Chapter 5

Complementation in Assamese and Mising

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed study of the semantics and grammar of relative subordination in Assamese and Mising. The chapter has the following structure. In Section 5.1, we explored the cognitive concepts of vantage point and viewing arrangement, which are crucial in determining the construal of complementation. Section 5.2 examined finite

complementation in Assamese and Mising, focusing on the complementizers *ze*, *buli*, and *зmna*, and their role in shaping complement construction. The subsequent sections discussed finite complementation in rapid informal speech, as well as wh- and whether/if clauses. Section 5.3 delved into non-finite complementation in Assamese and Mising, highlighting the significance of complementizers that mark them. Finally, section 5.4 investigated the structural similarities between complement and relative clauses in Assamese and Mising languages.

Grammatical connections between two situations arise from conceptual relationships. As discussed in Chapter 2-4, these connections facilitate various functions, such as evidence, modification, or complementation. Specifically, complement clauses provide answer to 'what' questions related to main clauses, clarifying their meaning or content. Clausal complementation is a type of subordination where complement clauses complete the meaning of the main clause they are linked to. In cognitive linguistics terms, they elaborate on the main verb's ground. A complementizer like 'that' in English, links the complement clause to the main clause.

Due to their subordinate nature, complement clauses undergo a conceptual shift. They function within the larger sentence structure, not as independent events. As already said, this phenomenon, where the main clause overshadows the subordinate clause, is termed conceptual subordination (Langacker, 1991, p. 436).

Clausal complements can be of two types: finite and non-finite. Finite complement clauses are grounded in time as in (1a) below.

(1a) *I know that she is a singer.*

Grammatically, the complement clause acts as the object of the main verb ('know' in (1a)). However, its importance lies in specifying what the speaker knows ('what I know'). The subject ('she') retains its nominative case.

Non-finite complement clauses also elaborate on the ground but lack specific time reference as in (1b) and (1c) below:

(1b) *I love to sing.*
(1c) *I heard her singing in the bathroom.*

Non-finite clauses may lack subjects entirely ('to sing') or use the accusative case ('her singing'). This reflects their reliance on the main clause for identification. They profile the action as a type, focusing on its nature rather than the specific event itself.

Finite complement clauses, with tenses and subjects, profile the event as a process, allowing independent understanding. Their role as complements is "only secondary" (Langacker, 2008, p. 438). In contrast, non-finite clauses cannot be grasped independently due to the lack of tense and a subject.

5.1 Vantage Point and Viewing Arrangement

Cognitive linguistics explores how grammar reflects our experiences. We conceptualize the world and use grammar to express these conceptualizations. A single event can have multiple interpretations based on the perspective (mental position) of the conceptualizer. As said previously, this ability to construe events differently is called construal. In Langacker's (2008, p. 55) words: "In viewing a scene, what we actually see depends on how closely we examine it, what we choose to look at, which elements we pay most attention to, and where we view it from."

As discussed in Chapter 1 of the thesis, two key concepts related to each other in clausal complementation are vantage point (speaker's perspective) and viewing arrangement (relationship between speaker and event). A viewing arrangement considers: Is the speaker a distant observer or integrated with the event? Second, is there an asymmetry, i.e., a clear distinction between speaker and event?

We have an Optimal Viewing Arrangement (OVA) when the speaker acts as a distant observer, reporting established facts and creating a clear separation from the event.

We have an Egocentric Viewing Arrangement (EVA) when the speaker shares the perspective of someone involved in the event, creating a shared experience.

Consider the following two examples:
(2a) *I know the sun rises every morning.*
(2b) *I saw the sun rising this morning.*

Sentence (2a) presents the sunrise as a general fact, while sentence (2b) emphasizes the speaker's direct experience.

When the speaker views the event objectively (distant reality), a finite complement clause is used, creating an OVA with clear asymmetry between speaker and the subject of the complement clause. When the speaker views the event subjectively, a non-finite complement clause is used, creating an EVA with blurred asymmetry, where the speaker can share the perspective of someone in the event.

As Langacker (2009, p. 293) suggests, there are at least two conceptualizers. There is the speaker, C0, who is the initial conceptualizer and apprehends the whole sentence. Then, there is C1, who is the main conceptualizer and who apprehends the complement event called CL2, e.g., 'She (C1) believes that John is dishonest.' However, sometimes, C0 and C1 can overlap, i.e., they may be the same person.

In the same way, C1 can sometimes be implicit as in 'It is said that the forest is haunted.' This creates a sense of a 'virtual' C1 who is the source of the reported information (contrast this with 'She (C1) believes that the forest is haunted.')

Finite complement verbs (e.g., 'know,' 'think,' 'believe,') often deal with knowledge and how we understand reality (see, for a detailed discussion on the semantics of verbs that goes with finite complementation, Wierzbicka, 1988, pp. 132-140).

On the other hand, non-finite complement clauses cannot stand alone and, unlike their finite counterparts, cannot be apprehended by 'any' conceptualizer, but a conceptualizer who is involved in CL2, e.g., 'Mary (C1) loves to swim.' On the other hand, in 'I love to swim,' C0 and C1 overlap.

5.2 Finite complementation in Assamese and Mising

In this section, finite complementation in Assamese and Mising is discussed. A fundamental aspect of human communication is narrating or communicating the utterances of others. Finite complementation, in particular, facilitates the narration of quoted speech, often occurring with verbs of cognition and communication, such as

knowing, saying, believing, and thinking. This is attributable to the fact that finite complement clauses report on the content of speech, thought or belief of somebody. Their primary function is quotational. The finite complementizers in Assamese are *ze* and *buli*, and in Mising it is as *ɜmna*. The complementizer *ze* in Assamese is equivalent to English 'that'. It introduces a finite complement clause and can be dropped when needed. *ze* clauses are mostly used in formal communication.

The basic meaning of English 'that' is that of identification. It identifies a specific person or thing known, observed, heard or previously mentioned (e.g., 'That girl is my friend.') Similarly, the finite complementizer 'that' in English helps to identify a situation that is known (e.g., 'I know that she is honest.'), heard (e.g., 'I heard that she is coming to the party tonight.'), or previously mentioned (e.g., 'She said that she won't be coming today.')

In the same way, the finite complementizers *ze*, *buli* in Assamese, and *ɜmna* in Mising, helps identify situations that have been previously communicated, observed or simply, known. In Assamese, the complementizer *ze* exhibits metonymic quotative properties just like English 'that', as it references a specific quote that has been previously heard, known, stated, or mentioned. On the other hand, *buli* and *ɜmna* are purely quotative. This is evident from the fact that *buli* is composed of the verb root *bul* 'to say' and the non-finite *-i*, while *ɜmna* is composed of the verb root *ɜm* 'say' and the non-finite *-nam*, however the final phoneme /*m*/ in *-nam* is never realized in the finite complementizer *ɜmna*. This may be attributed to the fact that *ɜmnam* is frequently followed by the verb *lu* 'tell', which triggers the elision of the final /*m*/ phoneme in *ɜmnam* making it *ɜmna*. Evidence that the complementizers *buli* and *ɜmna* are purely quotational is that they can simply be used as quotative markers in non-finite complementation as in (15e), (15f), and (26d), (26e), (26f), in Assamese and Mising, respectively.

All three of them, i.e., *ze*, *buli* and *ɜmna*, helps in identifying a quote that has been previously communicated, heard, observed, or understood. That is why, they are compatible with verbs of saying (e.g., *ko* 'tell' in Assamese and *lu* 'tell' in Mising), verbs of knowledge (e.g., *zan* 'know' in Assamese and *kin* 'know' in Mising), verbs of hearing (e.g., *xun* 'hear' in Assamese and *tad* 'hear' in Mising), etc.

As will be clear from the discussion below, the *ze* and *buli* complementation in Assamese and the *зmna* complementation is Mising is used mainly for a distant conceptualizing. They express factual statements and the verbs used in the main clause are verbs of knowing, thinking, believing, reporting, etc.

5.2.1 Finite Complementation with Assamese *ze*, *buli* and Mising *зmna*

A complementizer is a word that acts like a bridge, connecting a main clause and a complement clause. Complementizers can be seen as mental space builders (Fauconnier, 1985). They contribute to building mental spaces by acting as a signal that the sentence is introducing a new idea or perspective. This can prompt the listener to create a separate mental space for the information in the dependent clause. Different complementizers can indicate different relationships between the main and dependent clauses, e.g., 'that' often indicates a factual statement within the dependent clause as in 'I know that Mary is very beautiful'; while 'if' introduces a hypothetical situation, as in 'I don't know if John is coming today.' Thus, based on the complementizer used, the listener builds mental spaces in complementation. Unlike the English complementizer 'that', which sits in the clause initial position and can sometimes be dropped[1], the Assamese complementizer *buli* and the Mising complementizer *зmna* sits in the clause-final position of the complement clause and cannot be dropped. But another finite complementizer *ze* in Assamese sits in the clause initial position i.e., introduces the complement clause and can be dropped.

In (3a) and (3b) below, C0 and C1 are the same person. In other words, the speaker (C0) in either of the examples is expressing her conceptualization as C1, i.e., that the Sun rises in the East, and that the girl called Mary is very beautiful. Note that both are factual statements as understanding of the world and are expressed in each of the CL2s.[2]

(3a) *'I know that the Sun rises in the East.'*　[verb of cognition]
(3b) *'I believe that Mary is very beautiful.'*　[verb of cognition]

In (4a), the main clause is *Mary-e koisil* 'Mary said,' and the complement clause is *nahu buli* which Mary uttered to someone to mean that she would not come. As a speaker,

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1 In informal speech *that* is often dropped.
2 CL2 stands for the complement clause.

Mary did not have to say *moi nahu* instead of *nahu* (where the first-person pronoun is missing) because the hearer can easily infer that the missing first-person pronoun's referent is Mary herself. Thus, the complementizer *buli*, which is derived from the root word *bul* 'to say' (see Section 5.2 above), quotes in (4a) only *nahu*. This also explains why *nahu* is not within the quotation marks, because that would be redundant, i.e., the complementizer *buli* meaning 'saying' is functioning like quotation marks.

Similarly, in (4b), *Marybɨ gɨkuma ɜmna luka*, the main clause is *luka* and the complement clause is *gɨkuma* which Mary uttered to mean that she would not come. Here as well, Mary did not have to say *ŋo gɨkuma* instead of *gɨkuma* (where the first-person pronoun is missing) because the hearer can easily infer that the missing first-person pronoun's referent is Mary herself. Thus, the complementizer *ɜmna*, which is derived from the root word *ɜm* 'to say' (see Section 5.2 above), quotes in (4b) only *gɨkuma*. This also explains why *gɨkuma* is not within the quotation marks, because that would be redundant, i.e., the complementizer *ɜmna* meaning 'saying' is functioning like quotation marks.

In (4a) – (4h), C0 and C1 are different persons. That is, the speaker C0, just expresses C1's conception of reality.

The complementizers *buli* and *ɜmna* complement the main clause by directly quoting the VP of the subordinate clause uttered by the subject. In other words, *buli* and its Mising counterpart *ɜmna* are in essence connected to direct quoting or narration.

In (4a) – (4d), the subordinate clause subject and the main clause subject are co-referential, and the VP of the subordinate clause consists of direct quotations attributed to the shared subject of both clauses. Therefore, they are direct narrations. That is, in (4a), the VP of the subordinate clause *nahu* is a direct quotation made by the main clause subject Mary about her own self. The speaker is just expressing whatever Mary said. The same applies to (4b), (4c), and (4d).

(4a)　*Mary e nahu **buli** koisil*　　(Assamese)　(direct narration)

　　　Mary-e　　　na-ah-u　　　buli　ko-isil

　　　Mary-ERG　NEG-come-1　COMP　say-PST

　　　'Mary said that she won't come.' (lit)

Fig. 38 that follows, is a schematic representation of the Complementary schema (CS) and its instantiation (based on (4a) above). The subject of the second clause in (4a) is dropped as it is a co-referential.

The topmost box *Z* represents the entire sentence. *X* represents the main clause and serves as the figure (F), while *Y* represents the complement clause and functions as the ground (G). The lower boxes provide a more detailed breakdown of the complement clause structure. It highlights the complement clause, with the complementizer *buli* acting as the figure (F), while '*Mary e nahu*' as the ground (G). On the other hand, the dotted lines connecting the boxes signify the instantiation of the complementary schema, as well as the elaboration of the internal structure of the clauses involved.

Complementation: *Complementary schema*
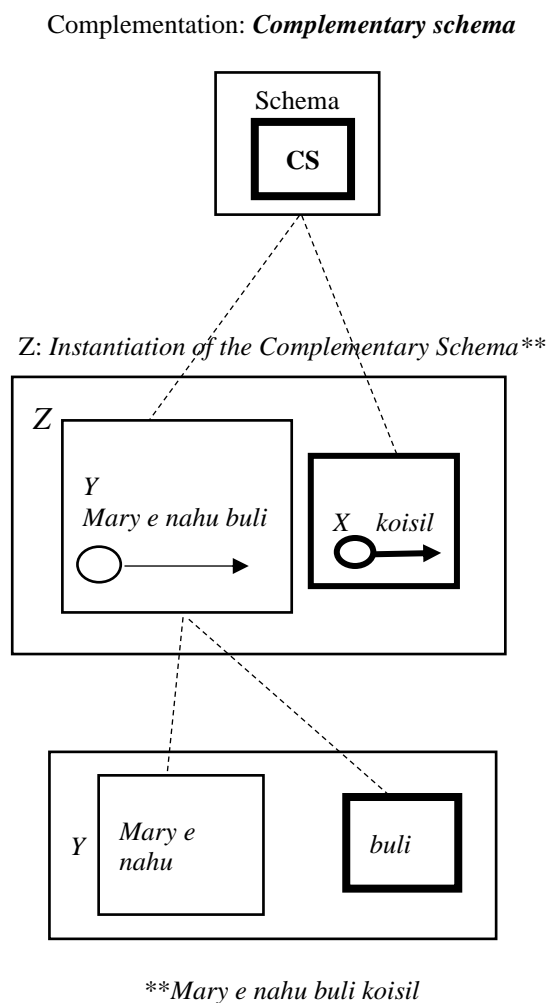
Fig. 35: Complementation by *buli*

(4b)   *Marybɨ gɨkuma³ ʒmna luka* (Mising)   (direct narration)

Mary-bɨ   gɨ-ku-ma   ʒmna   lu-ka

Mary-she   come-return-NEG   COMP   say-PST

'Mary said that she won't come.' (lit)

(4c)   *Mary e bʰat kʰam buli koisil* (Assamese)   (direct narration)

Mary-e   bʰat   kʰa-m   buli   ko-isil

mary-ERG   rice   eat-FUT   COMP   say-PST

'Mary said that she will eat rice.' (lit)

(4d)   *Marybɨ apin dojʒ ʒmna luka* (Mising)   (direct narration)

Mary-bɨ   apin   do-jʒ   ʒmna   lu-ka

Mary-she   rice   eat-FUT   COMP   say-PST

'Mary said that she will eat rice.' (lit)

In (4e) – (4h), the subjects of the main clause and subordinate clause are non-co-referential, with the main clause subject and the subordinate clause subject representing different individuals. Furthermore, the VP of the subordinate clause comprises of quotations made by the main clause subject, which pertain to the subordinate clause subject. For example, in (4e), the VP of the subordinate clause *tina bor dhunija* is a direct quotation made by the main clause subject John about the subordinate clause subject Tina. The same applies to (4f), (4g) and (4h). We have termed (4a) – (4h) as direct narration, wherein the speaker directly reports the utterance of the main clause subject without any modifications.

(4e)   *Tina bor dʰunija buli John e koisil*   (Assamese)   (direct narration)

Tina   bor   dʰunija   buli   John-e   ko-isil

Tina   very   beautiful   COMP   John-3   say-PST

'John said that Tina is very beautiful.'

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³ In Mising, negative constructions exhibit a notable pattern: the habitual marker -*dag* is suppressed, and only the negative marker attaches to the root verb.

(4f) *Tinabɨ ka:jumdag⁴ ʒmna Johnbɨ ludagai*   (Mising)   (direct narration)

Tina-bɨ   ka:jum-dag   ʒmna John-bɨ   lu-dagai

Tina-she   beautiful-HAB COMP John-he   say-PST

'John said that Tina is very beautiful.'

(4g) *Mary aru gʰuri nahe **buli** John e koisil*   (Assamese)   (direct narration)

Mary   aru   gʰur-i   na-ah-e   buli   john-e   ko-isil

Mary   more   turn-NF   NEG-come-3   COMP   John-3   say-PST

'John said that Mary would not come back.'

(4h) *Marybɨ gɨladkuma:boŋ ʒmna Johnbɨ ludagai*   (Mising)   (direct narration)

Mary-bɨ   gɨ-lad-ku-ma:-boŋ   ʒmna John-bɨ   lu-dagai

Mary-she   come-return-back-NEG-PRF   COMP John-he   hear-PST

'John said that Mary would not come back.'

Fig. 39 on the next page, is a schematic representation of the complementary schema and its instantiation (based on (4h) above).

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⁴ Mising lacks a distinctive category of adjectives. The modifiers in Mising are often created by combining a morpheme expressing some quality with the habitual *-dag*.

Complementation: ***Complementary schema***
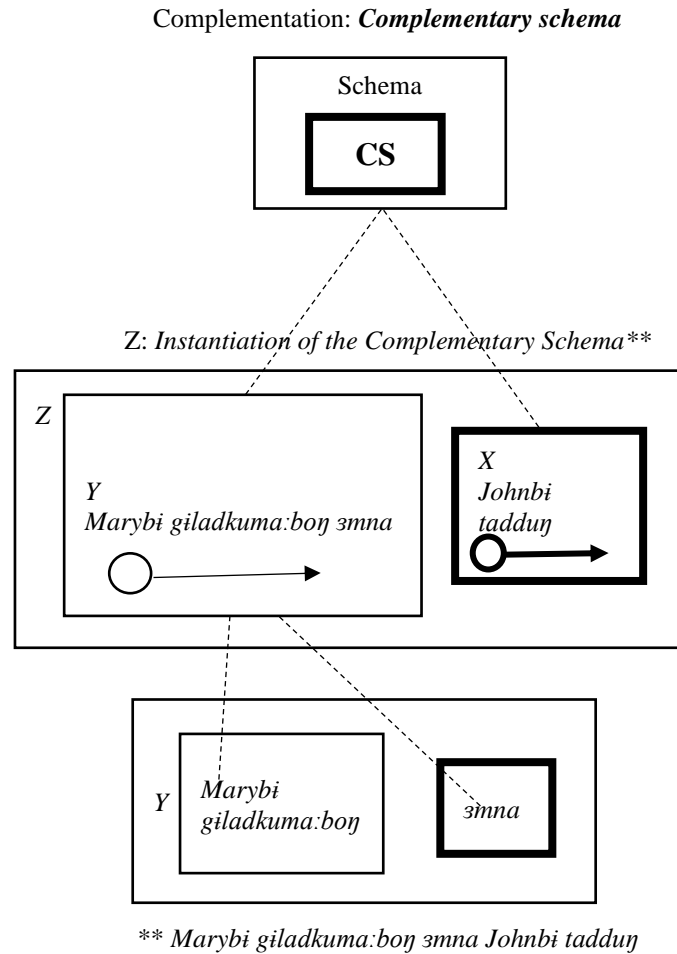
Fig. 36: Complementation by *ʒɯna*

In (5a) and (5b), C0 and C1 are the same person. The speaker i.e., C0 is expressing her own conceptualization as C1 i.e., that he will come back. The VP of the subordinate clause is the direct quotation of the main clause's subject. The main clause subject says something about the subject of the subordinate clause It is, therefore, a direct narration.

(5a)   *xi gʰuri ahibo **buli** moi zanu*   (Assamese)   (direct narration)

xi	gʰur-i	ah-ib-o	buli	moi	zan-u
he	turn-NF	come-FUT-3	COMP	I-GEN	know-1

'I know that he will come back.'

(5b) *bɨ gɨladjɜku **ɜmna** ŋo mɜːdag*   (Mising)   (direct narration)

    bɨ   gɨ-lad-jɜ-ku   ɜmna   ŋo   kin-dag

    he   come-return-FUT-back   COMP   I   know-HAB

    'I know that he will come back.'

On the other hand, *ze* clauses in Assamese are mostly used in formal speech. That is why, they are widely used to reproduce famous sayings or quotations in the language as in (6a).

In (6a), C0 and C1 are two different persons. Here, C0 reports what C1 said, about hating the sinner and not the sin. That is, indirectly, the complement clause is also a part of the speaker i.e., C0's conception of reality. *ze* metonymically quotes or points to the subordinate clause subject's utterance in (6a).

(6a) *zixu kʰrista e koisil **ze** papok gʰinaba, papik nohoi*   (Assamese) (direct narration)

    zixu   kʰrista-e   ko-isil   ze   pap-ok   gʰin-ib-a

    Jesus   Christ-ERG   say-PST   COMP sin-DOM   hate-FUT-2

    papi-k   na-hoi

    sinner-DOM   NEG-be

    'Jesus Christ said that hate the sin not the sinner.'

Mising, on the other hand, is mainly a spoken language and is not much used in formal settings, and thus, does not have any specific complementizer for formal usages. They on the other hand resort to simple juxtaposition in such cases as in (6b) below.

(6b) *zisu kristobɨ ludagai aiman agerdɜmpak tajumlaŋ, taniːdɜmmaŋ*   (Mising)

    zisu   kristo-bɨ   lu-dagai   ai-man   ager-dɜ-m-pak

    Jesus   christ-he   tell-PST   good-NEG   work-DEF-ACC-EMP

    tajum-laŋ,   taniː-dɜ-m-maŋ

    hate-IMP   man-DEF-ACC-NEG

    'Jesus Christ said that hate the sin not the sinner.'

In (7a), we have another construction with the complementizer *ze*. While in (7b), the same construction is expressed with the complementizer *buli*. Sentence (7a) would be

more appropriate in a formal setting, whereas (7b) is more suitable for informal contexts. Thus, *buli* and *ze* can be considered stylistic variants of each other.

In both (7a) and (7b), C0 and C1 are the same. And C0 expresses its own conceptualization as C1.

(7a) *moi bʰabu ze sorkare eitu tʰik kam kora nai*   (Assamese)

moi	bʰab-u	ze	sorkar-e	ei-tu	tʰik	kam
I	think-1	COMP	government-ERG	this-CLF	fine	work

kor-a	nai
do-2	NEG

'I don't think that the government has done a good thing doing this.'

(7b) *sorkare tʰik kam kora nai **buli** moi bʰabu*   (Assamese)

sorkar-e	ei-tu	tʰik	kam	kor-a	nai	buli	moi
government-ERG	this-CLF	fine	work	do-2	NEG	COMP	I

bʰab-u
think-1

'I don't think that the government has done a good thing doing this.'

Even though conceptualizers are essential and universal components of constructions, they can be either explicit, as in the examples above, or implicit. Implicit conceptualizers are those that are not overtly mentioned in the sentence. These are found in impersonal constructions, which lack explicit dummy subjects. Consider the sentence 'It is known that she is honest.' Here, the complement event 'that she is honest' cannot be traced back to a specific conceptualizer within the sentence. These constructions deliberately avoid specifying a conceptualizer. Instead, they depict an abstract setting where anyone can be the conceptualizer.

In impersonal constructions, the conceptualizer is only evoked in a general way. It remains implicit and unimportant. By default, the speaker is assumed to be the conceptualizer, but the perspective or the vantage point can easily shift to another character within the setting.

The primary focus of impersonal constructions lies on the event itself, the 'what' (the content of the complement event), rather than the specific 'who' (the conceptualizer) responsible for its interpretation (See Achard, 1998, p. 274).

In Assamese and Mising, unlike languages with dummy subjects, these constructions require implicit conceptualizers, which can be people (*manuh* for people as in (8a) and *tani* for people as in (8b) below) or everyone (*xokolu* for everyone as in (9a) and *appɨŋ* for everyone as in (9b) below).

The speaker (C0) as part of the setting is understood as the conceptualizer by default, but it can also be someone else within the setting. These constructions, as expected, focus on the event itself rather than the specific person who conceptualizes it. In the sentences above, everyone says that she is honest. The quotative complementizers *buli* and *зmna*, in here, are used to re-narrate that saying. This implies that *buli* and *зmna* are basically quotative, but they have polysemous or extended uses.

(8a)   *xi xot **buli** manuhe zane*   (Assamese)   (indirect narration)

xi   xot   buli   manuh-e   zan-e

he   honest COMP   people-ERG   know-3

'People know that he is honest'

(8b)   *bɨ зmpзi ainз **зmna** tani:jз kindag*   (Mising)   (indirect narration)

bɨ   зmpзi   ainз   зmna   tani:-jз   kin-dag

he   normally   honest COMP people-NOM   know-HAB

'People know that he is honest'

(9a)   *tai xot **buli** xokoluei zane*   (Assamese)   (indirect narration)

tai   xot   buli   xokolu-e-i   zan-e

she   honest COMP   everyone-ERG-EMP   know-3

'Everyone knows that she is honest.'

(9b)   *bɨ ainз **зmna** appɨŋзi kindag*   (Mising)   (indirect narration)

bɨ   ainз   зmna   appɨŋ-з-i   kin-dag

she   honest COMP   everyone-NOM-EMP   know-HAB

'Everyone knows that she is honest.'

In (10a) and (10b), the speaker fails to recall what the other person wanted to eat, whether it was chicken, fish, or whisky. Thus, he is asking him, where a possible noun is replaced with a pronoun, precisely, an interrogative pronoun, i.e., *ki* 'what' in (10a) and *okko* 'what' in (10b). Given this, the *buli* and *ɜmna* here are quoting here an 'unknown' thing, i.e., a thing that is forgotten. Cognitively, something unknown is a potential query, hence, *ki* 'what' or *okko* 'what.'

(10a) *tumi ki kʰaba **buli** koisila?*   (Mising)   (direct narration)

tumi   ki   kʰa-ib-a   buli   ko-isil-a

you   what   eat-FUT-2   COMP   say-PST-2

'What did you say you would eat?'

(10b) *bɨ okkom dojɜ **ɜmna** luka*   (Mising)   (direct narration)

bɨ   okko-m   do-jɜ   ɜmna   lu-ka

he   what-ACC   eat-FUTCOMP   say-PST

'What did you say you would eat?'

5.2.2 Finite Complementation in rapid informal speech Assamese and Mising

There is another type of finite complement clause that which is not marked by any complementizer. In English, these appear within quotation marks, e.g., He said, "I will go." Here, "He said" is the main clause, requiring a complement clause. It cannot stand alone because it begs the question: what did he say? Only the complement clause "I will go" completes its meaning. Similarly, "I will go" cannot stand alone because of the quotation marks. The quotation marks signal that "I will go" is someone's spoken words. This raises another question: who is the speaker?

Davis (2022, p. 1064) argues that complement clauses marked by a complementizer ("that" in the above example) and those marked by quotation marks do not differ in meaning. Both are subordinate to the main clause they belong to. In effect, the quotation marks themselves act as a complementizer in these constructions.

It is to be noted that in (11a) - (11d), the complementizers *buli* in Assamese and *ɜmna* in Mising are dropped. This is usually done in casual or rapid speech.

(11a) *Mary e nahu koisil* (Assamese) (direct narration)

Mary-e   na-ah-u   ko-isil

Mary-ERG   NEG-come-1   say-PST

'Mary said, "won't come".' (lit)

'Mary said she won't come'

(11b) *Marybɨ gɨkuma ɜmdag* (Mising) (direct narration)

Mary-she   gɨ-ku-ma   ɜm-dag

Mary-she   go-return-NEG say-HAB

'Mary said, "won't come".' (lit)

'Mary said she won't come'

(11c) *Marye bʰat kʰam koisil* (Assamese) (direct narration)

Mary-e   bʰat   kʰa-im   ko-isil

mary-ERG   rice   eat-FUT   say-PST

'Mary said, "will eat".' (lit)

'Mary said she would eat.'

(11d) *Marybɨ dojɜ ɜmdag* (Mising) (direct narration)

Mary-bɨ   do-jɜ   ɜm-dag

Mary-she   eat-FUT   say-HAB

'Mary said, "will eat".' (lit)

'Mary said she would eat.'

Thus, the finite complementizers in Assamese and Mising categorized by their broad semantic functions are presented in Table 7 and Table 8 that follows, respectively.

Table 7: Finite Complementizers in Assamese

Sl. No.	Finite Complementizer	Semantics
1	*ze*	Metonymically quotative
2	*buli*	Quotative

Table 8: Finite Complementizer(s) in Mising

Sl. No.	Finite Complementizer	Semantics
1	*ɜmna*	Quotative

5.2.3 *Wh-* and *Whether/If* Complementation in Assamese and Mising

Both Assamese and Mising have another type of finite complementation where the complement clause takes the form of *wh-*questions or *whether/if* clauses.

In the case of *wh-*clauses, they function similarly to quotative complements, lacking a grammatical marker (complementizer) in both languages. Semantically, they act as complements to the main clause[5], providing information or expressing uncertainty.

For *whether/if* clauses, Assamese uses the marker *ne nai* 'or not', while Mising uses the dubitative marker *-soŋ..-soŋ*. Taid (2016: 236) too has discussed these suffixes *soŋ..-ma:soŋ* as pairs of suffixes indicating an affirmative and a negative possibility.

It is to be noted that Taid (2016, p. 327) classifies these *wh-* and *whether/if* constructions as relative clauses in Mising. However, this thesis considers them as finite complement clauses due to their involvement of a conceptualizer and verbs of knowledge. The suffix *-zi*, attached to the subordinate clause, functions as a dubitative marker, indicating uncertainty about the knowledge expressed within the complement clause.

*Wh-*clauses ask questions using words like *who*, *what*, *where*, *why*, etc. They are compatible with main clauses that provide answers to those questions.

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[5] See Dirven (1989, pp. 118-119)

Whether/if clauses express uncertainty about the event in the complement clause. Therefore, they are compatible with main clauses indicating a lack of information.

In these constructions, the following relationships hold between the conceptualizers (C0, C1, and CL2). Consider the following examples:

(12a) *xi koloi gol moi nazanu*   (Assamese)

  xi   koloi   za-l   moi   na-zan-u

  he   where   go-PRF I   NEG-know-1

  'I don't know where he has gone.

(12b) *bɨ okolop gɨkazi ŋo kinma*   (Mising)

  bɨ   okolop gɨ-ka-zi   ŋo   kin-ma

  he   where   go-PST-DUB   I   know-NEG

  'I don't know where he has gone.'

(12c) *xi koloi polal moi nazanu*   (Assamese)

  xi   koloi   pola-l   moi   na-zan-u

  he   where   run-PRF   I   NEG-know-1

  'Where he has run to, that I don't know.'

(12d) *bɨ okolop dugpakkazi зdзm ŋo kinma*   (Mising)

  bɨ   okolop   dug-pak-ka-zi   зdз-m   ŋo   kin-ma

  he   where   flee-EMP-PST-DUB   that-ACC   I   know-NEG

  'Where he has run to, that I don't know.'

In (12a) - (12d), the speaker (C0) identifies with the subject of the main clause (C1). However, C0 lacks the information necessary to answer the question posed in the complement clause (CL2). While C0 acknowledges the question, they are unable to provide an answer.

Similar relationships hold for whether/if clauses, as illustrated in sentences (13a) - (13d). Here, C0 acknowledges the uncertainty expressed in the complement clause but cannot confirm or deny it.

(13a) *xi gʰuri ahibo **ne nai** moi nazanu* (Assamese)

xi	gʰuri	ah-ib-o	ne	nai	moi	na-zan-u
he	turn	come-FUT-3	or	not	I	NEG-know-1

'I don't know whether/if he will come back or not.'

(13b) *bɨ gɨduŋku**soŋ** gɨkumaː**soŋ** ŋo kinma* (Mising)

bɨ	gi-duŋ-ku-soŋ	gi-ku-maː-soŋ	ŋo	kin-ma
he	come-PROG-return-DUB	come-back-NEG-DUB	I	know-NEG

'I don't know whether/if he will come back or not.'

(13c) *kamtu hol **ne nai** moi nazanu* (Assamese)

kam-tu	ho-l	ne	nai	moi	na-zan-u
work-CLF	be-PRF	or	not	I	NEG-know-1

'I don't know whether/if the work is done or not.'

(13d) *agerdʒ kabojʒ**soŋ** kabomaː**soŋ** ŋo kinma* (Mising)

ager-dʒ	kabo-jʒ-soŋ	kabo-maː-soŋ	ŋo	kin-ma
work-CLF	become-FUT-DUB	become-NEG-DUB	I	know-NEG

'I don't know whether/if the work is done or not.'

5.3 Non-finite Complementation in Assamese and Mising

While all complement clauses rely on the main clause for meaning, the level of dependency can vary. The non-finite complement clause shows the highest degree of dependence on the main clause. This dependence is twofold: (a) The complement clause relies on the main clause to establish its reality; it describes an event as a general type, not a specific instance; (b) the complement clause depends on the main clause for its identification within that reality. Thus, non-finite complementation, as Radden & Dirven (2007, p. 55) suggest, exhibits the tightest conceptual linkage between clauses. The more conceptually dependent a complement clause is, the more structurally dependent it will be. Thus, compared to finite complementation, non-finite complementation is structurally tighter, i.e., non-finite complement clause, unlike its finite counterpart, is not an

independent identity; it is non-finite in form (see also Bolinger, 1980; and Langacker, 1991).

Uniquely, non-finite complement clauses are viewed subjectively by the conceptualizer (C1) as someone already involved in the event. Unlike finite complement clauses, they cannot be objectively construed from a distance (see our discussion in 5.1 above). They lack independent meaning and rely on the main clause for their conceptualization of reality, as in, to repeat our earlier examples in (2a) and (2b), viz., 'I know that the Sun rises every morning' vs. 'I saw the Sun rising this morning'.

This link between clauses in non-finite complementation is established using non-finite complementizers, which contribute to the building of mental spaces for a thing-like reified action or event to be viewed from various perspectives. In turn, such complementizers atemporalize actions or events. Thus, in English, the complementizer –ing in 'Mary hates smoking' where 'smoking' is a non-finite complement clause, reifies the verb 'smoke'. The sentence tells us about Mary's perspective on the act of smoking. On the other hand, in 'He loves to smoke', the non-finite complementizer is 'to' which reifies the verb 'smoke'.

As will be clear from the discussion below, the non-complementation in Assamese and Mising is used mainly for a subjective conceptualizing of the complement event. Thus, non-finite complementation is often used with verbs of perception, sensation, volition., etc., where the speaker feels more involved in the complement event. Also, because non-finite clauses lack tense and a typical subject, they are grounded in reality by the main clause verb and receive their identification through the main clause subject. As discussed earlier, the subject of the non-finite complement clause is either missing or in the accusative, i.e., it does not behave like a typical subject of an independent clause.

We constantly discuss things in the world, whether it is universal truths (e.g., 'Elephants are majestic animals'), personal opinions (e.g., 'I don't like fish'), desires (e.g., 'I want him'), knowledge (e.g., 'I know John'), or emotional responses (e.g., 'I love his hugs').

In the same way, non-finite complement clauses, by reifying actions into conceptual entities, are compatible with main clauses that express opinions, knowledge, or emotional

responses about these entities. This explains their compatibility with perception verbs (e.g., 'I saw her coming'), sensation verbs (e.g., 'I love to read'), and knowledge verbs (e.g., 'I know how to swim').

The following examples of non-finite complement clauses in Assamese and Mising, highlighting their compatibility with **attributive verbs**:

(14a) *aam kʰabaloi bʰal (hoi)⁶*   (Assamese)

   aam kʰa-iboloi   bʰal

   mango eat-COMP good

   'Mangoes taste good.'

(14b) *porhiboloi bʰal pau*   (Assamese)

   porh-iboloi bhal pa-u

   read-COMP good feel-1

   'I like to read.'

(14c) *xaturibo zanu*   (Assamese)

   xatur-ibo zan-u

   swim-COMP know-1

   'I know to swim.'

(14d) *aam donam aidag*   (Mising)

   aam do-nam   ai-dag

   mango eat-COMP well-HAB

   'Mangoes taste good.'

(14e) *ŋo porinam aipɜ mɜ:dag*   (Mising)

   ŋo   pori-nam aipɜ mɜ:-dag

   I   read-COMP good feel-HAB

   'I like to read.'

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⁶ The copula *ho* 'be' (along with the relevant person marker it takes on, e.g. *–i* in *hoi*) is not uttered in idiomatic Assamese present tense constructions.

(14f)   *ŋo baːnam kindag*   (Mising)

   ŋo   baː-nam   kin-dag

   I   swim-NF   know-HAB

   'I know to swim.'

5.3.1 Types of non-finite complement clauses in Assamese[7]

We have identified five types of non-finite complement clauses in Assamese, each marked by a different non-finite complementizer. These complementizers also function as non-finite markers in Assamese. We will focus on their grammar and meaning in the following sub-sections.

5.3.1.1 The non-finite complementizer *-a*

One of the non-finite complementizers in Assamese is *-a*. It is also a nominalizer. Therefore, it is compatible with attributive verbs such as *bʰal (hoi)* 'is good' and *beja (hoi)* 'is bad.' It is also the only non-finite marker compatible with the classifier *-tu*, as in (14b).

Assamese is a numeral classifier language (see Borah, 2008, 2012). Thus, in Assamese, a classifier always accompanies a noun when it is numerically quantified. The fact that *-a* is compatible with a classifier (i.e., *tu*, which classifies three-dimensional things and by extension abstract entities) provides evidence that the verb marked by it is fully nominalized, i.e., it has become fully noun-like. Actions marked by it exhibit the highest degree of reification.

In example (15a), the main clause is *beja* (*hoi*) 'is harmful' while the atemporal complement clause is *mod kʰua* 'drinking alcohol' complementing the predicative adjective *beja* 'harmful'. Similarly, in example (15b), the main clause is *bʰal* (*hoi*) 'is good', while the atemporal complement clause is *xatura* 'swimming' and it complements the predicative adjective *bʰal* 'good'.

(15a)   *mod kʰua beja (hoi)*

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mod k^{h}a-a beja (hoi)

alcohol eat-CMPZ bad (be)

'Drinking alcohol is harmful.'

(15b) *xatura b^{h}al (hoi)*

xatur-a b^{h}al (hoi)

swim-COMP good (be)

'Swimming is good for health.'

Fig. 40 below, is a schematic representation of the Complementary Schema (CS) and its instantiation (based on (15a) above).

Complementation: ***Complementary schema***

*** mod k^{h}ua beja (hoi)*
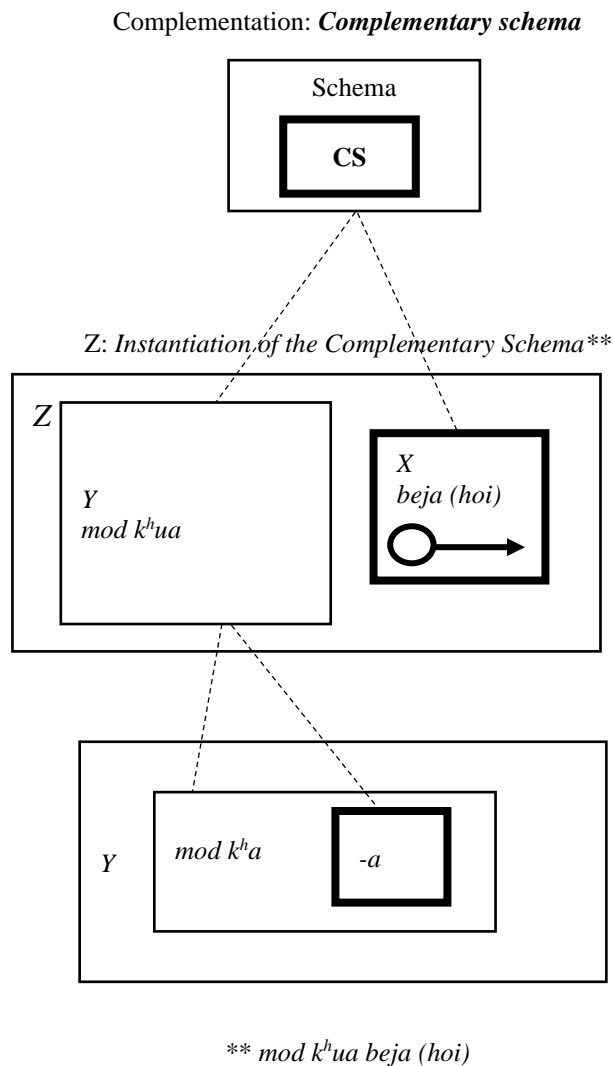
Fig. 37: Complementation by *-a*

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In (15a), we have a generalized statement about a particular type of action: 'Drinking alcohol is harmful.' Let's consider (15c) below, where another non-finite complementizer, i.e., *-ibloi* (see Section 5.3.1.2 below), is used in place of *-a*. This substitution results in a change of meaning: the sentence in (14c) expresses a personal opinion about the taste of mod 'alcohol.'

(15c)   *mod kʰaboloi beja (hoi)*

    mod   kʰa-iboloi   beja   (hoi)

    alcohol   eat-COMP   bad   (be)

    'Drinking alcohol is not tasty.'

The complementizer *–a* can be used with a non-generalized statement as well. In such a case, *–a* is suffixed by the classifier *-tu*. Assamese, unlike English, does not have an article like 'the'. Thus, when a classifier is suffixed to a noun, it results in a definite NP, e.g., *lora-tu* 'the boy'. Thus, *zua-tu* in (15d) means a specific instance of going, complementing the verb *gom pa* 'to learn'. The example (15e), where the classifier *-tu* is missing is, thus, not well-formed.

(15d)   *tumi taloi zuatu gom pau*

    tumi   tar-loi   za-a-tu   gom   pa-u

    you   there-ALL   go-COMP-CLF clue   get-3

    'I learned about you going there.'

(15e)   **tumi taloi ebar zua gom pau*

    tumi   tar-loi   za-a   gom   pa-u

    you   there-ALL   go-COMP   clue   get-3

This also explains, why (15f) below would not *usually* be used to mean (15a) above; it will be uttered rather as an opinion about a *specific instance* of drinking alcohol (e.g., upon seeing someone drinking alcohol), although it can *metonymically* mean a generalized statement on the possible harmful effects of drinking alcohol.

(15f) *mod kʰuatu beja (hoi)*

  mod   kʰa-a-tu   beja   (hoi)

  alcohol   eat-COMP-CLF   bad   (be)

  'In my opinion, drinking alcohol is harmful.'

In (15g) below, we have a further example where the non-finite verb in the complement clause complementing the predicative adjective *beja* 'bad' is suffixed by the same classifier *tu.*

(15g) *tar kʰuatu bor beja (hoi)*

  xi-r   kʰa-a-tu   bor   beja   (hoi)

  he-GEN   eat-COMP-CLF   very   bad   (be)

  'His style of eating is disgusting.'

The suffix *-a*, when added to the verb root *bul*, creates the form *bula*, which serves a quotational function. This *bula* is always followed by a classifier or a noun-classifier combination. For instance, in examples (15a) - (15c), *"ahim"*[8] meaning 'I'll come'; *"nahu"*[9] meaning 'I won't come', and *"sorijam"*[10] meaning 'I'll slap you*"* are direct quotes reported through *bula*.

While both *bula* and *buli* are quotative, they differ in their semantic scope. *buli* can function as a finite complementizer, enabling the reporting of distant conceptualizations. In contrast, *bula* is restricted to internal conceptualizations, where the speaker expresses their opinion or knowledge about the truth value of the reported statement. Since truth values are inherently tied to situations rather than objects, the suffixation of *-a* to *bul* subtly shifts the meaning towards denoting a situation, thus facilitating the expression of truth values.

Importantly, *bula* is always followed by the classifier *-tu* or the noun-classifier combination e.g., *kotha-tu* 'speech-classifier' as in (16c) below.

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[8] *ah-im* 'come-Future-Ø' = 'I'll come' (The first-person person marker in future is realized as Ø' in Assamese.).

[9] *na-ah-u* 'negative-come-1 = 'I won't come'.

[10] *soria-im* 'slap-Future-Ø' = 'I'll slap you.'

(16a) *xi ahim bulatu xosa (hoi)*

xi	ah-im	bul-a-tu	xosa	(hoi)
he	come-FUT	say-COMP-CLF	true	(be)

'The report that he said that he would come is true.'

(16b) *xi nahu bula kot^hatu xosa (hoi)*

xi	n-ah-u	bul-a	kot^ha-tu	xosa	(hoi)
he	NEG-come-1	say-COMP	speech-CLF	true	(be)

'The report that he said that he would come is true.'

(16c) *xi tak sorijam bula kot^hatu misa (hoi)*

xi	xi-k	sorija-m	bul-a	kot^ha-tu	misa	(hoi)
he	he-DOM	slap-FUT	say-COMP	speech-CLF	false	(be)

'The report that he said that he would slap him is untrue.'

Alternatively, as shown in examples (16d) - (16 f) below, the sentences can be re-written using the quotative *buli* instead of *bula*. In these cases, *buli* does not function as a finite complementizer to express distant conceptualizations. Rather, it participates in subjective conceptualizations by quoting the verb phrase (VP) of the subordinate clause. This quotative *buli* is always followed by the nominalized form of the verb *ko* 'tell' i.e., *kua* plus the classifier *–tu* as in (16d); or by *kua* followed by the noun *kot^ha* 'speech' and the classifier *–tu* as in (16e) and (16f).

(16d) *xi ahim buli kuatu xosa (hoi)*

xi	ah-im	buli	ko-a-tu	xosa	(hoi)
he	come-FUT	QUOT.	tell-COMP-CLF	true	(be)

'That he said that he would come is true.'

(16e) *xi nahu buli kua kot^hatu xosa (hoi)*

xi	n-ah-u	buli	ko-a	kot^ha-tu	xosa	(hoi)
he	NEG-come-1	QUOT.	tell-COMP	speech-CLF	true	(be)

'That he said that he would come is true.'

(16f) *xi tak sorijam buli kua kotʰatu misa (hoi)*

xi	xi-k	sorija-m	buli	ko-a	kotʰa-tu	misa	(hoi)
he	he-DOM	slap-FUT	QUOT.	tell-COMP	speech-CLF	false	(be)

‘That he said that he would slap him is untrue.’

5.3.1.2 The non-finite complementizer *-iboloi*

The non-finite complementizer *-iboloi* is composed of the non-finite *-ibo*, which is also the future marker in Assamese and the allative *-loi*. It is used typically to express a personally generalized statement, i.e., personal truths as was observed with (15c) above, which is reproduced as (17a) that follows.

(17a) *mod kʰaboloi beja (hoi)*   (factual modality)

mod	kʰa-iboloi	beja	(hoi)
alcohol	eat-COMP	bad	(be)

‘Drinking alcohol is not tasty.’

(17b) *mod kʰaboloi moza (hoi)*   (factual modality)

mod	kʰa-iboloi	moza	(hoi)
alcohol	eat-COMP	good	(be)

‘Drinking alcohol is a great fun.’

The complementizer *–iboloi* is, thus, also associated with a specific instance of the process in question, often with a future orientation. It may be used to express our emotional response regarding the thing in the complement clause. Consider the following examples, where the atemporal complement clauses have complemented the compound verb *mon za* ‘feel like’, and the verb *ko* ‘say’, respectively.

(17c) *tak saboloi mon goise*   (factual modality)

xi-k	sa-iboloi	mon	za-is-e
he- DOM	see-COMP	mind	go-ING.PROG-3

‘I want to see him.’

(17d) *xi tumak za**boloi** koise*   (factual modality)

      xi   tumi-k   za-iboloi   ko-is-e

      he   you-DOM   go-COMP   say-ING.PROG-3

      'He has asked you to go.'

5.3.1.3 The non-finite complementizer –*ibo*

The atemporal complementizer –*ibo* is associated with modality, i.e., a reality that has a potential to be factual or realized, as in the examples below. -*ibo* is also the future marker in Assamese. The complement clauses in the examples complement, respectively, the verbs *zan* 'can/know' and *par* 'can'.

(18a) *moi xatur**ibo** zanu*   (disposition modality)

      moi   xatur-ibo   zan-u

      I   swim-COMP   know-1

      'I can swim.'

(18b) *xi gari sola**bo** pare*   (disposition modality)

      xi   gari   sola-ibo   par-e

      he   car   drive-COMP   can-3

      'He can drive a car.'

Both (18a) and (18b) above express disposition modality, expressing the ability to perform some particular act or task. In (18c) and (18d), we have another such example with the complementizer –*ibo*, expressing a potential reality. The complement clauses in the examples complement, respectively, the verbs *bisar* 'want' and the compound verb *xidd^hanto lo* 'decide'.

(18c) *moi za**bo** bisarisu*   (potential modality)

      moi   za-ibo   bisar-is-u

      I   go-COMP   want-ING.PROG-1

      'I want to go.'

(18d)　*moi za**boloi** xidd^hanto loisu*　　　(potential modality)

　　　moi　　za-iboloi　　　xidd^hanto　　lo-is-u

　　　I　　　go-COMP　　　decision　　　take-ING.PROG.1

　　　'I have taken the decision to go.'

While (18e) expresses a potential reality with the verb *bisar* 'want' (18f), by contrast expresses a factual reality, i.e., the speaker has taken a decision to go, which is a factual. Thus, (18e) and (18f) are ill-formed.

(18e)　*moi zaboloi bisarisu*

　　　moi　　za-iboloi　　　　　bisar-is-u

　　　I　　　go-COMP　　　want-ING.PROG-1

(18f)　*moi zabo xidd^hanto loisu*

　　　moi　　za-ibo　　　xidd^hanto　　lo-is-u

　　　I　　　go-COMP　　　decision　　　take-ING.PROG.1

The ungrammaticality of (18e) and (18f) provide clear evidence that *-ibo* and *-iboloi* have different semantics. One is associated with potential reality, the other factual reality.

The examples below provide further evidence that *–ibo* is associated with potential reality. The complement clauses in the examples complement the modal verbs *lag* 'be attached' in (19a), and (20a), and *pari* 'be possible' in (21a).

(19a)　*xomoiot ah**ibo** lage*　　　(deontic modality)

　　　xomoi-ot　　ah-ibo　　　lag-e

　　　time-LOC　　come-COMP　　be attached-3

　　　'Arriving on schedule is desirable.'

(20a)　*azi mod k^h**abo** pari*　　　(intrinsic modality)

　　　azi　　mod　　　kha-ibo　　　par-i

　　　today　alcohol　　eat-COMP　　be able-IMM

　　　'It may be a day for drinking alcohol.'

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(21a)   *azi boroxun ah**ibo** lage*   (epistemic modality)

        azi   boroxun   ah-ibo   lag-e

        today   rain   come-COMP   be attached-3

        'It is likely to rain today.'

The (b) versions of (19), (20) and (21) are ill formed as they have *–iboloi* in place of *–ibo.*

(19b)   * *xomoiot ahiboloi lage*

        xomoi-ot   ah-ibo   lag-e

        time-LOC   come-COMP   be attached-3

        'Arriving on schedule is desirable.'

(20b)   **azi mod k^haboloi pari*

        azi   mod   kha-ibo   par-i

        today   alcohol   eat-COMP   be able-IMM

        'It may be a day for drinking alcohol.'

(21b)   **azi boroxun ahiboloi lage*

        azi   boroxun   ah-ibo   lag-e

        today   rain   come-COMP   be attached-3

5.3.1.4 The non-finite complementizer *-i*

The atemporal complementizer *-i* is associated with complementation that is resultative in meaning. In the following examples *–i* is used and they express a result had from an accomplished instance of a particular type of action as in (22a); or an expected result from such an action as in (22b) below. The complement clauses in the examples complement the compound verb *b^hal lag* 'enjoy'. *-i* is also the serial verb marker in the language.

(22a)   *anzak^hon k^ha**i** bor b^hal lagil*

        anza-k^hon   k^ha-i   bor   b^hal   lag-il

        curry-CLF   eat-COMP   very   good   be attached-PRF

        'I thoroughly enjoyed eating the curry.'

(22b)   *taloi go**i** nissoi bor b*ʰ*al lagibo*

tar-loi	za-i	nissoi	bor	bʰal	lag-ibo
there-ALL	go-COMP	sure	very	good	be attached-FUT

'I am sure we will thoroughly enjoy going there.'

In (22c) and (22d) below, we have two examples, each expressing a resultative summary of a particular type of action. In both examples the compound verb *beja pa* 'hate/dislike' controls the complement clauses.

(22c)   *dorob k*ʰ*a**i** beja pau*

dorob	kʰa-i	beja	pa-u
medicine	eat-COMP	bad	get-1

'I hate having medicines.'

(22d)   *mas k*ʰ*a**i** bohute beja pai*

mas	kʰa-i	bohute	beja	pa-i
fish	eat-COMP	many	bad	get-3

'Many dislikes eating fish.'

5.3.1.5 The non-finite complementizer *-ile*

The non-finite complementizer *-ile* is associated with complementation that expresses a condition. It establishes the condition as a ground and is compatible with main clauses featuring emotion verbs, indicating how we will feel once the condition is fulfilled. This can be seen in examples (23a) - (25a) below, which present three conditional statements using *-ile*. The complement clauses in these examples express a present (23a), future (24a), and past (25a) condition, respectively, complementing the noun *duk*ʰ *'pain'*. In other words, the sadness is linked to the fulfillment of the stated condition.

(23a)   *tumi kand**ile** duk*ʰ *pau*

tumi	kand-ile	dukʰ	pa-u
you	cry-COMP	hurt	get-1

'When you cry, I get hurt.'

(24a)   *tumi kandile dukʰ pam*

      tumi   kand-ile   dukʰ   pa-m

      you   cry-COMP   hurt   get-FUT

      'If you cry, I will get hurt.'

(25a)   *tumi nahile dukʰ palu heten*

      tumi   na-ah-ile   dukʰ   pa-il-u   heten

      you   NEG-come-COMP   hurt   get-PRF-1   COND

      'If you did not come, I would have been hurt.'

It is clear from the discussion above that the marker *–ile* atemporalizes a subordinate clause that expresses a condition. As a matter of fact, *–il,* in being the present perfect marker in Assamese, means that the action involved has just finished, but its impact or relevance is still there in the present. Thus, an extended (i.e., polysemous) meaning of *-il* is fulfilment of a condition, resulting in a particular result as its impact (i.e., pain in the case of the concerned examples). Thus, we have *–il* in the complement clauses in (23a) - (25a), suffixed by *–e* as a condition marker.

Actions marked by *-ile* exhibits a high degree of actionality, which enables it to be alternately expressed by the temporal and conditional subordinators like *zetia* and *zodi,* as in the (b) versions of (23), (24), and (25). We analyze these clauses as complement clauses rather than adverbial subordinate clauses, because when we say *dukʰ pau* 'I get hurt' as in (23b), *dukʰ pam* 'I will be hurt' as in (24b), and *dukʰ palu heten* 'I would have been hurt' as in (25b), immediately the question will arise as to 'what is it that hurts you?' in (23b), 'what will hurt you?' in (24b), and 'what would have hurt you?' in (25b). Thus, functions as a complement, providing essential information to fully articulate the meaning of the main clause.

(23b)   *tumi zetia kanda, dukʰ pau*

      tumi   zetia   kand-a dukʰ   pa-u

      you   when   cry-1   hurt   get-1

      'When you cry, I get hurt.'

(24b) *tumi **zodi** kanda dukʰ pam*

tumi   zodi   kand-a   dukʰ   pa-m

you   if   cry-1   hurt   get-FUT

'If you cry, I will be hurt.'

(25b) *tumi **zodi** nahila heten, tente dukʰ palu heten*

tumi   zodi   na-ah-il-a   heten   tente   dukʰ   pa-il-u   heten

you   if   NEG-come-PRF-2   COND   then   hurt   get-PRF-1   COND

'If you would have not come, I would have been hurt.'

5.3.2 Types of non-finite complement clauses in Mising

We have identified four types of non-finite complement clauses in Mising and three different non-finite complementizers. Notably, the absence of a complementizer is characteristic of informal, rapid speech, wherein the root verb in its bare form functions as the non-finite verb, which is discussed in Section 5.3.2.1

We focus on the grammar and meaning of each of these non-finite complementation form in the sub-sections that follow.

5.3.2.1 Non-finite Complementation in Mising with *-nam*

Mising employs the non-finite complementizer *-nam* to introduce non-finite clauses that function as complements within a sentence. Actions marked by *-nam* exhibits the highest degree of reification. It is the only complementizer that takes the definitive marker *-dʒ* in the language. It is primarily used to express universal and personal truths. Thus, (26a) - (26i) show how *-nam* can be used to create general statements about actions.

(26a) *apoŋ tɨ:**nam** aima*

apoŋ   tɨ:-nam   ai-ma

alcohol   drink-COMP   good-NEG

'Drinking alcohol is harmful.'

(26b) *misa agom lu**nam** aima*

misa   agom   lu-nam   ai-ma

false   words   say-COMP   good-NEG

'Lying is bad.'

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(26c) *bozek jub**nam** aima*

bozek   jub-nam   ai-ma

Too much   sleep-COMP   good-NEG

'Sleeping too much is bad.'

In these examples, the non-finite verb clauses ('drinking alcohol,' 'lying,' and 'sleeping too much') describe actions as general types, not specific instances.

While *-nam* can indicate general statements as exemplified by the three examples above, it can also indicate 'personalized generalizations' as in (26d) and (26e) below. These statements reflect truths specific to an individual, formed through repeated experiences. They represent personal preferences, unlike universal truths about actions in general (e.g., 'drinking alcohol is harmful').

(26d) *ŋɔ po**nam** aipɜ mɜ:dag*

ŋɔ   po-nam   aipɜ   mɜ:-dag

I   read-COMP   well   feel-HAB

'I love to read.'

(26e) *Johnbɨ futbol keli**nam** aipɜ mɜ:dag*

John-bɨ   futbol   keli-nam   aipɜ mɜ:-dag

John-he   football   play- COMP   good   feel-HAB

'John likes to play football.'

It is to be noted, however, when used with the definitive marker *-dɜ* and referring to a specific instance of an action, *-nam* loses its generalizing function. Consider (25f) below, which describes a single instance of someone going somewhere, and *-nam* with *-dɜ* clarifies this specificity.

(26f) *no olop gɨ**nam**dɜm kindag*

no   olop   gɨ-nam-dɜ-m   kin-dag

you   there   go-COMP-DEF-ACC   know-HAB

'I learned about you going there.'

The examples (26g) and (26h) below, are identical with (26b) and (26c) above in form, except that the definitive marker -*dʒ* is missing in (26b) and (26c). When attached to nouns, -*dʒ* creates definite noun phrases (e.g., *ko:dʒ* 'the boy'). Similarly, when added to non-finite verbs, it can suggest a specific action, although it might also carry a metonymic meaning of a generalized statement as is evidenced in (26g) - (26i).

(26g) *misa agom lunamdʒ aima*

   misa   agom lu-nam-dʒ ai-ma

   false   words say-COMP-DEF well-NEG

   'Lying is bad.'

(26h) *bozek jubnamdʒ aima*

   bozek   jub-nam-dʒ   ai-ma

   Too much sleep- COMP-DEF   well-NEG

   'Sleeping too much is bad.'

(26i) *nok ukumpʒ ginam aipʒ mʒ:dag*

   no-k   ukum-pʒ   gi-nam   aipʒ mʒ:-dag

   you-GEN home-ALL   go-COMP   good feel-HAB

   'I like going to your house.'

However, the non-finite complementizer -*nam* when suffixed to the verb root *ʒm* 'say', making it *ʒmnam*, has quotational properties.

-*nam* when suffixed to *ʒm* is always followed either by the definitive -*dʒ*, or by the noun *agom* 'speech' and the definitive -*dʒ*. In the examples below, "*gɨjʒ*", "*gɨkuma*", "*dɨjʒ*" are direct quotes that are reported by the quotative *ʒmnam*. It is different from the finite complementizer *ʒmna* as *ʒmna*, in addition to being quotative, can also function as a finite complementizer.

But *ʒmnam* cannot function as a finite complementizer to report a distant conceptualization. It can only take part in a subjective conceptualization, where it reports the VP of the subordinate clause, as in (27a) – (27c).

(27a) *bɨ gɨjɜ ɜmnamdɜ arro*

bɨ	gɨ-jɜ	ɜm-nam-dɜ	arro
he	come-FUT	say-COMP-DEF	true

'The report that he said that he would come is true.'

(27b) *bɨ gɨkuma ɜmnam agomdɜ arro*

bɨ	gɨ-ku-ma	ɜm-nam	agom-dɜ	arro
he	come-return-NEG	say-COMP	speech-DEF	true

'The report that he said that he won't come is true.'

(27c) *bɨ bɨm dɨjɜ ɜmnam agomdɜ aroma*

bɨ	bɨ-m	dɨ-jɜ	ɜm-nam	agom-dɜ	aro-ma
he	he-ACC	slap-FUT	say-COMP	speech-DEF	true-NEG

'The report that he said that he would slap him is untrue.'

Alternately, the above sentences can also be re-written using *ɜmna* in place of *ɜmnam* as those in (27d) – (27f). In these sentences, *ɜmna* is only a quotative word. The non-finite complementizer is *-nam* suffixed to *lu* 'tell' in (27d), (27e) and (27f).

ɜmna is always followed by the verb *lu* 'tell' and the definitive *-dɜ*, or the verb *lu* 'tell' followed by the noun *agom* 'speech', and the definitive *-dɜ*.

(27d) *bɨ gɨjɜ ɜmna lunamdɜ arro*

bɨ	gɨ-jɜ	ɜmna	lu-nam-dɜ	arro
he	come-FUT	QUOT.	tell-COMP-DEF	true

'That he said that he would come is true.'

(27e) *bɨ gɨkuma ɜmna lunam agomdɜ arro*

bɨ	gɨ-ku-ma	ɜmna	lu-nam	agom-dɜ	arro
he	come-back-NEG	QUOT.	tell-COMP	speech-DEF	true

'That he said that he would come is true.'

(27f) *bɨ bɨm dɨjɜ ɜmna lunam agomdɜ aroma*

bɨ	bɨ-m	di-jɜ	ɜmna	lu-nam	agom-dɜ	aro-ma
he	he-ACC	slap-FUT	QUOT.	tell-COMP	speech-DEF	true-NEG

'The report that he said that he would slap him is untrue.'

5.3.2.2 Non-finite Complementation in Mising with *-la*

The non-finite complementizer *-la* in Mising is primarily used to introduce resultative clauses. These clauses express the outcome or consequence of an action. They capture a common human experience: we perform actions that lead to specific results. That is, we express how we feel after having come into contact with a thing or after an action is complete.

Thus, sentence (28a) exemplifies the use of *-la* to express an expected result from an action. On the other hand, sentences (28b) – (278f) demonstrate how *-la* can indicate the achieved result of a specific action type.

(28a) *olop gɨla mɜːpojɜ*

olop   gɨ-la   mɜːpo-jɜ

there   go-COMP   feel-nice-FUT

'I am sure we will enjoy going there.'

(28b) *kobordɜm paːla mɜːpokaŋ*

kobor-dɜ-m   paː-la   mɜːpo-kaŋ

news-CLF-ACC   get- COMP   feel-nice-PST

'I am happy to receive the news.'

(28c) *kusere dola dopomaŋ*

kusere   do-la   do-po-maŋ

medicine   eat-COMP   eat-nice-NEG

'I hate having medicines.'

Fig. 41 on the next page is a schematic representation of the Complementary schema (CS) and its instantiation (based on (28c) above).

Complementation: ***Complementary schema***

** *kusere do**la** dopomaŋ*
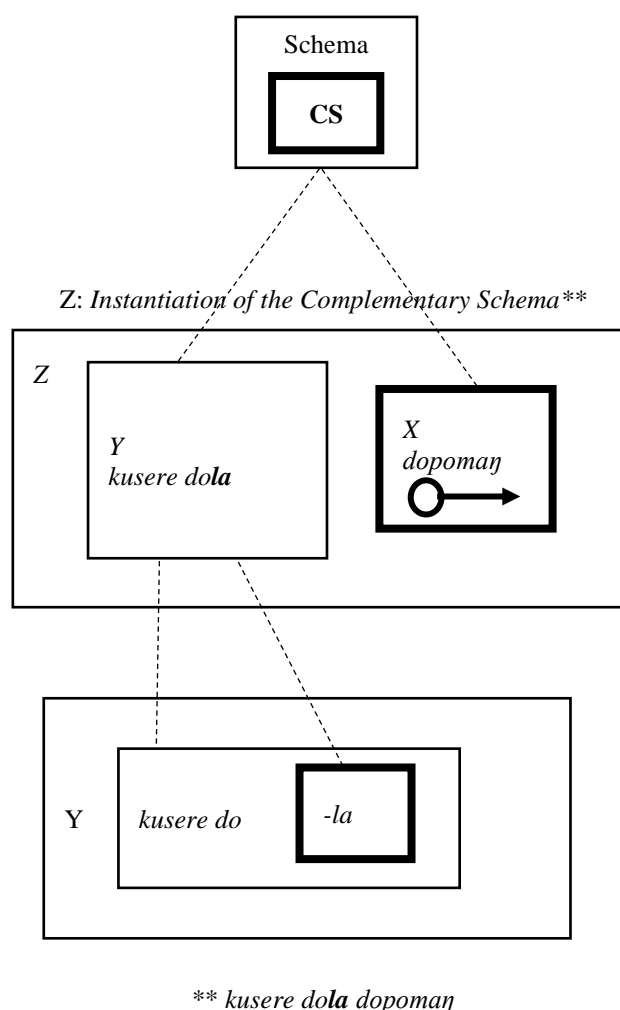
Fig. 38: Complementation by *-la*

(28d) *oŋodʒ do**la** dopodagai*

oŋo-dʒ   do-la   do-po-dagai

fish-DEF   eat-COMP   eat-nice-PST

'I liked eating the fish.'

(28e) *aːnʒ gorat kontʒkko ted**la** asinsʒ mʒsarsukaŋ*

aːnʒ   gorat   kontʒk-ko   ted-la   asinsʒ   mʒ-sar-su-kaŋ

river   side   some time-IND sit-COMP   heart   worry-untangle-do-PST

'Sitting in the river-side for some time made my worries go away.'

(28f) *puliːdʒ pʒdoŋ pala anu annʒ ŋinsaːduŋ*

　　　puliː-dʒ　　　　pʒdoŋ　pa-la　　　　anu　　annʒ　　ŋinsaː-duŋ

　　　sapling-DEF　　rain　　get-COMP　　new　　leaf　　grow-PROG

　　　'The sapling is thriving, thanks to the recent rainfall.'

5.3.2.3 Non-finite Complementation in Mising with *-milo*

The non-finite complementizer *-milo* introduces conditional clauses in Mising. These clauses express a condition that must be met for something else to happen. This is clear from (29a) - (29c) below. These sentences demonstrate how *-milo* can be used with different time frames for the condition. Thus, (29a) can be explained as expressing a present condition; (29b) can be explained as expressing a future condition; (29c) can be explained as expressing a past condition.

All three sentences connect the condition in the *-milo* clause to the main clause verb *mʒːdɨr* 'sadness,' indicating that the speaker's sadness is related to the fulfillment of the condition.

(29a) *no kabjomilo mʒːdɨrdag*

　　　no　　kab-jo-milo　　mʒː-dɨr-dag

　　　you　cry-FUT-COMP feel-tired-HAB

　　　'If you cry, I feel sad.'

(29b) *no kabmilo mʒːpomaːjʒ*

　　　no　　kab-milo　　　mʒː-po-maː-jʒ

　　　you　cry-COMP　　feel-nice-NEG-FUT

　　　'If you cry, I will be hurt.'

(29c) *no gɨmamilo　mʒːdɨrjai*

　　　no　　gɨ-ma-milo　　　　mʒː-dɨr-jai

　　　you　go-NEG-FUT-COMP　feel-tired-COND.PST

　　　'If you did not come, I would have been hurt.'

5.3.2.4 Non-finite Complementation in rapid informal speech in Mising

In rapid informal speech in Mising, the root verb, assumes a non-finite function, appearing in its bare, uninflected form without an accompanying complementizer. This form is mainly employed to create general statements about actions. Consider the following examples that follow, (30a) – (30d), where the root verbs occur in their bare form. This form is mainly used to denote modality.

(30a) *ŋo baːjodag*   (disposition modality)

ŋo   baː-jo[11]-dag

I   swim-know-HAB

'I know to swim.'

(30b) *ŋo gari dukkindag*   (disposition modality)

ŋo   gari   duk-kin-dag

I   car   drive-know-HAB

'I know to drive a car.'

(30c) *ŋo poriliːdag*   (factual modality)

ŋo   pori-lɨ[12]ː-dag

I   read-like-HAB

'I like to read.'

(30d) *ŋo porijodag*   (disposition modality)

ŋo   pori-jo-dag

I   read-know-HAB

'I know to read.'

(30e) *cricket keliliːdag*   (potential modality)

cricket   keli-lɨː-dag

cricket   play-desire-HAB

'I want to play cricket.'

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[11] *jo* is derived from *ijo* meaning 'to know'.
[12] *lɨ* is derived from *ilɨ* meaning 'desire'. However, it can also be employed to express the meaning of 'liking' in particular contexts.

(30f) *ŋo dolɨːdag*   (potential modality)

    ŋo   do-lɨː-dag

    I   eat-desire-HAB

    'I want to eat.'

(30g) *ŋo soːlɨːma*   (potential modality)

    ŋo   soː-lɨː-ma

    I   dance-desire-NEG

    'I don't want to dance.'

Thus, Assamese has at least five, and Mising has at least three non-finite complementizers in their respective languages, which are presented in Table 9 and Table 10 that follows, categorized by their broad semantic functions.

Table 9: Non-finite Complementizers in Assamese

Sl. No.	Non-finite Complementizer	Semantics
1	*-a*	Generalized statement
2	*-iboloi*	Personal generalization
3	*-ibo*	Potential modality
4	*-i*	Resultative
5	*-ile*	Conditional

Table 10: Non-finite Complementizers in Mising

Sl. No.	Non-finite Complementizer	Semantics
1	*-nam*	Generalized statement
2	*-la*	Resultative
3	*-mɨlo*	Conditional

5.4 Structural similarity between Complement and Relative Clauses in Assamese and Mising

We observe below that Assamese and Mising, like many other Tibeto-Burman languages, often exhibit a close structural similarity between non-finite complement clauses and

non-finite relative clauses[13]. This similarity arises because the non-finite relative clause is embedded within the non-finite complement clause. However, this is only the case when the relative clause is made non-finite or nominalized by –*a* in Assamese and -*nam* in Mising, which also functions as a complementizer (see Section 5.3.1.1 and Section 5.3.2.1).

In example (31a), the relative clause *tai kina* 'of her buying' is followed by the head noun *frock* 'frock.' *kina* is the non-finite or the nominalized form of the verb *kin* 'buy', nominalized by -*a*. Similarly, in (30b), the relative clause *mɜlok rɨksunam* 'of my meeting yesterday' is followed by the head noun *koːnɜdɜ* 'the girl'. *rɨksunam* is the non-finite or the nominalized verb form of the verb *rɨksu* 'meet', nominalized by -*nam.*

(31a) *tai kina frocktu*   (Assamese)

       tai   kin-a   frock-tu

       she   buy-NF frock-CLF

       'The frock she bought.'

(31b) *mɜlok rɨksunam koːnɜdɜ*   (Mising)

       mɜlok   rɨksu-nam   koːnɜ-dɜ

       yesterday   meet-NF   girl-DEF

       'The girl that you met yesterday.'

Now consider (31c) and (31d). The relative clause *tai kina* 'of her buying' in (30a) is now embedded within the non-finite complement clause *tai kina frocktu* 'the frock of her buying' in (30c). That is, *tai kina* is a relative clause that modifies the head noun *frocktu* 'the frock', but the relative clause with the head noun *tai kina frocktu* 'the frock of her buying' itself serves as a complement to the main clause *dekʰilu* 'I saw'.

Similarly, the relative clause *mɜlok rɨksunam* 'of my meeting yesterday' in (30b) is embedded within the non-finite complement clause *mɜlok rɨksunam koːnɜdɜ* 'of my meeting her yesterday' in (30d). That is, *mɜlok rɨksunam* 'of my meeting' is a relative clause that modifies the head noun *koːnɜdɜ* 'the girl', but the relative clause together with

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[13] Recall that relative clauses in Assamese and Mising are either finite or non-finite (see Chapter 4).

the head noun *mɜlok rɨksunam koːnɜdɜ* 'of my meeting of the girl yesterday' itself serves as a complement to the main clause *gɨduŋ* 'has come'.

(31c) *tai kina frocktu dekʰilu*   (Assamese)

      tai   kin-a   frock-tu   dekʰ-il-u

      she   buy-NF frock-CLF   see-PRF-1

      'I saw the frock that she has bought.'

(31d) *mɜlok rɨksunam koːnɜdɜ gɨduŋ*   (Mising)

      mɜlok   rɨksu-nam   koːnɜ-dɜ   gɨ-duŋ

      yesterday   meet-NF   girl-DEF   come-PROG

      'The girl I met yesterday has come.'

The non-finite complement clause with an embedded non-finite relative clause in (31c) is schematically presented in Figure 42 that follows.

Complementation: ***Complementary schema***

*** Mary e pindʰa kapurzur dʰunija**
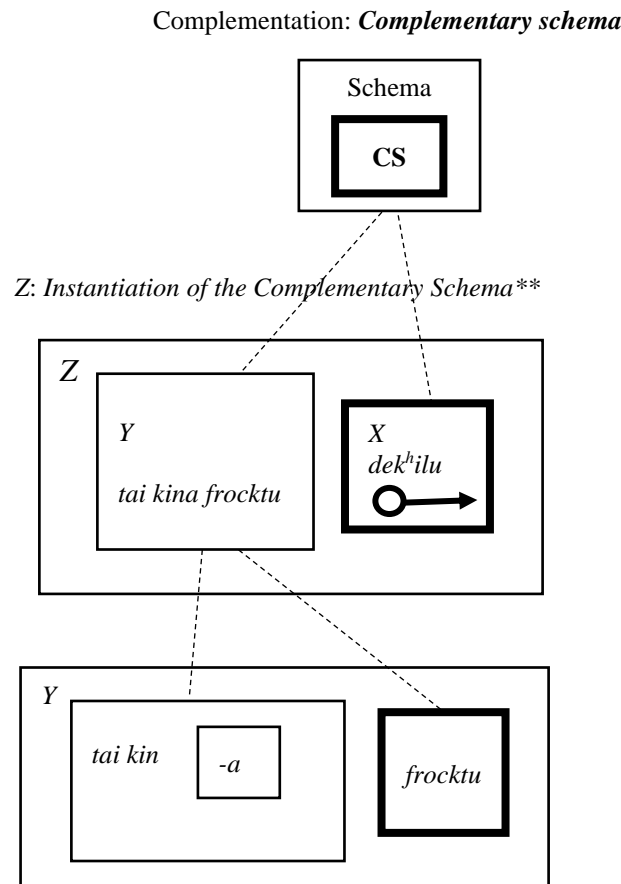
Fig. 39: The non-finite complement clause with an embedded non-finite relative clause

In Fig. 39, The topmost box *Z* represents the entire sentence. *X* represents the main clause and serves as the figure (F), while *Y* represents the complement clause and functions as the ground (G). The lower boxes provide a more detailed breakdown of the complement clause structure. It highlights the complement clause, with the complementizer *-a.* However, since the complement clause is again composed of the relative clause *tai kina* 'of her buying' and the head noun *frocktu* 'the frock', we show a schematic representation of the relative clause as well, where the head noun *froctu* 'the frock' is the figure (F), hence represented by smaller bold box, and the relative clause is represented by the bigger un-bold box.

Similarly, in (31e) and (31f) that follows, *xi nahu bula* 'his saying that he was not coming' and *bɨ gɨkuma ɜmnam* 'his saying that he was not coming' are relative clauses that modifies the head nouns *kotʰatu* 'the speech' and *agomdɜ* 'the speech', respectively. However, they are embedded inside the non-finite complement clause *xi nahu bula kotʰatu* and *bɨ gɨkuma ɜmnam agomdɜ* that themselves serve as complements to the main clauses *xosa (hoi)* 'is true' in (31e) and *arro* 'is true' (31f), respectively.

(31e) *xi nahu bula kotʰatu xosa (hoi)*   (Assamese)

xi	n-ah-u	bul-a	kotʰa-tu	xosa	(hoi)
he	NEG-come-1	say-NF	speech-CLF	true	(be)

'The report that he said that he would come is true.'

(31f) *bɨ gɨkuma ɜmnam agomdɜ arro*   (Mising)

bɨ	gɨ-ku-ma	ɜm-nam	agom-dɜ	arro
he	come-back-NEG	say-NF	speech-DEF	true

'The report that he said that he won't come is true.'

The discussion above clarifies why there is structural similarity between the non-finite relative clause and the non-finite complement clause in both languages.

This chapter is followed by a Conclusion in which we present our final thoughts and summarizing remarks.