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

Odia ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା

Different types of serial verb constructions:

1. symmetric serial vb Cxs (*V-i-V-…-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:

     -*jā* ‘go’, -*ʧāl* ‘walk’, -*paḍ* ‘fall’, -*pakā* ‘drop’, -*uʈʰ* ‘rise’, -*ās* ‘come’

  2. STATIVE verbs:

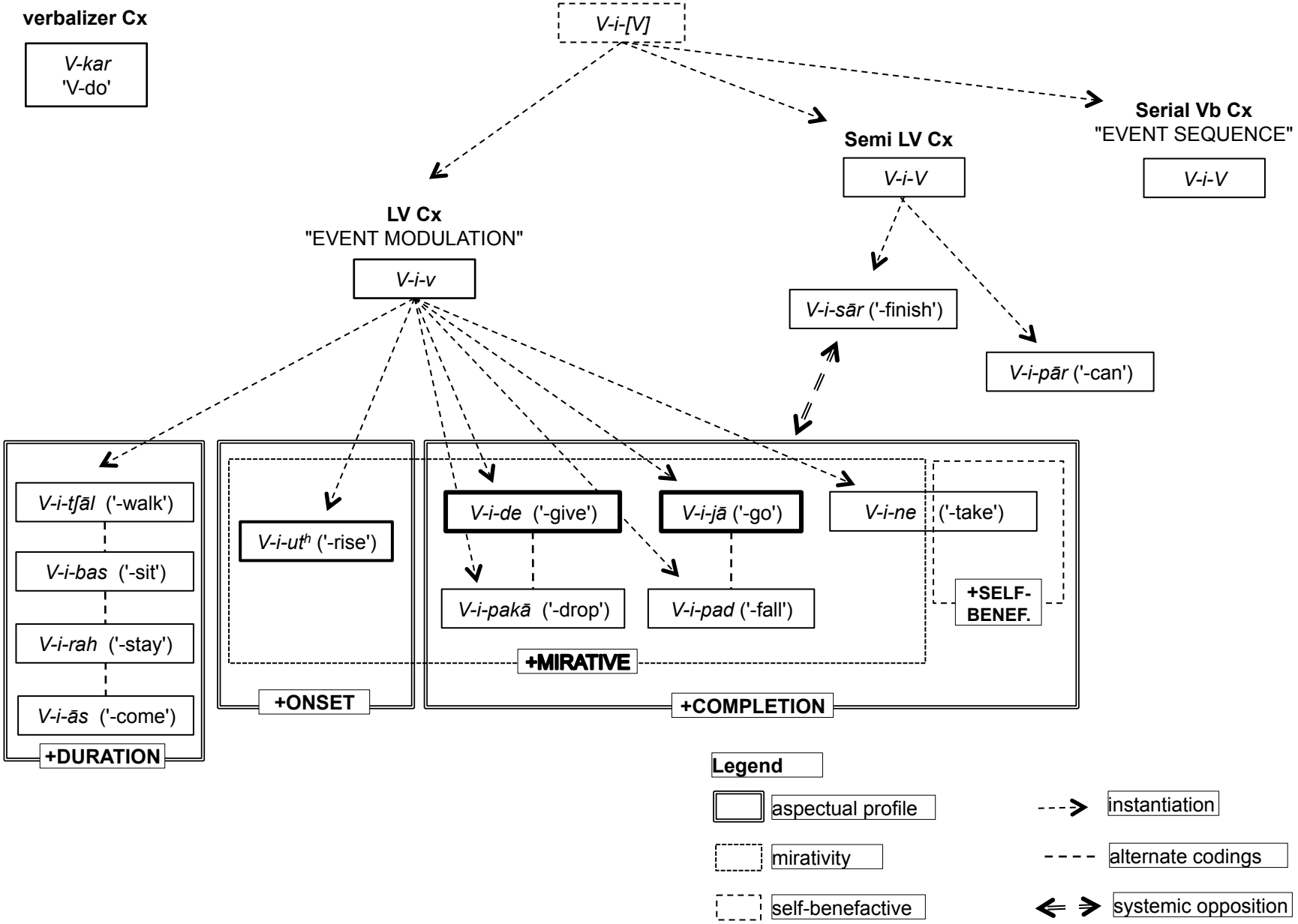
     -*bas* ‘sit’, -*rah* ‘stay’

  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)


verbalizer Cx
V-kar
'V-do'
V-i-[V]
Serial Vb Cx
"EVENT SEQUENCE"
V-i-V
Semi LV Cx
V-i-V
LV Cx
"EVENT MODULATION"
V-i-v
V-i-sār ('-finish')
V-i-pār ('-can')
V-i-tʃāl ('-walk')
V-i-bas ('-sit')
V-i-rah ('-stay')
V-i-ās ('-come')
+DURATION
V-i-ut^h ('-rise')
+ONSET
V-i-de ('-give')
V-i-jā ('-go')
V-i-ne ('-take')
V-i-pakā ('-drop')
V-i-pad ('-fall')
+SELF-BENEF.
+MIRATIVE
+COMPLETION
Legend
aspectual profile
mirativity
self-benefactive
instantiation
alternate codings
systemic opposition

Some examples

(1) a. mo hāṭ̪aru sabu paisā **sar-i-ās**ilā
my hand.abl all money **finish-**LNK**-come**.pst.3sg
'The money has all gone from my hand.'

b. se piṭhāṭāku seṭ̪ebeḷu **kʰā-i-tʃāl**itʃʰi
he pancake.cl.acc since.then **eat**-LNK-**walk**.PERF.3sg
'He has been eating the pancake since then.'

c. bahuṭ̪a guḍāe khāḍ̪ya **baḷ-i-paḍ**ilā
too much food **leave**-LNK-**fall**.PST.3sg
'Too much food was left over (unexpectedly).'

Syntactic features (transitivity)

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

- **intransitive** verbs constructions:
  - *-jā* '-go': break.go, die.go (*kill.go)
  - *-paɖ* '-fall': break.fall, sleep.fall, stumble.fall, (*do.fall)
  - *-uʈʰ* '-rise': laugh.rise, cry.rise, blossom.rise (*give.rise)
  - *-ās* '-come': fly.come, increase.come
- **(di)transitive** verb constructions:
  - *-ɖe* '-give' : break.give, kill.give (*die.give)
  - *-pakā* '-drop' : embrace.drop (*sleep.drop)
  - *-tʃāl* '-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. *pāɳi-ʈā* *phuʈ-i-**ga**-lā*

water-CL **boil.go.PST**.3sg

'The water (unsupposedly) boiled.'

d. *mũ pāɳi-ʈā* *phuʈ-**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)

Lemmens & Sahoo; *Sahoo &* Lemmens

Studia Linguistica 71(3) 2017; Review of Cognitive Linguistics 15(2) 2017

Four main claims:

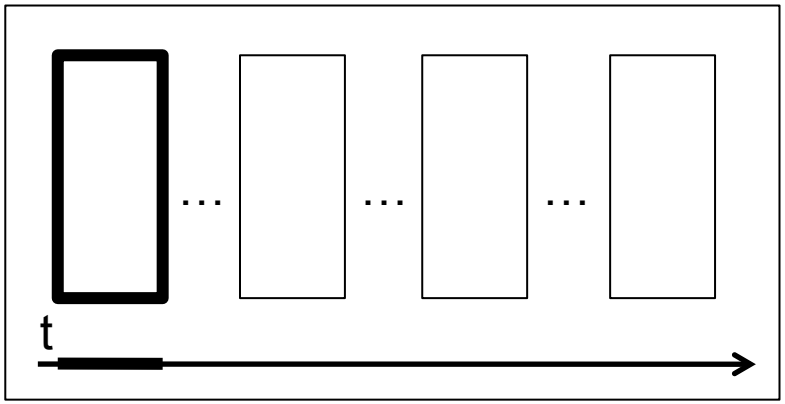
1. all Odia LVs express an aspectual value (phasal profile);
2. five LVs (*-jā* '-go'; *-paḍ* '-fall'; *-ḍe* '-give'; *-pakā* '-drop'; *-uɭ^{h}* '-rise') furthermore express mirativity ("surprise");
3. four of these differ in the degree of mirativity they express;
4. the LV *-ne* '-take' usually expresses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

1. Phasal (aspectual) profile

- all 10 LVs express a phasal profile on the event:

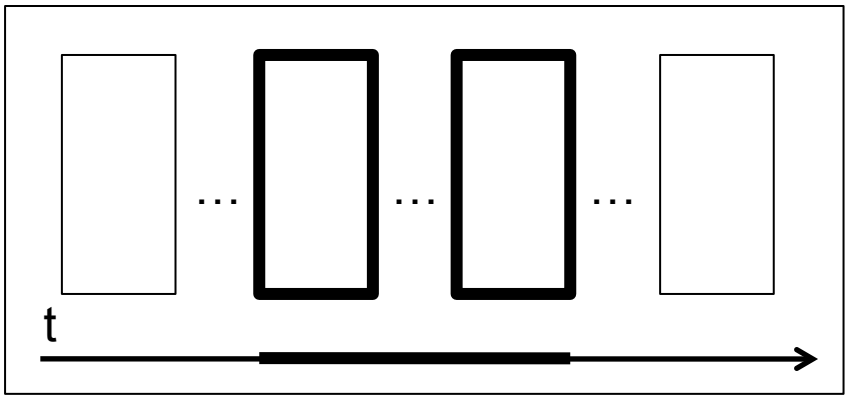
  1. '-go' / '-give' / '-fall' / '-drop' / '-take'
     => focus on **COMPLETION**
  2. '-rise'
     => focus on **ONSET**
  3. '-come' / '-sit' / '-stay' / '-walk'
     => focus on **CONTINUATION** / **DURATION**

ONSET



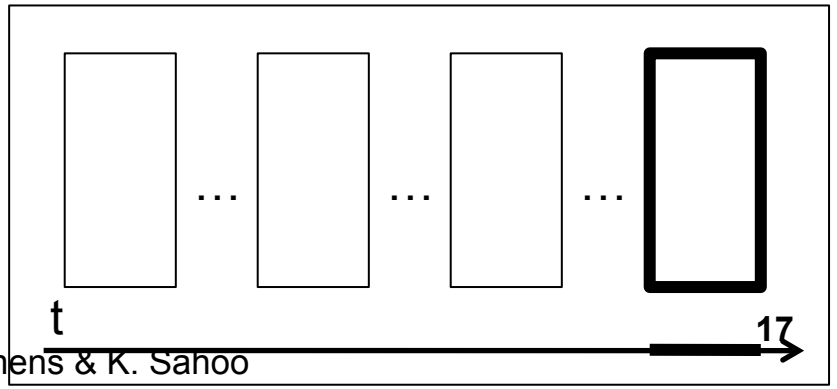
'-rise'

DURATION



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

COMPLETION



'-go' / '-give'
'-fall' / '-drop'
('-take')

(4) a. **SINGLE VERB CX**

*bahi-ʈā mũ 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**

gʰare pashu pashu se haʈʰāt gita gā-i-uʈʰilā

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**

se piʈhāʈāku seʈ̪ebeɭu khā-i-ʧālitʃhi

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**

*bahi-ʈā mũ 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).'

Lemmens & Sahoo *; Sahoo & Lemmens*

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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-parasitic expressions of mirativity*

Overview

	PHASAL VALUE	**MIRATIVITY**
–*uʈʰ* '–rise'	**ONSET**	**+ MIRATIVE**
–*ās* '–come'–*rah* 'stay' –*bas* 'sit',–*ʧāl* 'walk'	DURATION (MIDDLE)	- MIRATIVE
–*jā* '–go', –*paɖ* '–fall' –*ɖ̲e* '–give', –*pakā* '–drop'	**COMPLETION**	**+ MIRATIVE**
– *ne* '–take'	COMPLETION	± MIRATIVE

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

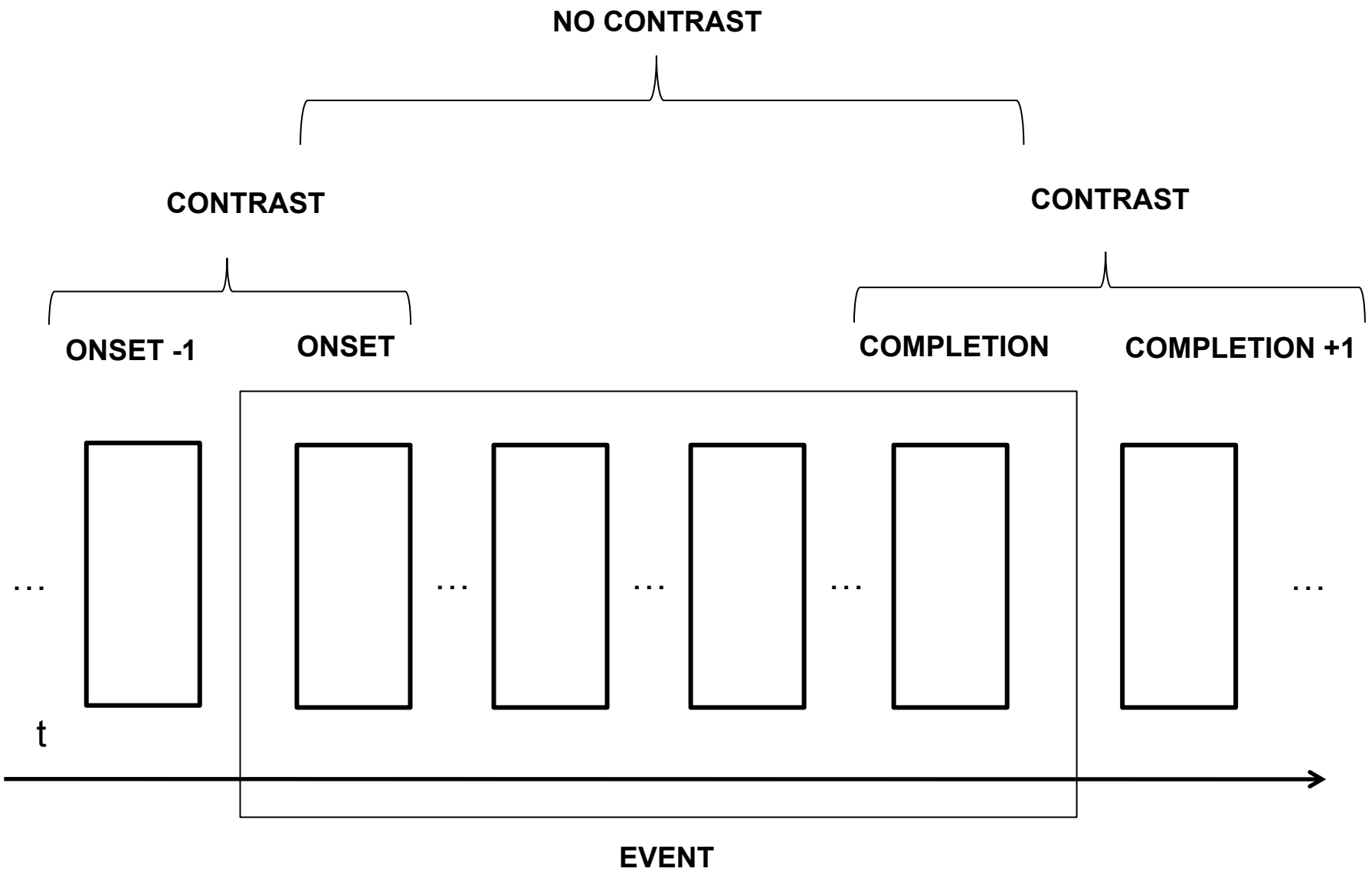
- COMPLETION & MIRATIVITY:

  "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



Lemmens & Sahoo; *Sahoo &* Lemmens

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3. Degrees of mirativity

There is a cline of mirativity :

	more mirative		**less mirative**
INTRANSITIVE	*-fall*		*-go*
TRANSITIVE	*-drop*		*-give*

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., *kʰā-i-ḍe-i-sār* eat.give.finish (stacking not possible for other LVs)

=> semi-light verb to express completion **without** surprise

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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

Summary of main findings

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

- ONSET & MIRATIVITY : -*ut͡ʃʰ* ('-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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Lemmens & Sahoo

- 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.

*mũ bʰābili mery kāndɻiba boli, ebam se kāndɻilā (*kāndɻi-ɖelā)*

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 haʈʰāʈ kānɖ-i-pakāilā. hã, se kāndɻilā (*kānɖ-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)?

- (Suggesive) 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 analyis of DURATION LVs (on-going)
  - coding perspective: which lexical verbs cannot occur in a LV-construction? (e.g., existential verb *otʃ* 'be')
- Psycholinguistic experiments to confirm corpus-based finding on degrees of mirativity

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Thank you

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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)