Finding your way through the light verb jungle: the case of Odia

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A road map through the jungle

• Butt (2010) "The light verb jungle":
  “the study of light verbs and complex predicates is fraught with dangers and misunderstandings” (p. 48)

• Sahoo & Lemmens / Lemmens & Sahoo:
  perhaps less of a jungle provided one takes a usage-based view of the different types of complex predicates and "light verbs" and their function
Outline

1. Introduction
2. Odia LV Cxs:
   - Formal features
   - Semantic features
   - Corpus-based analysis of Odia LVs
3. Larger theoretical considerations
4. Future work
Different types of serial verb constructions:

1. symmetric serial vb Cxs ($V-i-V-\ldots-V$) :
   - combine multiple main verbs
   - subject shared
   - sequential interpretation

2. asymmetric serial vb Cxs ($V-i-v$) :
   - combine a lexical verb with a light verb

= TODAY’S TOPIC
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Odia light verb constructions

• Small set (10) of 'true' light verbs (cf. Urdu / Hindi, etc.):

  1. MOTION verbs:
     
     - uth ‘rise’, -ās ‘come’

  2. STATIVE verbs:
     
     - bas ‘sit’, -rah ‘stay’

  3. TRANSFER verbs:
     
     - ḍe ‘give’, -ne ‘take’
How many LVs exactly?

• Different numbers in the literature:
  – Singh et al. (1986): 16 LVs in Odia
  – Vale (1948): 41 LVs in Odia

• Problem “light verb”, a mixed bag:
  – no distinction (esp. Vale) between symmetrical and asymmetrical serial verb Cxs
  – inclusion of “verbalisers” (Butt 2010), such as –
    kar ‘do’, e.g. kʰāikari phone.do (‘phone’) (NOTE: can be reduced to affix –ki)
  – inclusion of “semi-light verbs”, such as sār ‘finish’ or pār ‘can’: (i) meaning preserved & (ii) can combine with LV (V-sār-LV vs. *V-LV-LV)
Some examples

(1) a. mo hāṭaru sabu paisā sar-i-āsilā
    my hand.abl all money finish-LNK-come.pst.3sg
    ‘The money has all gone from my hand.’

b. se piṭhāṭāku seṭebeļu kʰā-i-tʃālʃʰi
    he pancake.cl.acc since.then eat-LNK-walk.PERF.3sg
    ‘He has been eating the pancake since then.’

c. bahuṭa guḍāe khāḍya bāl-i-paḍilā
    too much food leave-LNK-fall.PST.3sg
    ‘Too much food was left over (unexpectedly).’
Syntactic features (transitivy)

LV: no more arg. structure, but T-constraints

- **intransitive** verbs constructions:
  - *jā ’-go*: break.go, die.go (*kill.go*)
  - *paq ’-fall*: break.fall, sleep.fall, stumble.fall, (*do.fall*)
  - *uṭh ’-rise*: laugh.rise, cry.rise, blossom.rise (*give.rise*)
  - *ās ’-come*: fly.come, increase.come

- **(di)transitive** verb constructions:
  - *dē ’-give*: break.give, kill.give (*die.give*)
  - *pakā ’-drop*: embrace.drop (*sleep.drop*)
  - *tfāl ’-walk*: give.walk, take.walk, drink.walk

- **intransitive** and **transitive** verb constructions
  - *rah ’-stay*; *bas ’-sit*
Syntactic features (transitivity)

Alternating verbs: LV determined by Cx:

(2) a. *glas-ʈā bhāng-i-jā-i-ch-i*
   glass-CL break-LNK-go-PRF-AUX-3sg
   ‘The glass is broken.’

b. *kie glas-ʈā bhāng-i-de-i-ch-i (*bhāng-i-jā-i-ch-i)*
   somebody glass-CL break-LNK-give-PRF-AUX-3sg
   ‘Somebody has broken the glass.’
Syntactic features (causatives)

- LV constructions with CAUS -ā : transitive LV needed, e.g. 'V-give'
  
  c. pāṇi-tā phuṭ-i-ga-lā
  water-CL boil.go.pst.3sg
  'The water (unsupposedly) boiled.'

  d. mū pāṇi-tā phuṭ-ā-i-de-li
     I water-CL boil-CAUS-LNK-give-PST.1sg
  'I boiled the water (successfully & unexpectedly).'
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LV Cxs: semantic features

• Butt and Geuder (2001): some kind of “event modification”

• Butt & Lahiri 2002: "LV [adds] further contextually defeasible information […] about suddenness, force, agentivity or benefaction as well as further specification as to Actionsart"

• Lemmens & Sahoo (2016, 2017, forthc.): more refined classification w.r.t. semantics of event modification, but not (really) contextually defeasible, part of the Cx itself (CxG account)
Four main claims:

1. all Odia LVs express an aspectual value (phasal profile);
2. five LVs (-jā 'go'; -paɖ 'fall'; -d̪e 'give'; -pakā 'drop'; -uṭẖ 'rise') furthermore express mirativity ("surprise");
3. four of these differ in the degree of mirativity they express;
4. the LV -ne '-take' usually expresses self-benefaction and may or may not express mirativity.
1. Phasal (aspectual) profile

- all 10 LVs express a phasal profile on the event:
  
  1. '-go' / '-give' / '-fall' / '-drop' / '-take'
     => focus on COMPLETION
  
  2. '-rise'
     => focus on ONSET
  
  3. '-come' / '-sit' / '-stay' / '-walk'
     => focus on CONTINUATION / DURATION
ONSET

DURATION

COMPLETION

'rise'

'come' / 'sit'
'stay' / 'walk'

'go' / 'give'
'fall' / 'drop'
('take')
(4) a. SINGLE VERB CX

\[\text{bahi-ṭā} \ mū \ tāku \ de-l-i, \ kintu \ se \ ne-l-ā-ni\]

book-CL I him give-PAST-1SG but he take-PST-3SG-NEG

‘I gave (= offered) him the book, but he didn’t take it.’

b. LV Cx 'V-rise': ONSET

\[\text{gʰare} \ pashu \ pashu \ se \ haṭʰāt \ gita \ gā-i-utʰilā\]

house entering entering he suddenly song sing-LNK-rise.PST.3SG

‘While entering the house, suddenly he started singing’

c. LV Cx 'V-walk': DURATION

\[\text{se} \ piṭhāṭāku \ setebelu \ khā-i-tʃālitʃi}\]

he pancake.cl.acc since.then eat-LNK-walk.PERF.3sg

‘He has been eating the pancake since then.’

d. LV Cx 'V-give': COMPLETION

\[\text{bahi-ṭā} \ mū \ tāku \ de-i-de-li (*kintu \ se \ ne-l-ā-ni)\]

book-CL I him give-LNK-give-PST-1SG-NEG

‘I gave him the book (*but he didn’t take it).’
Four main claims:

1. all Odia LVs express an aspectual value (phasal profile);

2. five LVs (-jā 'go'; -paḍ 'fall'; -qē 'give'; -pakā 'drop'; -uṭh 'rise') furthermore express mirativity ("surprise");

3. four of these differ in the degree of mirativity they express;

4. the LV -ne 'take' usually expresses self-benefaction and may or may not express mirativity.
2. Mirativity

• Definition (Delancey 2001): (universal) linguistic category of SURPRISE
  = linguistic expression of a psychological-cognitive phenomenon (most likely universal) which arises from the discrepancy between what is expected (given the background of the speaker’s or hearer’s knowledge or assumptions) and what is observed
Mirativity

• Lexical expressions of mirativity:
  – surprise, holy smokes!, mon Dieu!
  – surprisingly, unexpectedly, out of the blue

• Grammatical(ized) expressions of mirativity:
  – evidential markers that may allow a mirative interpretation (pragmatic inference), see e.g. T. Peterson (2015)
Mirativity

• Peterson (2015) distinction between:
  – **parasitic** expressions of mirativity: mirative reading is parasitic on other expressions that initially serve to express other functions (e.g., evidentiality markers, WH-questions)
  – **non-parastic** expressions of mirativity: expressions whose sole purpose is to express mirativity (rare phenomenon!)

=> 6 Odia light verbs: possibly *non-parastic expressions of mirativity*
## Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASAL VALUE</th>
<th>MIRATIVITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONSET</strong></td>
<td>+ MIRATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DURATION (MIDDLE)</strong></td>
<td>- MIRATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMPLETION</strong></td>
<td>+ MIRATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>± MIRATIVE</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- \( u^h \) ‘-rise’
- ās ‘-come’-raḥ ‘stay’
- bas ‘sit’, tfāl ‘walk’
- jā ‘-go’, paḍ ‘-fall’
- dē ‘-give’, pakā ‘-drop’
- ne ‘-take’

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MOTIVATION for MIRATIVITY

• ONSET & MIRATIVITY:

  intuitively / experientially fairly straightforward: (sudden) onset of event is source of surprise

  not unlike Swedish gå och V ‘go and V’ and ta och V ‘take and V’ where (Wiklund 2009)
MOTIVATION for MIRATIVITY

• COMPLETION & MIRATIVITY:

"the observed situation is accessed and/or evaluated via the result of the (completed) event which, however, does not correspond to what can be expected." (Sahoo & Lemmens, 2017b)

not unlike motivation for (parasitic) mirative readings of perfective or evidential markers
MOTIVATION for NON-MIRATIVITY

• LVs with DURATIVE focus ('-come' / '-sit' / '-stay' / '-walk') are NOT mirative;

• Possible experiential motivation (hypothesis following suggestion by F. Talayati, p.c.):
  – mirativity is result of comparison of two different states:
    • ONSET: pre-onset & onset state
    • COMPLETION: end state & end+1 state
  – no such contrast for middle part of the process (identical states) => no source of surprise
Four main claims:

1. all Odia LVs express an aspectual value (phasal profile);
2. five LVs (-jā 'go'; -paḍ 'fall'; -qe 'give'; -pakā 'drop'; -uṭh 'rise') furthermore express mirativity ("surprise");
3. four of these differ in the degree of mirativity they express;
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3. Degrees of mirativity

There is a cline of mirativity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>more mirative</th>
<th>less mirative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRANSITIVE</td>
<td>-fall</td>
<td>-go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSITIVE</td>
<td>-drop</td>
<td>-give</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible explanation: lexical persistence *(T.B.C.!!)*

- fall: maximally involuntarily motion
- go: usually voluntary motion (default LV)
- drop: (in)voluntary action by agent
- give: voluntary action by agent (default LV)
Semi-LV sār 'finish$_{TR}$’

• While V-i-sār 'V-LNK-finish$_{TR}$’ is formally similar to a LV Cx, it is not because:
  • no bleaching (lexical meaning preserved)
  • no transitivity constraints
  • no mirativity
  • -sār can attach to a LV Cx, e.g., $k^hā$-i-đe-i-sār
eat.give.finish (stacking not possible for other LVs)

=> semi-light verb to express completion

without surprise
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4. Future work
Corpus

• Odia corpus:
  – part of the EMILLE Corpus
    (http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/corplang/emille)
  – approximately 2,730,000 words
  – mixed texts: newspaper & media, literature
    (various types), scientific texts, legal texts
Method

• Extraction of MV / LV from corpus via string search
  – random yet manual selection of LVs (roughly 500 for each, if that many)
  – manual analysis of each LV cx identifying the MV and some other features
  – collostructional analysis on MVs
  – manual comparison of contexts for contrastive pairs

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Summary of main findings
Review of Cognitive Linguistics 15(2) 2017; Lemmens & Sahoo (under revision)

• ONSET & MIRATIVITY : -$ut^h$ (‘-rise’):
  – mostly intransitive events that happen autonomously (appearance & emergence, light emission, intransitive motion events, etc.)

• COMPLETION & MIRATIVITY
  – $V$-fall and $V$-go = both refer to unexpected events, but $V$-go more “expected within the unexpected” (cup/leg vs. window breaking)
  – $V$-give vs. $V$-drop: unexpected plus difference of impact, size/amount, intensity, effort & force, etc. (cut down one tree vs. clear area)
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• LV cx are constructions in their own right:
  – no a priori link with form-identical main verb
    (*pace* Butt *et al.*)
  – no in-between category in a grammaticalisation cline (at least not for Odia)
  – have their own semantic properties:
    • phasal profile
    • mirativity (some)
Semantics vs. pragmatics

Fundamental question:

• Is it justified to claim mirativity as a semantic property of (aspectuo-mirative) LVs rather than a pragmatically inferred value?

• Typical argument: defeasibility
Is mirativity really semantic?

• Odia light verb Cxs:
  – phasal profile: definitely core part of LV Cx, cannot easily be cancelled out, but can be in some contexts (e.g., iterative)!
  – mirativity is more variable:
    • not all LV have mirative value
    • some are more mirative than others
    • at least one verb (-ne 'take') is variable in its mirative value depending on the context
    • mirativity CAN in some contexts be cancelled out, e.g. if combined with adverb of suddenness
Semantic, not pragmatic

• Conflicting evidence for mirativity as part of the semantic structure of LV Cxs, e.g.

\[ mū bʰābili mery kāndʒiba boli, ebam se kāndʒilā (*kāndʒi-ḏelā) \]

I thought Mary cry.FUT.3SG that, and she cry.PST.3SG / (*cry.LNK-give.PST.3SG)

‘I expected Mary to cry, and (indeed) she cried (*cry-give).’

\[ se haṭʰāṭ kāndʒ-i-pakāilā. ḥā, se kāndʒilā (*kāndʒ-i-pakāilā) \]

she suddenly cry-LNK-drop.PST.3SG. yes she cry.PST.3SG./ (*cry-LNK-drop.PST.3SG.)

‘She suddenly cried (cry.drop). Yes, she cried (*cry.fall / *cry-go).’
Existential doubts

• Possibly triggers some two-sided doubts:
  – Is mirativity in Odia really non-parasitic?
  – Is mirativity really semantic then?

• Solution: constructional view:
  – no strict demarcation between SEM & PRAG
  – mirativity has become part of the construction's semantic/functional value because of repeated usage in aspectuo-mirative contexts, cf. the surprise reading of What is X doing Y?
Okay, but …

… why then is mirativity the one that can be cancelled out more easily as opposed to the phasal value (more difficult to cancel out)?

• (Suggestive) answer: two types of meaning:
  – phasal value: grounded in objective (i.e. referential) basis (event)
  – mirativity: semanticization of the speaker's attitude and/or evaluation of the event

=> may be cancelled out more easily in contexts where it is less relevant
Constructional account of LV

• LV Cx are constructions: phasal profile and mirativity (if present) are part of the particular V-i-v construction itself
  – recognizes their special status (separate category)
  – captures what unites all the LV Cxs in maximal opposition to single verb Cxs
  – captures what distinguishes them individually (syntactico-semantic properties associated with each subschema)
Future work

• Some further refinements still to be done:
  – contextual variation in mirativity for *ne '-take'
  – more detailed corpus-based analysis of DURATION LVs (on-going)
  – coding perspective: which lexical verbs cannot occur in a LV-construction? (e.g., existential verb *otf 'be')

• Psycholinguistic experiments to confirm corpus-based finding on degrees of mirativity
Thank you


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References


DELANCEY, S. 2012. Still mirative after all these years. Linguistic Typology 16, 529-564.


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Some additional corpus examples regarding degree of mirativity
Contextual differences '-go' / '-fall'

Corpus examples:

– **sit:**
  - unexpected quantity of people sitting in the hall (V-go) [sitting is expected, high quantity is not]
  - person sitting on grass because tired (sitting unexpected)

– **break:**
  - glasses, cups and the like: breaking is not supposed to happen (always unexpected) but **can** happen and often does ('break-go')
  - windows: really unexpected, not supposed to happen ('break-fall')

– **leave**
  - leave dinner table to fetch something & coming back; leave meeting for phone call (V-go)
  - leave dinner table because not hungry; leave meeting & go home (V-fall)
Contextual differences ' -go' / ' -fall'

• Corpus examples (cont'd):
  – turn:
    • fan is off, but wind made it turn (V-go)
    • the crowd (unexpectedly) turned around (V-fall)
  – fade (disappear):
    • flowers having blossomed fading (V-go)
    • plants becoming extinct (V-fall)
  – cry (with tears)
    • watching Titanic and crying (V-go)
    • he mocking me, I uncontrollably started crying (V-fall)
Contextual differences '-give' / '-drop'

• V-give vs. V-drop: difference of impact, size/amount, intensity, effort & force, e.g.:
  – catch, hold:
    • catch/hold someone's bag (V-give)
    • catch/hold the reins of a horse (V-drop)
  – cut:
    • cut down one tree (V-give)
    • cut down all the trees, clean up area (V-drop)
  – open
    • open a door (V-give)
    • open your dress in public (V-drop)
Contextual differences '-give' / '-drop'

• V-give vs. V-drop (cont'd):
  – turn:
    • he twisted my hand (V-give)
    • he twisted the elephant's trunk (V-drop)
  – break:
    • Enemies broke away the top of the new palace (V-give)
    • Such type of terror could break apart a big country and will tear apart (V-drop)