REAL  
Verb = V  
1st member of the Verb Compounding = V1  
2nd member of the Verb Compounding = V2  
3rd member of the Verb Compounding = V3  

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