

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. *Bur-dun* which are not mentioned by scholars. The *Bur-dun* 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).

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3. Verb Compounding

Compound verb is a multi word compound that functions as a single verb. It is formed by V + V compounding and sometimes N + V compounding processes. V + V compounding is very common in Bodo-Garo group of languages; for example, in Tiwa *nuy* ‘eat’, *poi* ‘come’, *nuy-poi* ‘drink and come’ (Muchahary 2014: 122), in Dimasa *zi* ‘eat’, *p^hai* ‘come’ *zi-p^hai* ‘come and eat’ (Barman 2012: 62), in Kokborok *ka* ‘step’, *hu* ‘rub’, *ka-hu* ‘rub foot’ (lit. to step and rub) (Debbarma 2014: 133), in Rabha *sa* ‘eat’, *m^un* ‘get’ *sa-m^un* ‘get to eat’ (Basumatary 2004: 180). N + V compounding is also found in Kokborok language for example *ok* ‘stomach’, *kui* ‘be sour’, *ok-kui* ‘to feel hungry’ (Debbarma 2014: 134).

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 *p^hui* ‘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 ^h ui	>	zá-p ^h ui
	eat	+	come	>	‘come and eat’
(b)	luŋ	+	p ^h ui	>	luŋ-p ^h ui
	drink	+	come	>	‘come and drink’
(c)	laŋ	+	p ^h ui	>	laŋ-p ^h ui
	take away	+	come	>	‘come and takeaway’
(d)	zá	+	sém	>	zá-sém
	eat	+	to lessen	>	‘eat and make less’
(e)	luŋ	+	sém	>	luŋ-sém
	drink	+	to lessen	>	‘drink and make less’
(f)	laŋ	+	sém	>	laŋ-sém
	takeaway	+	to lessen	>	‘make less by taking away’

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

Transitive Verb				Intransitive Verb	
(2a)	aŋ	uŋk ^h am	zá-bai	(3a)	aŋ p ^h ui-bai
	1SG	rice	eat-PERF		1SG come-PERF
	‘I have eaten rice.’				‘I have come.’
(b)	aŋ	dui	luŋ-bai	(b)	bini udui-ja sém-bai
	1SG	water	drink-PERF		his/her belly-NOM lessen-PERF
	‘I have drunk water.’				‘His/her belly has become less, or
(c)	minu-ja	k ^h ada-k ^h uu	laŋ-bai		His/her belly has decreased.’
	Minu-NOM	basket-ACC	take away-PERF		
	‘Minu has taken away the basket.’				
Compounding Verb					
(4a)	aŋ	haba-jao	uŋk ^h am	za-p ^h ui-bai	
	1SG	marriage-LOC	rice	eat-come-PERF	
	‘I have come and eaten the rice at marriage (ceremony).’				

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(b)	an	haba-jao	zɯu-k ^h ɯu-bɯ	lɯŋ-p ^h ɯi-dɯŋ-mɯn	
	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	k ^h ada-k ^h ɯu	dohai	laŋ-p ^h ɯi-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	ɯŋk ^h am-k ^h ɯu		zǎ-sém-dɯŋ	
	Dabla-NOM	rice-ACC		eat-lesser-REAL	
	‘Dabla is making less rice by eating.’				
(e)	gobla-ja	zɯu-k ^h ɯu		lɯŋ-sém-bai	
	Gobla-NOM	rice beer-ACC		drink-lesser-PERF	
	‘Gobla has made the less rice beer by drinking.’				
(f)	bi-jɯ	goi-k ^h ɯu		laŋ-sém-gasinɯ	doŋ
	3SG-NOM	betel nut-ACC		take away-lesser-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 + hɯi	>	buŋ-hɯi	
	say + give (outside)	>	‘go and say’	
(b)	bu + so	>	bu-so	
	beat + make section	>	‘beat and make section’	
(c)	bu + k ^h ú	>	bu-k ^h ú	(bu > bu)
	pull + make loose	>	‘pull and make loose’	
(d)	dan + k ^h a	>	dan-k ^h a	
	cut + make separate	>	‘make separate by cut’	

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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 + k ^h a + hor	>	dan-k ^h a-hor
	chop + make separate + give (distance)	>	‘chop and make separate from distance’
(b)	bu + k ^h a + hor	>	bu-k ^h a-hor
	to pull + make separate + give (distance)	>	‘make separate by pulling from distance’
(c)	ha + so + hui	>	ha-so-hui
	cut + make section + give (outside)	>	‘go and cut into pieces’
(d)	bu + so + hui	>	bu-so-hui
	beat + make section + give (outside)	>	‘go and beat and make pieces’
(e)	bu + k ^h a + laŋ	>	bu-k ^h a-laŋ
	pull + make separate + take away	>	‘make separate by pulling and go away’
(f)	zú + k ^h a + laŋ	>	zú-k ^h a-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 *p^hui* ‘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 *p^hui*, *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 + p ^h ui + sém	>	zá-p ^h ui-sém
	eat + come + to lessen	>	‘come and eat and make less’
(b)	luŋ + p ^h ui + sém	>	luŋ-p ^h ui-sém
	drink + come + to lessen	>	‘come and drink and make less’

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- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| (c) | zá | + | p ^h wi | + | dér | > | zá-p ^h wi-dér |
| | eat | + | come | + | to be big/ to increase | > | ‘come and eat jointly’ |
| (d) | zá | + | sém | + | p ^h wi | > | zá-sém-p ^h wi |
| | eat | + | to lessen | + | come | > | ‘come and eat and make less’ |
| (e) | lʷŋ | + | sém | + | p ^h wi | > | lʷŋ-sém-p ^h wi |
| | drink | + | to lessen | + | come | > | ‘come and drink and make less’ |
| (f) | lʷŋ | + | dér | + | p ^h wi | > | lʷŋ-dér-p ^h wi |
| | 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.

- | | Intransitive + Transitive verb | > | Compound Verb | | |
|------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|---|
| (8a) | hab | + | su | > | hab-su |
| | enter | + | cause to put in | > | ‘to enter deeply’ |
| (b) | undu | + | su | > | undu-su |
| | sleep | + | cause to put in | > | ‘to sleep more time’ |
| (c) | sansri | + | laŋ | > | sansri-laŋ |
| | swim | + | take away | > | ‘swim and go away’ |
| (d) | undu | + | laŋ | > | undu-laŋ |
| | sleep | + | take away | > | ‘sleep and go in dreams or sleep without sense’ |
| (e) | k ^h ar | + | so | > | k ^h ar-so |
| | run | + | make section | > | ‘run and cross (the field)’ |
| (f) | bir | + | so | > | bir-so |
| | fly | + | make section | > | ‘fly and cross’ |

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)	k ^h ar + go >	k ^h ar-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 + p ^h wi >	só-p ^h wi
	reach + come >	‘to reach (by coming)’
(f)	sansri + p ^h wi >	sansri-p ^h wi
	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)	p ^h w-	+ lao	>	p ^h w-lao
	Caus.Pref.	+ to be long	>	‘make long’
(b)	p ^h w-	+ lum	>	p ^h w-lum
	Caus.Pref.	+ to be full (cover)	>	‘make full (cover)’

The causative verbs *p^hw-lao* ‘make long’ and *p^hw-lum* ‘make full (cover)’ are formed by adding prefix /p^hw-/. These two causative verbs can take prefix as V2 compounding as shown below. It is to be shown here that the *p^hw-lao* and *p^hw-lum* are shortened the syllable by deleting vowel /w/ while they are compounded. For example-

	V1	+	V2	>	Compound Verb
(11a)	nar	+	p ^h ulao	>	nar-p ^h lao
	push	+	make long	>	‘push and make long’
(b)	bu	+	p ^h ulao	>	bu-p ^h lao
	pull	+	make long	>	‘pull and make long’
(c)	bu	+	p ^h ulum	>	bu-p ^h lum
	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	+	p ^h o-dob	>	*nar-p ^h o-dob
(e)	nar	+	so-k ^h o	>	*nar-so-k ^h o
(f)	zá	+	p ^h e-sém	>	*zá-p ^h e-sém
(g)	dan	+	p ^h u-súnj	>	*dan-p ^h u-súnj
(h)	dan	+	si-p ^h ái	>	*dan-si-p ^h ái

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-k ^h o	>	nar-k ^h o
	push	+	cause to out	>	‘push and make out
(c)	zá	+	sém	>	zá-sém
	eat	+	to lessen	>	‘eat and make less’
(d)	dan	+	súnj	>	dan-súnj
	chop	+	to shorten	>	‘chop and make short’

- (e) dan + si-p^hái > dan-p^hái
 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 *zwb* ‘complete’, *bu* ‘pull’ and *p^hin* ‘answer’ are used as a single verb; on the other hand, the morpheme *zwb* ‘all/whole/finish up’, *bu* ‘come close’ and *p^hin* ‘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) *uŋk^ham-a zwb-bai*
 rice-NOM complete-PERF
 ‘Rice has finished/ Rice has become empty.’
- (b) *uŋk^ham-a zwb-zwb-bai*
 rice-NOM complete-whole-PERF
 ‘Rice has finished up/ Whole the rice has become empty.’
- (c) *aŋ uŋk^ham-k^hu za-zwb-bai*
 1SG rice-ACC eat-whole-PERF
 ‘I have eaten whole rice.’
- (d) *bi-ju rina-ni suŋnai-k^hu p^hin-bai*
 3SG-NOM Rina-GEN question-ACC answer-PERF
 ‘He/she has answered Rina’s question.’
- (e) *bina-ja rina-ni suŋnai-k^hu k^heb-se-bao p^hin-p^hin-bai*
 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 bat^hra-k^huu **buŋ-p^hin**-bai
 Ram-NOM Rina-GEN matter-ACC say-again-PERF
 ‘Ram has said again Rina’s matter.’
- (g) aŋ t^hela **bu**-duŋ
 1SG cart pull-REAL
 ‘I am pulling (a) cart’
- (h) aŋ t^hela-k^huu no-wao **bu**-**bu**-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) nuŋ aŋ-ni-sim **k^har**-**bu**-du
 2SG 1SG-GEN-up to run-come close-IMP
 ‘Please, you run and come close up to me.’
- (j) bi-ju no-sim **t^habai**-**bu**-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 *zubb* that can occur as a single verb. The example (13b) has shown a difference between the root verb and adverbial suffix, i.e. *zubb-zubb*, the first morpheme *zubb* is a verb root, which means ‘complete’ and the second morpheme *zubb* is an adverbial suffix, which means ‘all’ or ‘whole’. The example (13c) has shown *zubb* attaching to the transitive verb *zá* to show the adverbial function. The example (13d) shows *p^hin* as a root verb and (13e) shows a difference between the root verb *p^hin* and adverbial suffix *p^hin*. Similarly, the example (13g) has shown *bu* as a root verb while (13h) shows a

difference between the root verb *bʷ* and adverbial suffix *bʷ*. In addition, the examples (13i) and (13j) have shown the function *bʷ* 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-
 - (i) Transitive + Intransitive (see the 4.1. sub chapter)
 - (ii) Transitive + Transitive (see the 4.2. sub chapter)
 - (iii) Transitive + Transitive + Transitive (see the 4.3. sub chapter)
 - (iv) Transitive + Intransitive + Intransitive (see the 4.4. sub chapter)
 - (v) Intransitive + Transitive (see the 4.5. sub chapter)
 - (vi) Intransitive + Intransitive (see the 4.6. sub chapter)
- 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 *hor* ‘give (distance)’, *hʷi* ‘give (outside)’ and *lan* ‘take away’ can be V3 in ‘V1 + V2 + V3’ compounding process.
- f. The intransitive verbs *p^hʷi* ‘come’, *sem* ‘to lessen’ and *dér* ‘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 *zubb* ‘complete’ and the adverbial suffix *zubb* ‘all/whole’ are different morphemes in Bodo, although homophonous, which have been shown in the examples (13a) to (13c).
- k. Similarly, the root verb *p^hin* ‘answer’ and the adverbial suffix *p^hin* ‘again/back’ are different morphemes although homophonous, which have been shown in the examples (13d) to (13f).
- l. Furthermore, the root verb *bʉ* ‘pull’ and the adverbial suffix *bʉ* ‘come close’ are homonyms which are shown in the examples (13g) to (13j).

ABBREVIATIONS

1 st Person Singular	=	1SG	2 nd Person Singular	=	2SG
3 rd 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			
1 st member of the Verb Compounding	=	V1			
2 nd member of the Verb Compounding	=	V2			
3 rd member of the Verb Compounding	=	V3			

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