Light verb fronting phenomenon in Bangla compound verbs

Compound verb constructions within Indo-Aryan languages like Bangla comprise of constructions that are largely understood to be multiheaded (Butt 1995, 2003); Paul (2003) and Verma (1993). These constructions (i.e. the aspectual complex predicates) extend a singular argument structure and are monoclausal units (Butt, 1995). In Bangla aspectual compound verbs, generally, the main verb or polar verb provide not only the event information but also the argument structure and is marked by [e] – the conjunctive participle form or [te] – infinitive form. The main verb is followed by the light verb or vector verb which provides tense and aspectual information into these constructions.

1. mošaTa   ure   gelo
   mosquito-CL[1] fly-CP go-Pst-3P
   The mosquito flew away.

2. buro lokTa   morte   bošeche.
   old   man-CL die-inf   sit-Prst-3P
   The old man is about to die.   (Paul, 2003: 1)

Paul (2003) advocates that the unification of the polar verb and light verb is promulgated by the semantic principle of compounding where the semantic content of the light verb structure shares with at least a part of the content of the polar verb and certain selectional requirements on semantic grounds must be met to form these constructions. Thus, there has to be semantic compatibility between the main verb and light verb (Paul, 2003; Poornima 2012). The compound verbs do not require complete saturation of the light verb's subcategorization frame by the main verb's arguments. The compound verbs are essentially a lexical variant of the main verb. With constituency tests, it is established that the Bangla compound verbs also act as a verbal cluster. The Reverse constructions, on the other hand, do not adhere to such a structure. The Reverse constructions appear to show a VP complement that resists separation. This paper seeks to analyze the light verb fronted constructions in the Bangla compound verbs which also take a VP complement while forming interrogatives or exclamatives.

Bangla compound verbs can be understood to have argument composition (Hinrichs and Nakazawa, 1994; Poornima and Koenig, 2009, Poornima 2012) where the main verb and light verb extend a singular argument structure to the exclusion of the arguments brought in by the main verb. The Reverse constructions of such compounds, on the other hand show the light verb preceding the main verb and its object.

3. mohini   akaš   ke   chimTi[2] keTe   dilo.   [Bangla compound verb]
   Mohini   Akash Acc pinch-N cut-CP give-Pst
   Mohini   pinched Akash.

4. mohini   akaš ke dilo   chimTi keTe. [Reverse construction of Bangla CV]
   Mohini   Akash Acc give-Pst pinch-N cut-CP
   Mohini   pinched   Akash.

While Bangla compound verbs act as a verbal cluster (through tests like non-intervening NPs, adverbs, inflections) and essentially resist separation (Basu and Wilbur, 2010), some light verbs do not strictly adhere to this as seen in the examples below. Paul (2003) posits around 16 light verbs in Bangla that form compound verbs. However, only [dewa] meaning 'to give' and [jawa] meaning 'to go' appear to

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be the most illustrious in terms of usage of such light verb fronting constructions of Bangla compound verbs while other light verbs appear to give infelicitous and ungrammatical constructions. The light verbs [dewa] meaning 'to give' and [jawa] meaning 'to go' are driven by directional semantics despite largely being semantically bleached.

In Bangla compound verbs, [dewa] meaning 'to give' associates notions of other-benefaction and often necessitate agentivity. [jawa] is a polysemous light verb meaning 'to go' which may show a perfective action or an action drawn to conclusion or express an ongoing activity.[3] Light verb fronted constructions with these verbs thus bring focus to the directed action of an event which renders such marked interpretations. This constrained set[4] is illustrated below:

5.a. rupa   sobar   samne   heche   dilo
     Rupa-3P-Sg everyone-Gen in front sneeze-CP give-Pst-3P
     Rupa   sneezed   in front of everyone.

  b. dilo   rupa   sobar   samne   heche!   [exclamative/unintentional]
     give-Pst-3P Rupa   everyone-Gen in front   sneeze-CP
     Rupa   sneezed in front of everyone!

6.a. meyeTa   nodite   dube   gelo.
     girl-Cl   river-Loc   drown-CP   go-Pst-3P
     The girl drowned in the river.

  b. gelo   meyeTa   nodite   dube!   [exclamative/suddenness]
     go-Pst-3P girl-CL   river-Loc drown-CP
     The girl   drowned in   the river!

7.a. ora   kaaj   kore pʰelbe.
     they-3P work   do-CP drop-Fut
     They   will finish the work.

  b. *pʰelbe   ora   kaaj   kore!
     drop-Fut   they   work   do-CP
     They   will   finish   the   work!   [Intended]

8. dilo   to mohima sob   misTi   pʰele?   [interrogative]
    give-Pst-3P INT Mahima all-Adj   sweet-N   drop-CP
    Mahima dropped all   the sweets?

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[3] [jawa] meaning 'to go' is shown as a light verb that shows ongoing action. Basu and Wilbur (2010), thus, in an event-based analysis show through the following sentence that the $V_{RESULT}P$ is lacking. However, the other sentence below shows that a completive event maybe achieved through the light verb.
i) ami   toma-ke kobe theke   bole   jachchi
  I-Nom you-Dat when from   say-perf go-be-Prst
  I have been telling you for a long time.   (Basu and Wilbur, 2010: 15)
ii) tak   theke poRe   glasTa   bhenge   gElo
   shelf from fall-CP glass-CL break-CP   go-Pst-3P
   The glass fell down from the shelf and   broke.   (Paul, 2003: 5)
Thus, the light verb [jawa] meaning 'to go' can contribute to the compound verb through SEM where it has the completive_rel or the ongoing_rel.
For sentence (ii), the unaccusative construction is noted. Interestingly, with [dewa] meaning 'to give', the agent or causer of the action is also included for constructions like [bhenge dilo], for example.
[4] Examples have been taken to show how varied constructions from semantically opaque constructions (with main verb [kaTa] meaning 'cut') to more semantically transparent constructions (6.b., 8, 14) show this pattern.

The data above shows that upon reversing the compound verbs, the light verb may appear in any environment that precedes the VP complement comprising of the main verb and its object since Bangla has a relatively free word order. The following section takes up constituent analysis of the VP constituent which show that upon analysing light-verb fronting constructions, it appears that different clausal structures i.e. interrogatives and exclamatives form in Bangla but the VP complement analysis remains intact.

9.a. dilo   nibʰa   mita   ke   chimTi keTe!
      give-Pst-3P Nibha   Mita   Acc   pinch-N cut-CP
      Nibha pinched Mita!

  b. dilo   mita   ke   nibʰa   chimTi keTe!
      Give-Pst-3P Mita   Acc Nibha   pinch-N cut-CP
      Nibha   pinched Mita!

  c. dilo   chimTi keTe   nibʰa   mita   ke!
      give-Pst-3P pinch-N cut-CP nibha   mita   Acc
      Nibha pinched Mita!

  d. *dilo   chimTi   nibʰa mita   ke   keTe
      give-Pst-3P pinch   Nibha Mita Acc   cut-CP
      Nibha pinched Mita!   [Intended]

  e. *dilo   nibʰa chimTi mita   ke   keTe!
      give-Pst-3P Nibha pinch-N Mita Acc cut-CP
      Nibha pinched Mita. [Intended]

Sentences 9.a to 9.e show that the light verb fronted constructions always take a VP constituent and separating the main verb and its object results in ungrammatical constructions. In the following sentences, it is noted that coordination of the main verb with another main verb is not possible as the main verb and its object act as a constituent. Adverbial modification in between the main verb and its object also results in ungrammatical constructions as evidenced in sentence 12. The negation marker also appears after the light verb as seen in sentence 13. Sentence 14 is an instance of emphasizing that the action of throwing the glass is almost as a disservice to others thus emphasizing the directional semantics of the light verb.

10. *dilo   nitin   promila ke   guli mere   aar   kore.
    Give-Pst-3P Nitin   Promila Acc bullet hit-CP CONJ   do-CP
    Nitin   shot a bullet at   Promila. [Intended]

11. dilo   rajib   pinki   ke   hoTatkore   dʰakka   mere!
    give-Pst-3P Rajiv   Pinky   Acc   suddenly-Adv push-N   hit-CP
    Rajiv   suddenly   pushed Pinky!

12. ??dilo   rajib   pinki   ke   dʰakka   hoTatkore   mere!
    give-Pst-3P Rajiv Pinky Acc   push-N   suddenly-Adv hit-CP
    Rajiv   suddenly   pushed Pinky! [Intended]

13. debe   na   to   ora   pinkir   kaaj   kore?
    give-fut NEG INT   3P-Pl-Pron Pinky-Gen work do-CP
    They   will   not   do Pinky's work, right?

14. dilo   promila   gilas   chuRe!
    give-Pst-3P Pramila   glass   throw-CP

Promila   threw   the glass!

The English Auxiliary system (EAS) shows various auxiliary initial constructions ranging from interrogatives, exclamatives, negative exclamatives, blessings/curses and comparatives. (Sag et al, 2019) With Bangla light verb fronting phenomenon too, similar clausal structures appear as observed in sentences 5.b., 6.b. and 8. Following the constructional approach with a flat structure, the general constraint below captures this idea.

V [COMPS < ….., $\boxed{1}$,….. >] < VP [SYNSEM $\boxed{1}$]   →   Reversal constraint

Albeit only few light verbs form these reverse constructions and light verb fronted constructions from Bangla compound verbs, these nonetheless attribute to pragmatic factors that express blame, frustration, anger, intentionality (Das, 2015; Kumbaraou et al, 2021). Abbi and Gopalkrishnan (1991) propose distinct categories of semantic differentiations in their typological study of light verbs across India. The three categories are the aspectual category which notes the perfective aspect or the completive action; attitudinal category demarcating attitudes like 'regret' through light verbs like [bosha] meaning 'to sit' and adverbial category which show how the action is done- easily, suddenly, violently. While the light verbs [dewa] meaning 'to give' and [jawa] meaning 'to go' generally demarcate the aspectual notions in Bangla compound verbs, the light verb fronted constructions show the shift in prominence to the adverbial category in addition to the aspectual category. These pragmatic contexts appear on the part of the speaker for the subject. The pragmatic-rel undertakes all these pragmatic notions which are encoded within the feature background (bgrnd). Considering a sentence like 14 below, Fig. 1 is configured.
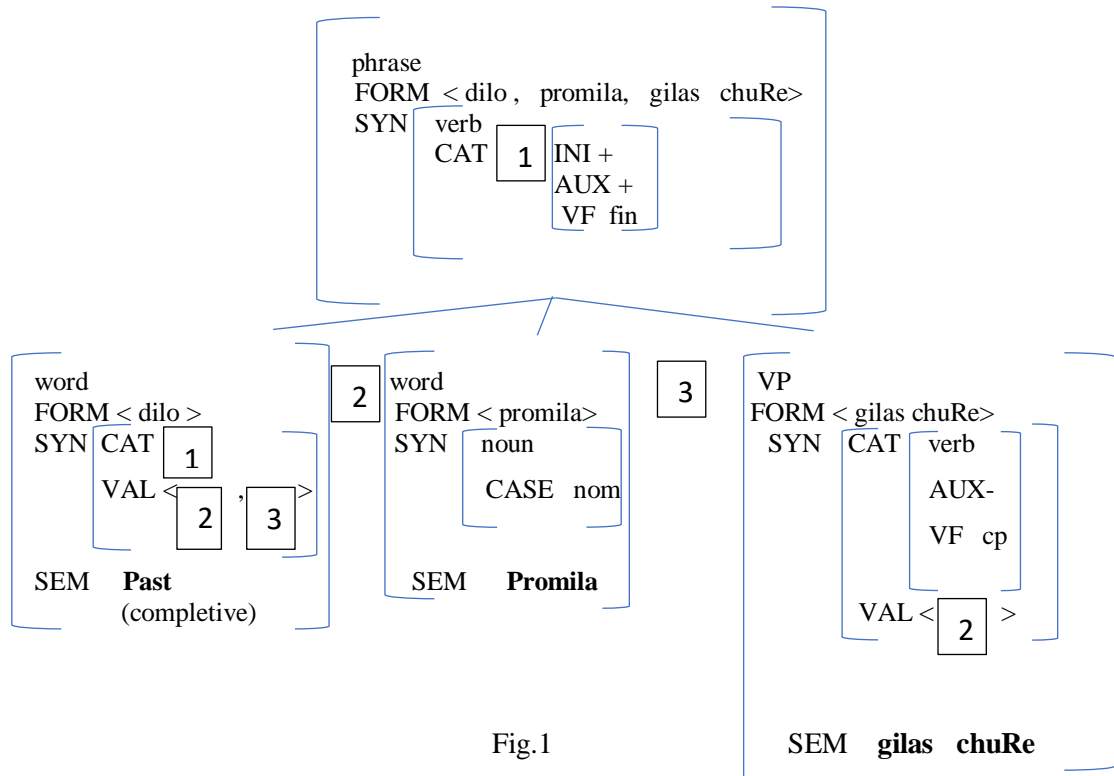

Fig.1

The figure above postulates a flat structure where the finite light verb [dilo] selects the VP [gilas chuRe]. The VP complement has the verb [chuRe] meaning 'throw' with the verb form in its conjunctive participle form. The light verb fronted constructions take a HEAD [INITIAL +] value. The constructional approach undertaken above will require a type hierarchy allowing different sub-types of

light verb fronted constructions- exclamatives and interrogatives. This paper intends to look at another possible analysis of these constructions with the head movement analysis using DOUBLE SLASH (DSL) where essentially there is no 'movement' but the way Müller (2021) associates this while considering head movement in English and German. The light verb fronting phenomenon brings new clauses and represents a local dependency. DSL being a head feature makes it available along the projection path. [5]

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[5] This analysis (head movement using DSL) without a flat structure as seen above will require domain considerations as well because in sentences like 11, it would be possible to have a word order where after the light verb, the object appears before the subject.