

CHAPTER-III

Compound Verb Construction in Nepali

3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks into the different features and properties of compound verbs (CV) in Nepali. § 3.1 looks into Nepali compound verb construction and the different types of CVs are discussed here. § 3.2 discusses the verbal features of CVs in Nepali. In § 3.3 negation with reference to Nepali compound verb is explained in detail. In § 3.4 we look into causatives and passives in a CV construction. In §3.5 some properties like deletion of the first element in a CV construction, compound sentences in a CV are discussed. § 3.6 deals with Nepali light verbs, its types and their properties.

3.1 Compound Verbs in Nepali

Compound verb construction is normally a combination of two constituents; (i) both the constituents can be verbs (Verb – Verb), and (ii) first constituent can be a non-verbal category and the second constituent, a verb. CVs thus formed with two elements but functions as a single unit and the second verb of that unit carries the verbal inflection. Initially the idea of CV was limited to the juxtaposition of two verbs into a single unit. Besides the V-V CV construction, languages can have a CV construction where the first item is a non-verbal element that juxtaposes to the second element, which is the light verb. Montaut (2016:142) states that the formation of a complex predicate by using a non-verbal element along with a light verb can be considered as an exclusive Pan Indian feature, which makes the subcontinent a unique linguistic area. In most of the world languages, CVs show that light verbs carry TAM features, agreement features and other grammatical inflections while the main lexical verb or the non-verbal category either a noun or an adjective determines its semantics along with the light verb.

3.1.1 Types of Compound Verb Construction in Nepali

Based on the merge of the two elements we can broadly divide Nepali compounds in verbal compound (V-V) and non-verbal compound (N/Adj/Adv - Verb) category. Under V-V kind of CV we see also have a type where the first verbal element takes the –i marker. This

normally happens when the light verb is *de* ‘give’ and *li* ‘take’. But there are CVs like *khol de* ‘open’, which does not take the conjunctive particle –*i* obligatorily. In Nepali *khol de* ‘open’ and *khol-i de* ‘open’, both are acceptable constructions. We can see the verbal compound combinations in table 10.

Table 10

| Verb - Verb | Verb + i - Verb |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| bandh gar ‘close’ close do | bana-i de ‘make’ make-i give |
| khol de ‘open’ open give | kha-i de ‘eat’ eat-i give |
| hukum gar ‘order’ order do | hani-i li ‘hit’ hit-i take |

Table 10: Verbal constituents of CV Construction

In Table 11, we have we have examples of non-verbal constituents like adjective, noun as the first constituent of the CV.

Table 11

| Adj-V | N-V |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ramro pa ‘love’ good get | bija gar ‘marry’ marriage do |
| safa par ‘clean’ clean make | suru gar ‘start’ start do |
| niko gar ‘cure’ cure do | hatya gar ‘murder’ murder do |
| ramro lag ‘like’ good feel | arambha gar ‘begin’ begin do |

Table 11: Non-verbal constituents of CV Construction

Now let us look at some examples of the Nepali CV constructions:

(80) razib-le dokan bandh gar-j-o (V-V)

rajib-ERG shop close do-PST-3P.SG.M

“Rajib closed the shop.”

(81) buini-le afno buda-lai biswas gar-ch-e (N-V)

sister-ERG own husband-ACC trust do-PRES-3P.SG.F

“Sister trusts her husband.”

(82) mai-le tjo bench phor par-j-e (Adj-V)

I-ERG that bench dirty make-PST-1P.SG

“I made that bench dirty.”

Apart from these combinations, in SN we can have an adverb as the first constituent in a CV. The example shown here is from Lohani (1999:5) here as example (83):

(83) choraa-le kaapi khera phaal-y (Adv-N)

Son-OBL-E notebook-N uselessly throw-PnhSM

“The son left the notebook unused.” (Lohani 1999: 5)

From example (80-82), we can see that Nepali CV can be formed by juxtaposition of the main verb, and light verb giving a V-V compound verb in (80), noun and verb in (81), adjective and light verb in (82). These sentences from (80-82) are both in AN and SN. Sentence (83) cited by Lohani is not widely observed in AN.¹

The examples (80-82) shows Nepali compound verb construction where a non-verbal unit and a light verb are combined to indicate a single event. In these constructions, the semantics is determined by the noun/ adjective or by the adverb with the light verb.

In the V-V type construction, the main verb carries the *-i* marker. This normally happens when the CV construction has *-de* ‘give’ and *-li* ‘take’ as a light verb. In Sentences (84-85), we have instances of such construction.

(84) *timi-le jo fan bana-i li-j-eu* (V+i -V)
 you-ERG this fan make-CNJP take-PST-2P

Lit: You repaired the fan for yourself.

“You repaired the fan.”

(85) *ishad-le ma-lai tjo kahani bhani di-j-o* (V+i -V)
 ishad-ERG me-DAT that story tell-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG

“Ishad told that story to me.”

Examples (84-85) shows a verbal compounding where both the units are verb and it has a conjunctive particle *-i* marker to be attached with the main verb. Generally, this *-i* marker comes only if it is a V-V type of construction where the light verb is *de* ‘give’ and *li* ‘take’ except constructions like *khol de* ‘open’ which optionally takes the conjunctive particle *-i*. So, we can say that in AN, certain verbal compounds obligatorily require a conjunctive particle to be attached with the main verb.

3.1.2 Word order and CV

The word order of Nepali main verb and light verb is not flexible. Let us see an example of Nepali light verb construction:

(86a) *shibani-le tjo gari bigar-i din-ch-e*
 shibani-ERG the car destroy- CNJP give-PRES-3P.SG.F

“Shibani destroys the car.”

*(b) Shibanile tjo bigari gari dinche.

*(c) Shibanile tjo dinche gari bigari.

(d) Shibanile bigari dinche tjo gari.

From the example (86a-86d) we see that Nepali light verbs cannot be moved out from their canonical word order. The direct object *gari* ‘car’ cannot occur between the main verb and the light verb. The main verb and the light verb in Nepali cannot have a reverse order, which is possible in languages like Marathi. Tejaswini Deoskar (2006:184) shows that Marathi allows such reverse order unlike Nepali.

(87) gita-ni pustak taakla waach-un (Deoskar 2006:184)

gita-ERG book drop.NEU.PST read-PRT

“Gita read the book (anyhow, to finish it off).”

Example (87) is an acceptable construction in Marathi where the light verb *takla* ‘drop.neu.pst’ precedes the main verb *waach-un* ‘read-prt’. Though the canonical word order of Nepali is SOV, but it is flexible in specific context as in (86d). The example (86d) is grammatical and acceptable because here, the CV *bigari dinche* ‘destroy’ moves as one single unit. We have seen (86a-86d) that the compound verbs have fixed word order. In a verb final language like Nepali, the finite features have to obligatorily occur in the clause final position; hence the restriction. Therefore, as a compound construction, the word order may be flexible but segregating a CV into light and main verb cannot be reversible from their canonical word order.

3.1.2.1 K-word insertion

Another important aspect of Nepali CV construction is that a k-word can occur between a main verb or other non-verbal element and a light verb in a negative construction. For example:

(88a) sachin bija gar-na manti kina bha-ena

sachin marriage do-INF agree why complete-PST.NEG.3P.SG

“Why did Sachin not agree to marry?”

The k-word *kina* ‘why’ in Nepali can occur between a main verb or the non-verbal element and the light verb as seen from example (88a). The other possible combinations are as follows:

- (b) sachin kina bija gar-na manti bha-ena ?
- (c) sachin bija gar-na kina manti bha-ena ?
- (d) kina sachin bija gar-na manti bha-ena ?

3.1.3 The Conjunctive Particle -i in AN

Masica (1991:326) labels the **-i** marker as an instance of absolutive marker in SN compound verb construction. Lohani (1995) and Pokhrel (1991) in the lines of Masica have also termed the **-i** marker as absolutive marker while discussing the SN compound verb construction. Masica (1991:324) shows that **-era** is the conjunctive participle in Nepali. In AN we observe that both the **-i** and **-era** are in non-finite form. According to Subbarao (2009), conjunctive participial links the main clause and the subordinate clause. Therefore, to avoid the confusion we will label the **-i** marker in AN as a conjunctive particle that links the main verb and the light verb in a CV construction. In examples (89-90) we have shown both the **-i** and **-era** markers in a simple sentence.

- (89) ram bhat kha-era ga-j-o (SN and AN)
- ram rice eat-NF leave-PST-3P.SG.M

“Ram left after having rice.”

- (90) ram bhat kha-i ga-j-o (AN)
- ram rice eat-NF go- PST-3P.SG.M

“Ram left after having rice.”

From (89-90), we see that the meaning of both the construction is same. Now let us look the markers in a CV construction in (91-92).

(91) ram-le bhat bana-era di-j-o
 ram-ERG rice make-NF give-PST-3P.SG.M
 “Ram prepared and gave the rice.”

(92) ram-le bhat bana-i di-j-o
 ram-ERG rice make-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M
 “Ram prepared rice.”

In (91), we see that the conjunctive participle **-era** is joining the main clause and subordinate clause but the meaning of the construction clearly implies that it is not a compound construction. In (92) with the help of the **-i** marker, a compound verb construction is formed. Therefore, we will label this **-i** as a conjunctive particle in AN compound verb construction. In AN, construction like (90) and (92) are widely acceptable where the **-i** functions as a conjunctive particle. One of the possible explanation for this phenomenon is the influence of Assamese on AN. In Assamese, the conjunctive particle **-i** suffixes to the first constituent of the compound verb.

(93) ram-e bhat bana-i di-l-e
 ram-ERG rice make-CNJP give-PST-3P
 “Ram prepared rice.”

3.2 Verbal features of Nepali Compound Verbs

In this section, we discuss the verbal features of Nepali with reference to compound verb construction.

3.2.1 Tense in Nepali CV

The examples (80-85) shows how two different elements come together and form a compound construction. From the examples in §3.1.1, we can see that the verbs *pa* ‘get’, *de* ‘give’, *lag* ‘feel’, *par* ‘make’ are known as light verbs in Nepali as they also attribute

something to the main verb in order to fulfill the complete meaning. Light verb plays an important role in a CV construction as it takes TAM features. In examples (94-96) we have the compound verbs taking the TAM features.

(94) doctor-le jo bimar niko par-ch-a
 doctor-ERG this disease cure make-PRES-3P.SG
 “Doctor cures this disease.”

(95) doctor-le jo bimar niko par-j-o
 doctor-ERG this disease cure make-PST-3P.SG
 “Doctor cured this disease.”

(96) doctor-le jo bimar bholi niko par-ch-a
 doctor-ERG this disease tomorrow cure make-PRES-3P.SG
 “Doctor will cure this disease tomorrow.”

In Chapter 2, we have shown AN variety has present and past tense markers. To indicate future time, temporal adverbs are obligatorily used. The same can be seen in examples (94-96) where the light verb carries tense in AN compound verb construction.

3.2.2 Aspect in Nepali CV

In Nepali, the basic aspectual distinction is between Perfective and Imperfective aspects. In this section, we will try to see the aspectual marking in a compound construction. Let us analyze some examples:

3.2.2.1 Perfect

(97) simanta-le ghar bana-i de-ko-ch-a
 simanta-ERG house make- CNJP give-PERF-PRES-3P.SG
 “Simanta has made the house.”

- (98) simanta-le ghar bana-i de-ko thi-j-o
simanta-ERG house make- CNJP give-PERF EXIST-PST-3P.SG
“Simanta had made the house.”

3.2.2.2 Imperfect

- (99) razu-le dabai bhabi katar kha-i di-dei-ch-a
razu-ERG medicine believe jackfruit eat- CNJP give- PROG-PRES-3P.SG
“Raju is eating jackfruit as medicine.”

- (100) razu-le dabai bhabi katar kha-i di-dei thi-j-o
razu-ERG medicine believe jackfruit eat- CNJP give-PROG EXIST-PST-3P.SG
“Raju was eating the jackfruit as medicine.”

From § 3.2.2.1 and § 3.2.2.2 we can see that, in Nepali, the progressive as well as perfect aspect gets marked only in light verbs. In present tense the **-ko** marker suffixes to the light verb, followed by tense and agreement and same is seen with the progressive marker **-dei** as shown in (97 and 99). However, in case of the past perfect and progressive, the progressive marker suffixes to the light verb and the existential marker **thi** takes the tense and agreement.

The main verb (97-100) cannot take the aspectual features: therefore, the light verb is considered as the source of all grammatical properties of a compound verb construction.

3.2.3 Modal Verbs in Nepali CV

In chapter 2, § 2.1.2.3 we have seen that a modal verb occurs to indicates ability, probability, and necessity. In chapter 2, examples (26-33) show that in a modal verb construction, the main verb takes the infinitival **-na/-nu** and the modal verb carries tense, aspect and agreement features. In a CV construction, the light verb takes the infinitival marker **-na/-nu** and the modal verb carries the tense, aspect and agreement features.

(101) hami jo kha-i di-na sak-ch-um
 we this eat- CNJP give-INF can-PRES-1P.PL
 “We can eat this.”

(102) timi-le ma-lai ramro pau-na par-ch-a
 you-ERG me-ACC like get-INF must-PRES.2P.SG
 “You must like me.”

In Nepali, if a modal verb occurs in a CV construction, the light verb takes the infinitival marker **-na** which is an allomorphic variant of **-nu** (§ 2.1.2.3, examples 26-28). Generally, in a Nepali CV construction, the light verb always takes the tense marker but from the examples (101-102), we see that in a CV construction the modal verb *sak* ‘can’ in (101) and *par* ‘must’ in (102) takes the TAM feature and the light verb takes the infinitival **-na**. The CV in (101-102) occurs in an infinitival clause and the modal verb occurs in the main clause, the modal verb carries tense, agreement and the compound verb takes the infinitival **-na**. The agreement marker occurs with the modal verb in a Nepali CV construction.

3.3 Negation in Nepali CV

In Nepali, we can negate any construction by using the negative marker **na**. In a CV construction, negation can be done by suffixing the negative marker to the light verb. Let us take some examples of non-verbal compounds from AN.

(103a) naresh-le ziba hatja gar-ena
 naresh-ERG animal murder do-PST.NEG.3P.SG.M
 “Naresh did not kill animals.”

*(b) naresh-le ziba hatja-na gar-j-o

*(c) naresh-le ziba na-hatja gar-j-o

(104a) mai-le timi-lai ramro pa-ina
 I-ERG you-ACC good get-PST.NEG.1P.SG
 “I did not like you.”

*(b) mai-le timi-lai ramro-na pa-j-e

(c) mai-le timi-lai na-ramro pa-j-e

In (103a-104c) the negative marker **-na** suffixes to the light verb. In (103a) we have *-ena* which is a fusion of tense, negation and agreement in masculine gender and in (104a) we see *-ina*, which is a fusion of tense, negation and agreement in feminine gender construction (For details see chapter 2, § 2.4). From the above examples (103a-104b), it is apparent that in a CV construction the finite light verbs obligatorily takes the **na** as a suffix. If we apply the negative marker to the non-verbal element instead of the light verb, it will result into bad sentences as (103b, 103c, 104b). (104c) is a grammatically correct sentence but the interpretation of negation differs in this example. From examples (103-104), we have seen that in a non-verbal CV construction, the light verb obligatorily takes the negative marker.

In (105-106) we have negation of CV construction where both the constituents are verbal.

(105a) krishna-le raza zastei hukum gar-ch-a
 krishna-ERG king like order do-PRES-3P.SG.M
 “Krishna orders like a king.”

(b) krishna-le raza zastei hukum gar-deina
 krishna-ERG king like order do-PRES.NEG.3P.SG.M
 “Krishna does not order like a king.”

*(c) krishna-le raza zastei hukum-na gar-ch-a

*(d) krishna-le raza zastei na-hukum gar-ch-a

(106a) u-le khana kha-i di-j-o
he-ERG food eat- CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M
“He ate the food.”

(b) u-le khana kha-i di-ena
he-ERG food eat- CNJP give-PST.NEG.3P.SG.M
“He did not eat the food.”

*(c) u-le khana kha-i-na di-j-o

In the examples given above, we see that (105b and 106b) is grammatical. In a verbal compound construction, the negative marker occurs obligatorily with the light verb. We cannot either prefix or suffix the negative marker with the main verb in a CV as evident from the ill formed sentences in (103b, 103c).

In (106d) we have a grammatically well-formed sentence but the interpretation of this sentence varies. This is no longer a CV construction because the negative marker **-na** prefixes with the main verb and requires an object i.e. *ma* ‘I’ in the construction that changes its interpretation.

(d) u-le khana na-kha-i ma-lai di-j-o
He-ERG food NEG-eat-NF I-DAT give-PST-3P.SG.M
“He gave me food without eating.”

Interestingly example (106e) has a double negation structure where both the non-finite verb and the finite verb takes negation. In example (106e), we can see that both the verbs occur independently but not as a CV. This structure is possible only because it is not a compound verb construction.

- (e) u-le khana na-kha-i ma-lai di-ena
 he-ERG food NEG-eat- NF I-DAT give-PST.NEG.3P.SG.M
 “He did not give me food without eating.”

Thus it can be summed up with the view that the order of the verbal constituent in a compound verb negative construction are shown below

- i. Main Verb – Light Verb – Tense – Negative –Agreement** (example 103a, 104a)
- ii. Main Verb – CNJP – Light Verb – Tense – Negative –Agreement** (example 105b)
- iii. Nonverbal element – Light Verb – Tense – Negative – Agreement** (example 106b)

3.3.1 Negative Polarity Items

Negative polarity items (NPI) are words that come only when there is a negative element in a construction. Let us see the examples shown below.

- (107) mai-le kadapi doilo band^h gar-ina
 I-ERG never door close do-PST.NEG.1P.SG
 “I never closed the door.”

- (108a) sid^hu-le kaileni bathroom safa par-ena
 sidhu-ERG never bathroom clean make-PST.NEG.3P.SG
 ‘Sidhu never cleaned the bathroom.’

In example (107-108), words like *kadapi*, *kaileni* are the examples of Negative Polarity Items in Nepali. Let us see another example where we will see how the NPI can occur in between a compound construction.

- (b) sid^hule bathroom safa kaileni parenā. **V-NPI-V**
- (c) sid^hule bathroom safa parenā kaileni. **V-V-NPI**
- (d) kaileni sid^hule bathroom safa parenā. **NPI-V-V**

The verb *sut* ‘sleep’ is an intransitive verb and we have one NP *nani* ‘baby’ which functions as a subject and has the thematic role of topic. When the causative marker –a suffixes to the intransitive verb *sut* ‘sleep’ we have (110) as shown below

- (110) *ama-le* *nani-lai* *sut-a-j-in*
 mother-ERG baby-ACC sleep-CAUS-PST-3P.SG.F.LH
 “Mother made the baby sleep.”

In (110) with the suffixation of –a to the intransitive verb *sut* ‘sleep’, we derive a transitive verb *suta* ‘to sleep’. The derived transitive in (110) shows that it has a new argument *ama* ‘mother’, which is an agent and the subject of the intransitive verb *sut* ‘sleep’. In (109), *nani* ‘baby’ becomes the direct object and it has the thematic role of theme/patient. Here, the subject and the agent is the causer and the direct object *nani* is the causee or the affected.

Now let us look at how a derived di-transitive construction of the verb *sut* ‘sleep’ in Nepali is derived as shown in (111) below.

- (111) *ama-le* *rima-lai* *laga-era* *nani* *sut-a-j-in*
 mother-ERG rima-DAT employ-NF baby sleep-CAUS-PST-3P.SG.F.LF
 “Mother made Rima make the baby sleep.”

In (111) we have an instance of indirect causation where the oblique argument *rimalai lagaera* becomes the indirect causer. In such a construction the subject and the direct object retains its position. The direct object *nani* ‘baby’ is the theme and the causee of the action. The subject *ama* ‘mother’ has the thematic role of agent who indirectly makes the oblique argument *rима* to make the baby sleep. Nepali has only one causative marker –a for both direct and indirect causation.

In Nepali there are some predicates like *laga* ‘engage’, *bana* ‘make’ which expresses the notion of causation. These verbs give a semantically causative reading but it overtly requires the morphological causative marker -a in the main verb to indicate causation.

- (112) mai-le zon-lai kud-na lag-a-j-e
 I-ERG john-ACC run-INF engage-CAUS-PST.1P.SG
 “I made John run.”
- (113) u-le ta-lai za-ne ban-a-j-o
 he-ERG you-ACC go-INF make- CAUS-PST.3P.SG.M
 “He made you go.”

Now we will take an example of causative in Nepali compound verb and see the position of causatives in such construction.

- (114) mahesh-le ma-lai himakshi sita bhet gar-au-ch-a
 mahesh-ERG me-ACC himakshi with meet do-CAUS-PRES-3P.SG.M
 “Mahesh make me meet Himakshi.”

From (114), we can see that the causative marker *-au* gets attached to the light verb in Nepali compound verb construction. We can also see from the example that the main verb which indicates the first event seems persuasive to make the second event effective or we can say that the second verb *gar* ‘do’ happened only because of the first verb *bhet* ‘meet’.

3.4.2 Passives

Payne (1997:204) mentions three properties for passives as following:

- (i) “The agent is either omitted or demoted to an oblique role.”
- (ii) “The other core participants possesses all properties of subjects relevant for the language as a whole.”
- (iii) “The verb possesses any and all language-specific formal properties of intransitive verbs.”

Pokhrel (1996:453) shows that SN has reflexive and non-reflexive passives. The passive sentence of an intransitive construction takes the reflexive *aphu* ‘myself’ and in other construction the passive marker *-i* occurs. In (115a-115b) we have shown the examples.

(115a) ma bas-j-e (Active)

I sit-PST-1P.SG

“I sat”

(b) aphu bas-i-j-o (Passive)

self sit-PASS-PST-3P.SG.M

“I was sat.”

In such construction, Pokhrel (1996:452) mentions that there is no agreement in number, gender and person. It is always in the third person singular masculine gender by default. In (116a-116b) we have the passive marker construction of a transitive verb from Pokhrel (1996:451).

(116a) mai-le chor-i cin-e (Pokhrel 1996: 451)

I-ERG sibling-FEM identify-1P.SG.PST

“I identified the daughter.”

(b) chor-i cin-i-i (Pokhrel 1996: 451)

sibling-FEM identify-PASS-3P.SG.F.PST

“The daughter was identified.”

In AN examples like (115a-116b) are acceptable constructions. Here we see lowering of valency in (116b) when we passivize (116a)

The passive examples shown above are found in both SN and AN variety. In AN when a compound verb is passivized we have the passive marker **-a** which suffixes to the main verb as in examples (117a-117b).

(117a) sumit-le meri-lai ghar bana-i di-j-o

sumit-ERG mary-DAT home make-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

“Sumit built a house for Mary.”

- (b) meri-lai ghar bana-i di-a ga-j-o
 mary-DAT house make-CNJP give-PASS go-PST-3P.M

“A house was built for Mary.”

From the examples (117a-117b), we can see that the subject *sumit-le* is dropped in the passive sentence (117b) and we get a complex construction *bana-i dia gajo*, which means ‘built’. In (117b) the light verb only takes the passive marker –a, unlike in (117a) where it takes the tense and agreement features. In the passivized sentence (117b), an auxiliary verb *ga* ‘go’ occurs and it takes the tense and agreement features. The subject *sumit-le* drops in (117b). This first property mentioned by Payne (1997:204) is applicable to AN as seen from the examples (117a-117b).

3.5 Properties of CV

This section looks into the properties of CV constructions in Nepali. In § 3.5.1 we discuss the deletion of the verbal/non-verbal constituent from a CV and in §3.5.2, the formation of compound sentences in a CV construction is shown with adequate examples.

3.5.1 Deletion of the Verbal/Non Verbal element from a Compound Construction

From the examples discussed so far, we have seen that in a declarative sentence, it is not possible to drop either the verbal as well as non-verbal element or the light verb from a compound construction. For e.g.

- (118a) swapa-le doilo bana-i di-j-o
 swapa-ERG door make- CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

“Swapa made the door.”

- * (b) swapa-le doilo bana-i

- (c) swapa-le doilo di-j-o
 swapa-ERG door give-PST-3P.SG.M

“Swapa gave the door.”

In a declarative sentence, if we drop the light verb from a CV then it leads to a grammatically unacceptable construction like (118b). The example in (118c) is a grammatically acceptable sentence where the main verb *dijo* ‘give’ is finite but it is not a compound verb construction. Therefore, we find example (118c) is acceptable if it functions as a simple verb. Apart from verbal compounds, this is also applicable for non-verbal compounds in a declarative construction. This normally happens with a yes-no sentence as shown in (119).

(119a) timi ma-lai ghrina gar-ch-eu ra?
 you I-ACC hate do-PRES-2P.SG QP

Do you hate me?

Answer: gar-ch-u

“(I) do.”

(b) swapa-le doilo bana-i di-j-o ra?
 swapa-ERG door make- CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M QP

Did Swapa make the door?

Answer: di-j-o

“(He) did.”

In a yes-no question type of sentences, it seems that the verbal/non-verbal element can be dropped from a CV. When a speaker replies, the light verbs can solely complete the discourse as shown in (119a) and (119b). This is possible, since Nepali is a pro-drop language. This phenomenon is seen in most of the Indo-Aryan languages where the pronominal subjects can be dropped. In (119a-119b) we also find the object NPs can be dropped too. The deletion of a non-verbal element from a CV in (119a) and the deletion of the main verb from a CV in (119b) is possible only in situations like yes/no question-answer sequence. The quick response to a question creates such construction where the speaker drops the subject and in spite of uttering the entire sentence, the reply concentrates only on the required information.

3.5.2 Compound Sentences in Compound Verb Construction

Compound sentences can be formed with CVs. The conjunction *ra* ‘and’ can occur between the non-verbal unit and light verb construction. In (120a) we have one such example. If we break the sentence (120a) then we have (120b) and (120c). From (120b) the light verb *par* ‘make’ is dropped and from (120c) *ule jo kotha* ‘he this room’ is dropped.

(120a) u-le jo kotha phor ra chiplo par-j-o
he-ERG this room dirty and slippery make-PST-3P.SG.M
“He made the room dirty and slippery.”

(b) u-le jo kotha phor par-j-o
he-ERG this room dirty make-PST-3P.SG.M
“He made this room dirty.”

(c) u-le jo kotha chiplo par-j-o
he-ERG this room slippery make-PST-3P.SG.M
“He made this room slippery.”

Here the conjunction *ra* ‘and’ occurs between the adjectives. The adjective can only occur with the help of a conjunction, which connects them. In (120), the non-verbal unit *phor* ‘dirty’ and *chiplo* ‘slippery’ are coordinated to form a compound. Now in (121), we look into V+i-V compound verbs in a compound sentence.

(121a) u-le bhat kha ra rako zati phela-i di-j-o
he-ERG rice eat and remain CLF throw-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M
“He ate the rice and threw the remaining.”

(b) u-le bhat kha-i di-j-o
 he-ERG rice eat-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

“He ate the rice.”

(c) u-le rako zati phela-i di-j-o
 he-ERG remain CLF throw-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

“He threw the remaining.”

In (121a) we see a compound sentence with a CV construction. If we break the sentence (121a), we have (121b) *kha-i de* ‘eat give’ and (121c) *phela-i de* ‘throw give’ compound constructions. If we see the compound sentence (121a), the conjunctive particle **-i** is dropped from the verb *kha* ‘eat’ and both the CVs from (121b-121c) are combined by the conjunction **-ra**. The possible explanation for the dropping of **-i** marker may be due to the occurrence of the conjunction **-ra** which is already working as a conjunction here. Therefore, examples like (121d) are unacceptable in Nepali.

*(d) u-le bhat kha-i ra rako zati phela-i di-j-o
 he-ERG rice eat-CNJP and remain CLF throw- CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

“He ate the rice and threw the remaining.”

In (121d) the conjunctive particle **-i** and the conjunction **ra** cannot occur together in a sentence. If we drop the conjunction and retain the conjunctive particle, we have a grammatical construction as shown in (121e).

(e) u-le bhat kha-i rako zati phela-i di-j-o
 he-ERG rice eat-CNJP remain CLF throw-CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

“He ate the rice and threw the remaining.”

The example (121e) provides evidence that **-i** marker has a conjunctive status which is why **-i** and **-ra** cannot occur in (121d). Now, in example (122) we have shown the compound sentences in a V-V compound verb construction.

(122a) mai-le bijana dokan bandh gar-j-e ra beluka khol di-j-e
 I-ERG morning shop close do-PST.1P.SG and evening open give-PST-1P.SG
 “I closed the shop in the morning and opened it in the evening.”

(b) mai-le bijana dokan bandh gar-j-e
 I-ERG morning shop close do-PST-1P.SG
 “I closed the shop in the morning.”

(c) mai-le beluka dokan khol di-j-e
 I-ERG evening shop open give-PST-1P.SG
 “I opened the shop in the evening.”

3.6 Light Verb Construction in Nepali

LVCs can be seen in most of the South Asian language families like; Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto Burman (Kachru and Pandharipande 1980). Jespersen (1965, Volume VI:117) first introduced the term light verb to indicate constructions like V+NP in English. Benjamin Slade (2013:535) defines light verb as constituting verbs, which typically have full lexical verb counterparts, but which enter the derivation structurally deficient in some respect. In Nepali compound verb construction, the light verb plays a very vital role which we will discuss in the next sections.

We have observed so far that compound verbs are formed with either a verbal or a nonverbal element and a light verb in Nepali. The main verb may occur in its root form or it may take the conjunctive particle **-i**. On the other hand, the light verb takes features like tense, aspect, mood and agreement. ⁱⁱ

Let us see the following Nepali examples in (123) and (124).

(123) timi-le ma-lai han-i di-j-eu
 you-ERG me-ACC hit- CNJP give-PST-2P.SG
 “You hit me.”

The main verb *han* ‘hit’ in (123) takes the conjunctive particle **-i**. The light verb *dijeu*

(124) ama-le kotho sapha par-j-in
 mother-ERG room clean make-PST-3P.SG

“Mother cleaned the room.”

‘gave’ takes tense and agreement features. In (124) the adjective *sapha* ‘clean’ combines with the light verb *par* ‘makes’ to form a conjunct light verb compound but the adjective *sapha* does not take the conjunctive participle **-i**. The light verb *par* ‘make’ takes the tense and agreement features. In both the examples main verb *han* and the adjective *sapha* along with the light verb contributes to the larger meaning of the predicate construction. The light verb also plays an important role in thematic roles or semantic roles assignment to the compound verbs. In (123) the light verb *di* ‘give’ has two argument NPs, an agent *timi* ‘you’ and a theme *malai* ‘me’ and in (124) the light verb *par* ‘make’ has an agent *ama* ‘mother’ and a theme *kotho* ‘room’.

3.6.1 Types of Light Verbs

Going by the examples in (123) and (124) Nepali light verbs can be broadly divided into two categories:

- i. **Conjunct light verb construction:** It combines a non-verbal category like noun and adjective with a verb giving a N/Adj – V constructions.
- ii. **Compound light verb construction:** It combines two verbs giving a V – V construction.

3.6.1.1 Conjunct Light Verb Construction

In this section, we are going to look at conjunct light verb construction in the language. In (125-127) we have a few examples of non-verbal CVC. In these sentences the conjunct light verbs are formed with a noun *jad* ‘memory’ and the light verb *a* ‘come’ as in (125), in (126) we have an adjective *phor* ‘dirty’ which combines with the light verb *par* ‘make’. In SN, adverb - verb CV is widely used but in AN such construction has not come to my notice. In example (127) the light verb *phaal* ‘throw’ combines with an adverb *khera* ‘uselessly’ to form the non-verbal CVC.

(125) madhav-lai tjo kahani jad a-j-o (Noun + Verb)

madhav-DAT the story memory come-PST-3P.SG

“Madhav remembered the story.”

(126) zon-le tjo kotho p^hor par-j-o (Adjective + Verb)

john-ERG the room dirty make-PST-3P.SG.M

Lit: ‘John dirty make the room.’

“John made the room dirty.”

(127) chora-le kaapi khera phaal-j-o (Adverb+Verb)

Son.OBL-ERG notebook-N uselessly throw-PNHSM

“The son left the notebook unused.”

(Lohani 1999:5)

The occurrence of a non-verbal element with the light verbs *a* ‘come’, *par* ‘make’ and *phaal* ‘throw’ are exclusive. This is evident from the ungrammatical complex predicates as shown below in (128).

(128) jad a-j-o, *jad par-j-o, *jad phaal-j-o

p^hor par-j-o, *p^hor a-j-o, *p^hor phaal-j-o

khera phaal-j-o, *khera a-j-o, *khera par-j-o

As observed in (128), we can state that the semantics of the light verbs determine the selection of the non-verbal elements to form a complex predicate. The combination in a CV is not arbitrary as seen from example (128). Certain light verbs occur specifically with a fix set of verbal/non-verbal element. In (128) we see that the light verb *ajo* ‘come’ can occur with the non-verbal element *jad* ‘memory’ but cannot occur with the non-verbal element *phor* ‘dirty’.

3.6.1.2 Compound Light Verb Construction

In Table 12 we have some light verbs in Nepali which occur in compound light verb constructions

Table 12

| Light Verb | Gloss |
|------------|--------------|
| kha-i sak | 'eat finish' |
| bana-i de | 'make give' |
| a-i pug | 'come reach' |
| bana-i li | 'make take' |

Table 12: Compound light verbs

In Table 12, the compound light verb constructions take *sak* 'finish', *de* 'give', *pug* 'reach', *li* 'take' etc. as light verb. In chapter 2, §2.1.2.3.1 and §2.1.2.3.3 we have shown *sak* as the mood marker of probability and ability. However, the verb *sak* in (129) is a separate lexical item that has the meaning of finishing something. In (129-132) we have some examples of AN compound light verb construction:

- (129) pammi-le tjo biscut kha-i sak-j-in (Verb + Verb)
 pammi-ERG the biscuit eat- CNJP finish-PST-3P.SG.F
 "Pammi finished eating the biscuit."

- (130) sravan-le tjo ghar bana-i di-j-o (Verb + Verb)
 sravan-ERG that home make- CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M
 "Sravan built that house."

- (131) ma ghar a-i pug-j-e (Verb + Verb)
 I home come- CNJP reach-PST-1P.SG
 "I reached home."

- (132) saikia-le mobile bana-i li-j-o
 saikia-ERG mobile make-CNJP make-PST-3P.SG.M
 “Saikia repaired the mobile”

The examples (129-132) show a construction that consists of two verbs. The light verb contains Tense-Aspect-Mood (TAM) and agreement.

3.6.2 Subject Oriented Benefactive Light Verbs

The light verbs *de* ‘give’ and *li* ‘take’ are benefactive light verbs in Nepali. The light verb *de* becomes *di* due to morpho-phonemic change in Nepali. Poornima (2012:203) describes benefactive event, which expediently affects a participant, the beneficiary. In many cases, the agent him/herself is a beneficiary e.g., ‘I made my notes’, and in others the agent and the beneficiary are not co-referential e.g., ‘I made the notes for my brother’. Poornima (2012:202-16) has discussed extensively about this subject oriented benefactive light verbs in Hindi. In the lines of Poornima (2012) we would like to examine the benefactive light verbs in Nepali;

- (133) ram-le bhat bana-i li-j-o
 ram-ERG rice cook- CNJP take-PST-3P.SG.M

Lit: ‘Ram prepared the rice for himself.’

“Ram prepared the rice.”

- (134) ram-le bhat bana-i di-j-o
 ram-ERG rice cook- CNJP give-PST-3P.SG.M

Lit: ‘Ram prepared the rice for somebody.’

“Ram prepared the rice.”

When the agent Ram prepares the rice for himself, the light verb *li* is used but when the agent is preparing the rice for someone else, then the light verb *de* is used. Therefore, we can say that in Nepali, the light verb *li* is used as self-benefactive and the light verb *de* is

used as non-self benefactive. However, the benefactive light verb *li* can give malefactive reading in certain specific situations. For e.g.

- (135) dher raksi khara afno ghar afui bigar-i li-j-o
 excessive alcohol eat own home himself destroy- CNJP take-PST-3P.SG.M
 “He himself ruined his own house by consuming excessive alcohol.”

In (135), the subject is the agent that has caused ruin to himself by excessive consumption of alcohol. The fact that the agent ruined his home benefits neither him nor his family. The light verb *li* ‘take’ is interpreted as a malefactive in (135).

Sometimes self-affectedness is also seen by the use of light verb *li*. The agent itself gets affected sometimes from the result or consequences of the action, as shown in (136-137).

- (136) chora-ko bani dek^{hi} bau-le afui-lai han-i li-j-e
 son-GEN behavior see father-ERG self-DAT hit- CNJP take-PST-3P.SG.M
 “After seeing his son’s behavior, he hit himself (out of anger).”

- (137) buda-ko nokri na-bhako dekhi budi-le pir li-j-in
 husband-GEN job NEG-happen see wife-ERG tension take-PST-3P.SG.F
 “The husband’s not getting a job made the wife tense.”

3.7 Co-occurrence of Light Verbs

In Nepali, certain light verbs can occur with another light verb in a single construction. In the next example, we will see a compound light verb and conjunct light verb occurring together in a single sentence. For e.g.

- (138) raz-lai ghar bana-i di-j-e pachi nilam-ko jad a-j-o
 raj-DAT house make- CNJP give-PST-1P after nilam-GEN memory come-PST-3P
 “Raj remembered Nilam after I built the house.

In (138) we can see two light verbs where the light verb *di* ‘give’ introduces the agent *u* ‘he’ and the other light verb *a* ‘come’, where both takes the inflections. In this compound LVC+ conjunct LVC the first light verb is about the subject that is dropped in the sentence and has the thematic role of an agent. The agent built the house and therefore the first light verb of the CV which indicates ‘building the house’, takes the tense and first person agreement. The second CV is about *Raj* who is the experiencer, takes the past tense marker and third person agreement

Now let us look an another example where the permissive LV occurs with the conjunct LV in one construction;

- (139) mai-le biplab-lai kotha safa par-i za-na di-j-e
 I-ERG biplab-DAT room clean make- CNJP go-INF give-PST-1P.SG
 “I allowed Biplab to go after cleaning the room.”

In this conjunct LV + permissive LV construction, the main verb of the permissive construction *za* is in its infinitival form. In this construction, the agent *ma* is introduced by the permissive LV but not the conjunct LV because to give permission there has to be an agent. In (139), ‘Biplab’ left only after the subject ‘I’ gave him the permission.

Let us look an another example like conjunct LV + permissive LV + passive LV;

- (140) biplab-lai kotha safa par-i za-na di-j-a ga-j-o
 bipab-DAT room clean make- CNJP go-INF give-PST-3P.PERF go-PST-3P
 “Biplab was allowed to go after cleaning the room.”

3.8 The Light Verb *de*

From what discussed so far, we have seen that the light verb *de* occurs only in compound light verb constructions. However, the light verb *de* can also occur in certain conjunct light verb constructions too as in (141) below.

- (141) ajkal bibek-le padhai-ma pura mon din-ch-a
nowadays bibek-ERG read-POSP complete attention give-PRES-3P.SG.M
“Nowadays Bibek gives all his attention to studies.”

In this example the light verb *de* and the noun *mon* ‘attention’ forms a conjunct light verb construction. Let us see an another example (142);

- (142) jo keta-le ma-lai dherei dukkha di-j-o
this boy-ERG I-ACC much sad give-PST-3P.SG.M
“This boy hurt me so much.”

In example (142), the light verb *de* is juxtaposed with a non-verbal element *dukkha* ‘sad’ in the CV construction. Therefore, we can say that the light verb *de* can function both as a compound light verb and a conjunctive light verb in Nepali.

Now let us see an another example of the light verb *de* in Nepali;

- (143) mahesh-le bikram-lai budd^{hi} nikal-na di-j-o
mahesh-ERG bikram-ACC idea out-INF give-PST-3P.SG.M
“Mahesh let Bikram to get an idea.”

- (144) timi-le ma-lai school za-na di-j-eu
you-ERG I-ACC school go-INF give-PST-2P

Lit: ‘You let me go school.’

“You allowed me to go school.”

(145) mai-le mero chora-lai ghar au-na di-j-e
I-ERG my son-ACC home come-INF give-1P.SG

“I allowed my son to come home.”

The examples (143-145) also has the *di* ‘give’ light verb which seems to be a compound light verb construction but this is a permissive light verb constructionⁱⁱⁱ where the agent allows or gives permission to perform or do something. In these examples, we can see that the permissive light verb *di* requires an agent like *Mahesh/timi/ma* to complete the construction.

3.9 Conclusion

From the above discussion, we have seen that both verbal and non-verbal element can form compound verb construction. In case of non-verbal elements categories like nouns, adjective and adverbs with the help of a verb constructs compound verbs in Nepali. In verbal compound construction the conjunctive participial marker *-i* suffixes with the main verb. The agreement features of the compound verb construction is taken by the light verb. The position of the main verb and the light verb cannot be interchanged in Nepali CVC. The light verbs in Nepali does not only take TAM and agreement features but also takes the causative and passive markers in certain construction. In Nepali, the light verbs are divided into both conjunct and compound light verb categories. The light verb *de* shows an interesting feature by occurring in both conjunct and compound category of light verbs.

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ⁱ Adverb + LV observed in SN. For details see Lohani (1999:5)

ⁱⁱ For details see Chetry and Barbora (2022)

ⁱⁱⁱ For more information on Permissive light verb construction see Butt (1993)