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Languages and Peoples of the Eastern Himalayan Region (LPEHR)

Non-finite verbs in Assamese

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comprehensive description of non-finite verbs in Assamese, a language that belongs to Indo-Aryan family. Non-finite verbs exist in multi-verb constructions, which include both single and multi-clausal constructions. In single clauses, they occur with different auxiliaries and carry various aspectual and modal meanings. In multi-clausal constructions, on the other hand, they occur in dependent clauses and mark various syntactic relations that they have with the main clause. This paper primarily deals with two aspects: firstly, it discusses the forms of non-finite verbs, and secondly, it analyses the syntactic functions they carry in single and multi-clausal constructions. The syntactic functions of non-finite verbs in multi-clausal constructions are examined from two perspectives – their functions within superordinate constructions, and their functions within a construction.

KEYWORDS

Non-finite verbs, multi-clausal constructions, dependent clauses, apectual auxiliarie

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1 Introduction

Non-finite verbs are traditionally defined in contrast to their finite counterparts. They refer to a set of verb forms which usually lacks specifications for the category of tense, aspect, number, person and cannot function as the only predicates of independent sentences (Ylikoski 2003, Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1994)). However, cross linguistic evidence shows that languages vary on the basis of whether they lack specifications for all the categories listed in the definition or only for a few. Cross linguistic data show that there are languages like English, on the one hand, in which the non-finite verbs lack specifications for all the categories that a finite verb inflects for. There are languages like Swahili, as mentioned by Haspelmath (1995), on the other hand, where the non-finite verbs do not inflect for tense and mood, but for person. This is the reason why Haspelmath (1995) discusses the distinction that is traditionally drawn between finite and non-finite verbs using the scale of desententialization, which assists in viewing the notion of finiteness and non-finiteness as a gradual concept. According to Haspelmath, "the traditional concepts of finiteness and non-finiteness are just two extreme points on a scale of desententialization (cf. Lehmann 1988: 200), and other languages may show various intermediate points on this scale (P. 5)". As a result, the definitional criterion for non-finite verbs becomes language specific.

The non-finite verbs in Assamese can be defined by both morphological and syntactic criteria. Morphologically, they can be defined by the lack of specification for tense, aspect, and subject indexation. The forms become invariant regardless of whether the subject refers to first, second, or third persons. Syntactically, they can be defined on the basis of their non-occurrence as only predicates of independent clauses. This syntactic criterion can be applied consistently to define all non-finite verbs in the language.

The non-finite verb forms occurring in multi-clausal constructions can be categorized as infinitives, participles, converbs, and action nominals or verbal nouns depending on both their morphological properties and syntactic functions. Accordingly, the constructions in which they occur are labeled as infinitival constructions, participle constructions, converbal constructions, and action nominal constructions. It must be noted here that Assamese does not show one-to-one correspondence between the non-finite forms marked by different affixes and their functions. A particular affix, though not all, is used in more than one syntactic function.

The data for the study come from two sources. One source is the Emille-CIIL Assamese corpus, which includes 1,191 written texts (3,005,337 word tokens and 223,333 word types). This corpus is stored in CQPweb that was created by Andrew Hardie (Lancaster University, U.K.). The other source consists of spoken texts that include conversations and narratives. These texts have been collected by the author of this work. Apart from these two

sources, a few constructed examples are used in the work for the elucidation of some statements.

This paper is structured in the following manner. Section 2 deals with the definition and the types of non-finite verbs found in cross-linguistic research. A brief discussion of previous research on non-finite verbs in Assamese is outlined in Section 3, which is followed by an overview of verbal morphology – both finite and non-finite morphology – in Section 4. Section 5 briefly introduces the single and multi-clausal constructions used in the language. The types and various functions of non-finite verbs are discussed in Section 6, while Section 7 summarizes the paper.

2 Non-finite verbs in cross-linguistic perspectives

The views of typologists differ regarding the categorization of non-finite verbs. The traditional category of non-finite verb forms seems to be categorized into four main types, such as converbs (verbal adverbs, adverbial participle, adverbial verb forms, adverbial modifier, adverbial subordination, conjunctive participle, gerund or gerundive, absolute construction, absolute participle (Haspelmath 1995a.; Ylikoski 2003, Coupe 2005)), infinitives (verbal nouns or nominal verb forms), participles (verbal adjectives (Haspelmath 1995a.)), action nominals[1] (action nominalizations, masdars, nomina actionis, gerunds, (de)verbal nouns, complex event nouns, process nominals (Ylikoski 2003; Comrie & Thompson 2007; Noonan 2007; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993; Grimshaw 1990; Haspelmath 1996)) in recent typological literature in terms of their word-classes and syntactic functions (Ylikoski 2003). However, depending on whether the classification is made on the basis of the word-class approach or the functional approach, one of these four types is left out from some typological description of non-finite verbs (Ylikoski 2003). This section presents mainly three ways of classifying non-finite verbs in the description of three typologists, namely Nedjalkov (1998), Haspelmath (1995a), and Ylikoski (2003).

Nedjalkov (1998) distinguishes three types of non-finite verbs, namely, infinitives, participles, and converbs on the basis of their syntactic functions. The action nominal is not considered as a type of non-finite verb in his description. He defines participle as a non-finite verb which functions as an attribute, converb as a non-finite verb that functions as an adverbial modifier, and the infinitive as a non-finite verb that serves the syntactic function of an object in complement clauses (pp.421-422; as cited in Ylikoski 2003:191). The reason for not considering action nominals to be a type of non-finite verb might be due to the dual syntactic status of action nominal constructions, as they share the properties of both noun phrases and clauses (see Comrie 1976, Comrie & Thomson 2007, Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993 and 2003).

Haspelmath (1995), on the other hand, discusses action nominals as *masdars* (P. 4). He identifies three derived verb forms, namely, masdar, participle, and converb. He defines all

[1] The action nominal is one of the two types of nominalizations. The other one is the argument nominalization which includes agentive nouns, instrumental nouns, manner nouns, locative nouns, objective nouns, and reason nouns (Comrie &Thomson 2007; Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993; Muysken 1999). However, from the various typological descriptions (Ylikoski 2003; Comrie & Thompson 2007), it seems that only action nominals have been considered as non-finite verbs.

these three derived verb forms as inflectional verbs, since these forms are described exclusively in the grammatical paradigm of verbs, and the formation of them is regular, general and productive (1996: 47). Further, he assignes each derived verb form to a new word class: the masdar is identified as a member of the noun class, the participle as a member of the adjective class, and the converb as a member of the adverb class (1995: 4), by applying the theory of word-class-changing inflection or transpositional inflectional morphology (1996). According to this theory, masdars, participles and converbs are inflectional verb forms which respectively belong to the word-classes of nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Even though Haspelmath gives each derived verb a separate word-class status, he defines all these three derived verbs on the basis of their syntactic functions. In the conext of defining converbs (1995: 4), he talks about the syntactic function that is served by each verb-derived form. According to him, each verb-derived form serves a non-prototypical syntactic function, such as masadars serve the function of arguments, participles serve the function of adnominal modifiers, and converb serves the function of adverbial modifiers, as shown in Table 1.

Word class:	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
Derived verb form:	masdar (= verbal noun)	participle (= verbal adjective)	converb (= verbal adverb)
Syntactic function:	argument	adnominal modifier	adverbial modifier

Table 1: Derived verb forms with different word class status (Haspelmath 1995: 4)

By the use of the phrase 'non-prototypical syntactic function', he implies that these three verb-derived forms carry those syntactic functions which cannot be prototypically carried by a (finite) verb, i.e. prototypically, a (finite) verb cannot function as an argument, as an adnominal modifier or as an adverbial. When he defines a converb as a non-finite verb form that is used to mark adverbial subordination, he refers to the syntactic function, which stands as a definitional criterion for the category of converbs.

Haspelmath's theory of word-class-changing inflection is, however, not accepted by Lowe (2014). He argues that "inflection is necessarily category preserving – that is, there is no such thing as Haspelmath's (1996) "word-class-changing inflection," at least in terms of the core lexical category of the word. Thus non-finite verb forms necessarily have the syntactic category V. Typically verb internal syntactic phenomenon, such as object government and adverbial modification, are licensed within VPs (P.319)." Non-finite forms are inflectional in the sense that their formation is completely productive, regular, and general (Haspelmath 1996, Ylikoski 2003). They are also verb forms as they preserve the lexeme-word-class, i.e. the verb class, which determines the internal syntax of the phrase (or clause) headed by a (the) non-finite (Ylikoski 2003; Comrie 2011; Lowe 2014).

Ylikoski (2003) includes action nominals and infinitive, both within the main type of non-finite verbs in his description. He presents a different perspective which helps us to view all four types of non-finite verb forms - action nominals, participles, converbs, and infinitives – "as forming a more or less coherent system of non-finites" (P. 191). He says that the reason for the non-inclusion of action nominals in Nedjakov's classification and infinitives in Haspelmath's classification is a consequence of mixing the word-class-based definition with

the functional approach to non-finites. According to him, as a result of this mixing, we are not able to see "some quite systematic interrelations between these main types of non-finites" (P. 192). He argues that "there is too strong a tendency to think that the word-class of a given non-finite can be deduced solely from its syntactic functions; or vice versa, conclusions about the functions of particular non-finites are sometimes drawn from their having already been defined in terms of their new "word-form word-class (P. 192)." Thus, he proposes a new perspective which shows the interrelation between action nominals, infinitives, and converbs. His main argument, which is also supported by both synchronic and diachronic evidences, is that the syntactic functions of action nominals distribute over converbs and infinitives, which is against the view that the functions of infinitives distribute over masdars and converbs (Van der Auwera 1998b). Even though action nominals are nouns by virtue of their external syntax, they are verbs by virtue of their internal syntax, i.e. the internal structure of the construction headed by an action nominal is much more like that of a clause. The action nominal, which is the head of this construction, can take adverbial modifiers similar to finite verbs, or they can take subject in the ergative case or object in the accusative case, similar to finite verbs[2]. This is the first reason why action nominals are discussed by Ylikoski under the heading of non-finite verbs. The second reason for considering action nominals as non-finite verbs is that they are the ones which often tend to develop into new non-finites, such as infinitives and converbs through the process of verbalization (P. 219).

Among the three perspectives discussed above, Ylikoski's (2003) approach for treating non-finite verbs seems to be the most convincing. If his perspective is observed, it seems that it is the function of action nominals which is shared by both converbs and infinitives, and not the function of infinitives which is shared by action nominals and converbs as Auwera (1998b) claims. It is evident from cross-linguistic research that the category of converbs tends to develop from adverbially used action nominal constructions (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993; Haspelmath 1995a; Tikkanen 2001), along with some other sources (Genetti 1986; Epps 2009; Coupe 2017) and the category of infinitives tends to arise from purposive action nominal constructions (Haspelmath 1989). Ylikoski (2003) provides diachronic evidence from different languages, such as North Sámi in which infinitives and converbs are found to have developed from adverbially used action nominal constructions.

3 Previous research on non-finite verbs in Assamese

Non-finite verbs have not got much attention in the descriptive study available in Assamese. The descriptions in which the discussion of non-finite verbs take place are Medhi (1936), Kakati (1941), Goswami (1982), Goswami and Tamuli (2003), Saikia Bora (2006), Chowdhary (2008), Kalita (2019), etc. The main deparature of this study from others is that it treats the non-finite morphemes in Assamese (*-i*, *-a*, *-(i)bɔ*[3], *-ũt*, and *-il)* as nominalizers.

[2] It should be noted here that the subjects and the objects in this language are not always marked in ergative or accusative case. To know about the case system of Assamese, please see Chowdhary (2014).

[3] The first vowel of this morpheme is presented in parenthesis for the reason that the use of it is conditioned by phonological factors. *-i*occurs, only if the verb stem ends with a consonant. The verb stem ending with a vowel takes *-bɔ*.

These morphemes occur with a set of case morphems which help to identify the role that a particular dependent clause plays in the main clause. This view is based on both synchronic and diachronic data. Furthermore, the previous studies have listed a lot of non-finite morphemes which are the products of counting the same morpheme as a new one when it occurs with a new case morpheme. For example, Chowdhary (2008: 231-235) discusses *-a* and *-at* as two separate non-finite forms. But synchronic data say that the latter is a dimorpheme consisting of the nominalizer *-a* and the locative *-t*. The reason for this thinking is that *-a* does not only occur with *-t* 'LOC'. Rather, it occurs with different case suffixes, such as allative *-loi* (*ɔh-a-loi* 'come-NMLZ-ALL'), genitive *-r* (*ɔh-a-r* 'come-NMLZ-GEN'), dative *-k* (*ɔh-a-k* 'come-NMLZ-DAT') etc. (see Section 6.4). Similarly, if we consdier another non-finite form, i.e. *-õt*, it does not only occur in an adverbial construction, but it is also found in another construction with the nominalizer *-a* (ex. *k^{h}a-õt-a* 'eat-NMLZ-NMLZ', meaning 'eater'). In the context of analyzing *-(i)lɔt* and *-(i)boloi*, even though Chowdhary (P. 230, 231, 235) mentions the dimorphemic status of these two forms, she actually considers each of these forms as a monomorpheme, which is seen in the examples she provides. However, the synchronic data show that *-ɔt* and *-loi* is not only specified for the construction she talks about. They are extensively used to mark all kinds of nominals. Apart from the synchronic data, diachronic data also say that the form like *-(i)boloi* has developed from two forms: *-(i)ba-kɔ* 'NMLZ-gen' and *lagi* 'RN', meaning 'towards, for'' (*-bo* comes from *-(i)bakɔ* and *-loi* comes from *lagi*) which occur together in a construction to carry commonly the adverbial meaning of purpose, i.e. towards serving a purpose (Bez 2012). *lagi* occurs in old Assamese with ordinary nouns to mark the allative function. The purposive meaning is carried only if it occurs with *-(i)bakɔ*. *-(i)bo-loi* 'NMLZ-ALL' in modern Assamese is also used to carry the same kind of adverbial function, i.e. towards serving a purpose (see Section 6.3).

4 Verbal morphology – finite verb morphology and non-finite verbal morphology

4.1 The morphology of finite verbs

It is important to discuss the morphological properties of finite verbs used in the language before the discussion of non-finite verbs is presented. A finite verb in Assamese is marked for the category of person, honorificity, tense, aspect, and mood.

A verb indexes subjects in terms of the category of person and the honorificity of the subjects. The number distinction of the subjects is not indexed by the verb. The subject indexes differ in some cases on the basis of tense and aspect they interact with. A verb indexes a subject in the first person with two markers: *-ʊ* and *-m*. The former is used when the verb is in the present and in the past tense while the latter is used if the verb is in the future. The first person subject index *-ʊ* becomes *-m* when it interacts with the future, for which reason *-m* is consdiered as a joint exponent of the first person and the future tense in relevant literature (G. C. Goswami and J. Tamuli 2003; Chowdhary 2008).

A verb indexes a subject in the second person with a set of four markers in terms of the honorificity of the subject, i.e. the second person inferior, the second person familiar, and the second person honorific, and the tenses it occurs with. The second person inferior subject is not morphologically marked by the verb, if it interacts with the present tense. However, it is marked by *-i* when the verb occurs in the past and in the future tense. The verb marks the second person familiar subject invariably with *-a* in all the three tenses. The second person honorific subject is indexed by *-i* marker when the verb is in the present tense, with *-e* when the verb is in the past tense, and with *-ɔ* when the verb is in the future tense.

A verb indexes a subject in the third person with a set of three markers which are identical with the indexes of the second person honorific subject. Even though Assamese has three sets of third person pronominal forms on the basis of the honorificity and proximity, the verbal index does not differ accordingly. The verb invariably takes *-i* when it is in the present tense irrespective of the distinction of whether the third person subject is inferior proximal or distal, familiar proximal or distal, and honorific proximal or distal. When the verb is in the past tense, it invariably takes *-e* without maintaing the distinction of honorificity and proximity. Similarly, the verb takes *-ɔ* invariably irrespective of the distinction of honorificity and proximity that each pronominal form marks.

Tense and aspect morphology is not very simple and straightforward in Assamese. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the tense/aspect forms and their functions.The present tense is morphologically unmarked in the language. There are two markers for the future tense: *-(i)bɔ* and *-(i)m*. The distribution of these two forms is different. *-(i)bɔ* is present if the subject is in the second and the third person. *-(i)bɔ* co-occurs with the second and the third person indexes, but not with the first person index. It becomes *-m* when the subject denotes the first person, and thus *-m* is presented as a joint exponent of the first person and the future tense, as stated earlier. No marker is used for the past specification. *-il* is used for the function of perfective. *-is* is used to refer to the past situation which has also present relevance. It usually carries the kind of meaning that is expressed by the present perfect in English. However, *-is* serves some other functions, one of which includes imperfective meaning. *-il* and *-is*, both forms are complex in nature, which need to be investigated thoroughly and deserve a separate discussion on their own merits.

Further, the verb has the imperative marker *-ʊk/-ɔk* which expresses commands, requests, or orders to the second person honorific and to the third person subjects. The verb remains unmarked when commands, requests, or orders are directed to the second person inferior subjects. The imperative is not distinguished by the second person familiar verb form. The second person familiar verbal index *-a* is used if commands, orders, or requests are directed to the second person familiar subjects.

4.2 The morphology of non-finite verbs

Assamese has five morphemes which are added to dependent verbs – *-i*, *-a*, *-(i)bɔ*[4], *-õt*, and *-il*. The first three occur in both single and multi-clausal constructions while *-õt* and *-il*

[4] The first vowel of this morpheme is presented in parenthesis for the reason that the use of it is conditioned by phonological factors. *-i* occurs if the verb stem ends with a consonant. The verb stem ending with a vowel takes *-bɔ*.

occur only in multi-clausal constructions. It is noted that all these morphemes are nominalizers which eventually have developed to infinitives and converbs. The nominalization status of some of the forms is seen from various case inflections that are added to those forms.

5 Single and multi-clause constructions

5.1 Single clause constructions

Before going to deal with the types and functions of non-finite verbs in the following section, this section intends to present a brief overview of single and multi-clausal constructions used in the language. In discussing single clauses, I will briefly talk about how a single predication is expressed in surface forms.

There are five structural means of encoding a single predication – with a single verb, with a sequence of two verbs, with a sequence of a noun and a verb, with a sequence of a noun followed by two verbs, and without a verb, as illustrated in the following examples.

(1) *ram-e* *b̤at* *kʰa-l-e.*
Ram-ERG rice eat-PFV-3
'Ram ate rice.'
(Self-elicited)

(2) *ram-e* *b̤at-kʰini* *kʰa-i* *pela-l-e.*
Ram-ERG rice-CLF eat-CP throw-PFV-3
'Ram finished eating rice.'
(Self-elicited)

(3) *tai* *bɔr* *bea-koi* *b̤ɔi* *kʰa-l-e.*
3INFR.F.DIST very bad-ADVLZ fear eat-PFV-3
'She was scared very badly.'
(Self-elicited)

(4) *tai* *bɔr* *bea-koi* *b̤ɔi* *kʰa-i* *go-l.*
3INFR.F.DIST very bad-ADVLZ fear eat-CP go-PFV
'She got scared very badly.'
(Self-elicited)

(5) *ama-r* *zia-r* *tʊpɔni-tʊ* *bɔr* *patɔl.*
1PL-GEN Jiya-GEN sleep-CLF very light
'Our Jiya's sleep is very light'
(Conversation)

The common feature of these five clauses is that each of them denotes a single predication because of which they are defined as single clauses. All of the verbs in the language have the ability to occur in isolation for carrying a single predication, as shown in (1).[5] The verb in this construction is marked by all the verbal categories, such as tense, aspect, person etc. The construction shown in (2) has a sequence of two verbs, the first of which is known as a main verb and the second is known by a name, such as vector, light verb, auxiliary (Thompson 2004), intensifiers, operators, explicators (Masica 1991) etc. This sequence encodes a single event which is the event denoted by the main verb. The second verb more or less loses its lexical meaning and adds some additional meanings to the event. Additionally, the second verb is the one which specifies all the verbal properties, as shown in (2). The first verb of the sequence is marked by a non-finite suffix. This kind of verbal sequence is known in various descriptive traditions by the name of compound verbs, complex predicates, serial verbs etc. (Burton-Page 1957; Hook 1974, 1991; Butt 1993; Tamuli 1997; Thompson 2004; Raffaella, Harley, & Karimi; Post 2004). The construction presented in (3) has a sequence of a noun and a verb, which forms the predication. This sequence is studied under the heading of conjunct verbs in various descriptions (Tamuli 1997; Thompson 2004). The example (4) presents a sequence of conjunct verbs followed by a vector. Here, the first verb, which occurs in the medial position in the sequence, is marked by a non-finite suffix and the vector is specified for all the verbal properties. The construction (5) encodes a predication that is carried by a non-verbal predicate (for the discussion of non-verbal predicates, see Dryer 2007). The kind of predication expressed in this example is made by a construction with the presence of a copula that is specified for all the verbal properties in the past and in the future tense, and by a construction with the absence of a copula in the present. However, the restriction on the use of the copula triggered by the tense distinction is applicable only in nominal and adjectival non-verbal predicates. Locative predicates or existential clauses demand the obligatory presence of a copula in all tenses.

The five ways of forming predicates in single clause constructions (single event) are schematically organized in figure 2.

(a) [NP [V]$_{VP}$]$_{INT}$ or [NP [NP V]$_{VP}$]$_{TR}$
(b) [NP [V_1 + V_2]$_{VP}$]$_{INT}$ or [NP [NP V_1+V_2]$_{VP}$]$_{TR}$
(c) [NP [N + V]$_{VP}$]
(d) [NP [N + V_1 + V_2]$_{VP}$]
(e) [NP [N or ADJ + (COP)]]

Figure 2: Structure of predicates in single clause constructions.

[5] Since the distinction between a single clause and a multi-clausal construction is made here in terms of the number of predications (the clause is defined here in terms of predication), i.e. whether a single or multiple predications are expressed in a construction, the distinction, such as transitive versus intransitive, is not maintained here. The example (1) is presented here to show how a single verb can signal a predication in contrast to a sequence of two verbs or a sequence of a noun in association with two other verbs.

5.2 Multi-clause constructions

The multi-clause constructions are formed by a sequence of more than one clause, usually two, in which the clauses either exhibit a coordination relation or a dependency relation. In the construction expressing the coordination relation, the verbs of all the clauses in a sequence have the independent status in terms of morpho-syntactic properties and semantic relations they exhibit. In the construction expressing the dependency relation, on the other hand, one clause functions as a main clause and the other clauses have the relation of dependency with the main clause. The dependency relation is expressed by two types of constructions: (1) the dependent clauses in the first type of construction inflect for the obligatory operators of the main clause, such as tense, aspect, person, but cannot stand alone as independent utterances only because there is a conjunction which signals that they are linked to another clause, i.e. structural dependency (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997; Cristofaro 2003) , (2) the clauses in the second type of construction usually occur in the chaining structure in which the final clause ends in a dominating verb marked by all verbal properties and the non-final clauses occur with a verb of restricted structure in contrast to the final verb (Payne 1997, Dooley 2010, Longacre 2007, Nonato 2014; Weisser 2013), i.e., operator dependency (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997; Haiman and Thompson 1984; Cristofaro 2003). The verbs of non-final clauses are usually marked by non-finite morphology which is mostly used to mark the relation that a dependent clause has with the larger construction. Further, the time reference of the non-final clauses is always relative, i.e. the time of the dependent clauses depends on the time of the main clause, as explained in (6) and (7).

(6) *pʰotu mar-i potʰa-i di-m apʊna-k.*
photo take-CONJ send-CP give-FUT.1 2HON-DAT
'I will take a photo (of it) and send (it) to you.
(Conversation)

(7) *e azi ratipua hɔt ʊata bɛg-ɔt pani lo-i*
this today morning hot water bag-LOC water take-CONJ

ɦek-il-ʊ.
to foment-PFV-1
'I took a bag of hot water this morning and provided warmth (to the leg).' (lit. 'I took some hot water in a hot water bag and applied it to the leg')
(Conversation)

The time reference of the main clauses in (6) is the future. Thus the time reference of the non-final clause is also the future. The time reference of the main clause in (7), on the other hand, is the past for which reason the time of the non-final clause is also the past.

It should be noted here that not all dependent clauses in multi clausal constructions exihibit the same kind of dependency relation. Some dependent clauses code subordination[6]

[6] Subordinate clauses are defined in this work in terms of functional criterion (Cristofaro 2003). Only those non-finite constructions are analysed here as subordinate constructions which are used to convey pragmatically non-asserted information. To know about whether a particular non-finite construction carries non-asserted

relation, such as complement, relative, and adverbial relations[7] while some others do not. Particularly, some dependent clauses marked by *-i* cannot be considered as subordinate, if we look at whether those dependent clauses fall under the scope of sentential negation and interrogation. Even though the dependent clauses presented in ((6) and (7)) have some properties of subordinate clauses, such as morphosyntactic reduction (Haiman and Thompson 1984; Cristofaro 2003), they are not subordinate in terms of the scope of matrix clause operators, such as negation and interrogation. For example, if the sentential interrogation is applied to example (6), the illocutionary force of the interrogative extends to the dependent clause, as shown in (8) and it suggests that the information coded by the dependent clause is also asserted, and thus the dependent clause is not subordinate.

(8) *pʰotu mar-i potʰa-i di-m-ne apʊna-k?*
photo take-CONJ send-CP give-FUT.1-QUES 2HON-DAT
'Will I take a photo (of it) and send (it) to you?

(Self-elicited)

Even though the dependent clauses presented in (6) and (7) are analyzed as embedded adverbial clauses in relevant descriptions (Chowdhary 2008: 224), they do not always seem to express modifying meaning. Rather, the dependent and the main clauses seem to express a sequence of semantically coordinated events. Example (9) shows that the structure demarcated by [] in (9a) is not used to express an adverbial-like proposition. Rather it denotes an event which is coordinated with the following event expressed by the complex predicate marked in bold. The following discourse of (9a) presented in (9b) tells us that the reason which caused Rupali to be tense was not because of her looking out of the window. Rather it was the sea storm for which she became tense.

information, the scope of sentential negation and interrogation is taken into account. If any non-finite construction is shielded from the scope of sentential negation or interrogation, that construction encodes pragmatically presupposed information and thus is considered as a subordinate clause. It should be noted here that the subordinate clauses identified by these two tests seem to exhibit some other formal properties of subordinate clauses, such as morphosyntactic reduction and clausal embedding.

[7] In their discussion of adverbial clauses, Thompson, Longacre, and Hwang (2007) point out that the relationship between subordinate and main clauses is a continuum in which the subordinate represents one side of the continuum and includes clauses which are grammatically dependent on another clause or on some element in another clause. In this continuum, the complement and the relative clauses usually represent an embedding structure for which reason they seem to be more subordinate. "Adverbial clauses, however, are viewed as (hypotactic) clause combining with respect to the main clause since they relate to the main clause as a whole" (Thompson, Longacre, and Hwang 2007: 238) because of which they are viewed as "less subordinate than the prototypes of the other two types on the continuum" (Thompson, Longacre, and Hwang 2007: 238).

(9) *a.* *[kʰiriki-re* *bahir-oloi* *sa-i]* *rupali*
window-INS outside-ALL look-CVB Rupali

sɔŋkitɔ ***ho-i*** ***pɔr-il.***
tensed become-CP fall-PFV
'Rupali looked outside the window and became tense.

b. *d̪umuha-t* *kɔp-i* *as-e* *ɦagɔr-ɔr* *par-ɔr* *zaubɔn.*
storm-LOC vibrate-CP be-3 sea-GEN bank-GEN broom plant
The white broom plant that grows in the seashore is vibrating in the storm.

ɦũ-ɦũ[8] *ɦɔbd-ere* *g̪ɔr-ɔr* *b̪itɔ-oloi* *ɦʊma-i*
REDUP sound-INS house-GEN inside-ALL enter-CP

ah-is-e *botah-ɔr* *ɦũt].*
come-PF-3 wind-GEN current
A current of wind has entered speedily inside the house.'
(amr34_ Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

However, this type of constructions warrants more research for the reason that the analysis may vary depending on the discourse context (see Examples (41)-(43)).

6 Types and functions of Non-finite verbs

Among the four forms discussed in the previous section, *-i*, *-a*, and *-bɔ* occur in both single and multi-clausal constructions while *-ũt* and *-il* occurs only in multi-clausal constructions. All these forms carry different meanings when they occur in different constructions. In single clause constructions, they occur with a set of vectors and usually carry different kinds of aspectual and modal meanings. In multi-clausal constructions, they mark different dependent constructions which encode different relations that they have with the main clauses, such as complement relations, relative relations or adverbial relations.

It is not very straightforward to categorize non-finite verbs into distinct classes, such as action nominals, infinitives, converbs, and participles in Assamese. As mentioned earlier (see Section 1), some of the four forms mentioned above carry a variety of functions. Thus, before presenting a classification of the forms, the following sections will first deal with each form one by one. The discussion of each form will include the internal and the external syntax of the dependent constructions that are marked by the individual form. Then, it will be tried to group the forms into distinct classes on the basis of their morphological properties and syntactic functions.

8 An imitative sound which is produced with the nose, i.e. an imitation of sniffing sound

6.1 -i

Among the four markers mentioned above, the use of *-i* is very frequent in Assamese. It is used in both single and multi-clausal constructions to serve a variety of functions. In single clause constructions, it is attached to the first verb of a two-verb sequence, the first of which is defined as a main verb. The main verb is accompanied by a second verb known as vectors, auxiliaries, operators in relevant descriptive traditions (Tamuli 1997; Thompson 2004), and this is the verb which carries all the verbal properties of a finite verb. This two-verb sequence indicates a single event which is the event that is denoted by the main verb. The associated vector more or less loses its lexical meaning and adds some additional meanings, such as progression, iteration, completion etc. to the event denoted by the main verb. Further, the two-verb sequence of this type sometines seems to express quite a different meaning which is not related to the mening of the main verb either. Chowdhary (2008: 223) analyzes this type of sequence as a phrasal verb and the final verb of the sequence as a light verb. However, no such distinction is made in this study for two reasons: (i) the purpose of this paper is to show how a particular non-finite marker is distributed in a single clause to code single event and in a multi-clausal construction to code multiple events. From this perspective, the *-i* marked phrasal verbs analyzed by Chowdhary do not differ from the sequence followed by a vector. Both are used to code a single event, and (ii) the light verb analyzed by Chowdhary and the vector analysed in this work seems to have the same functional load irrespective of whether the resulting event denotes the event coded by the main verb or not. However, it is not said that this kind of distinction is not necessary. Assamese has so many such sequences, the meanings of which are not at all related to the meaning of the main verb. The distinction, such as *-i* marked main verb + vector and *-i* marked main verb + light verb would be necessary, if one wants to treat the verbal sequences differently based on whether any sequence denotes the meaning expressed by the main verb or denotes a completely different meaning which is neither close to the main verb nor to the auxiliary verb of the sequence.

It should be further noted here that *-i* marked main verb followed by a vector is not structurally distinguishable from *-i* maked main verb followed by another main verb. The latter frequently seems to carry sequential or simultaneous events. And in some cases, the first verb of a sequence functions like an adverbial (see Chowdhary 2008: 225). It is, however, not possible to capture here all kinds of functions that *-i* has. It clearly warrants more research on its own merit.

In multi-clausal construction, it occurs in dependent clauses to signal different syntactic relations holding between the dependent and the main clause. Further, the clause marked by it is inherently subjectless. This section first discusses its distribution and functions in the single clause and then deals with the multi-clausal constructions.

6.1.1 -i in single clause constructions

It is attached to single or conjunct verb stems immediately followed by a set of vectors and forms complex predicates. The set of vectors which go with *-i* includes *as* 'have/exist', *tʰak* 'stay', *de* 'give', *lɔ* 'take', *za* 'go', *ah* 'come', *pela* 'throw', *tʰɔ* 'keep', *pa* 'get', *sa* 'see', *dʰɔr* 'catch', *tʊl* 'raise, lift', *potʰa* 'send', *utʰ* 'rise', *pɔr* 'fall', *pʰur* 'travel', *an* 'bring', *ne* 'take away', *ʊla* 'emerge' etc. Each vector has the homophonous main verb counterpart from which a

particular vector has developed. Most of the vectors more or less lose their lexical meaning and carry some extended functions. It is noted here that the main verb constituent of a complex predicate belongs to an open-ended class and there are a number of choices in which a particular main verb can co-occur with different vectors or a particular vector can go with different main verbs. The interpretation coming from a particular sequence of this kind depends on the temporal-clausal structure of the situation it occurs in. The temporal-clausal structure of a main verb may warrant which vectors can co-occur with that verb and what kind of interpretation evolves. Similarly, the temporal-clausal perspective may explain what kind of interpretation can come out from those sequences that are formed by the combination of different main verbs with a particular vector. To know about the temporal-clausal dimension of complex predicates more, see Tamuli (1997).

It should be further noted here that even though each vector in *-i* marked construction has multiple interpretations, this paper does not discuss all of them. Only the frequent construction with the common meaning is presented in this work, not all, to show how *-i* occurs with different vectors to carry a wide range of meanings.

Among these, the pairs of *as* 'have/exist/be' and *tʰak* 'stay', *pela* 'throw' and *tʰɔ* 'keep', *de* 'give' and *lɔ* 'take', *za* 'go' and *ah* 'come' occur more frequently with *-i* . *as* 'be' occurs in peripheral progressive constructions to signal the continuation of an event denoted by the main verb, as illustrated below. It occurs with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

(10) *peha-i* *TV* *sa-i* ***as*-e** *sage.*
paternal uncle-ERG TV see-CP be-3 probably
'The paternal uncle is probably watching TV.'

(Conversation)

(11) *ɦu-i-e* ***as*-a-neki** *etia-ʊ?*
sleep-CP-RES have-2FAM-QUES now-ADD
'Are you still sleeping?'

(Conversation)

The event expressed in (10) is active while in (11), it is stative. Accordingly, the verbal sequence in (10) signals the active progression whereas the verbal sequence in (11) denotes the stative progression. The interpretation of active and stative progression depends on the semantics of the main verb.

-i occurs with *tʰak* 'stay, remain' to carry the meaning of habituality, repetitiveness, durativity, continuity, change of state (resultativity) etc. The different interpretations of this verbal sequence sometimes depend on the semantics of the main verb and sometimes on the adverb used to modify it. For example, *tʰak* sequence may have the interpretation of habituality or repetitiveness when the main verb denotes actions (see examples (12) and (13)). But it can carry the interpretation of durativity (see example (14) or resultativity (change of state) when the main verb denotes states (see example (15)). This vector also occurs with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

(12) *nɔlbari-sɔlbari-r* *manuh-bilak-tʊ* *deili* *ɔh-a-zʊ-a*
Nalbari-REDUP-GEN people-PL-CONTR daily come-NMLZ-go-NMLZ

kɔr-i-e ***tʰak-e.***
do-CP-RES stay-3
'The people from Nalbari (no matter whether people from other places keep traveling) always keep shuttling.'

(Conversation)

(13) *ami* *ei-bʊ*[9] *ɦɔdai* *bebohar* *kor-i* *tʰak-ʊ,*
1PL this-PL always use do-CP stay-1

ama-r *gɔr-ɔt* *ami* *gi-ta-i* *zetia* *kɔtʰa*
1PL-GEN house-LOC 1PL few-CLF-ERG when conversation

pat-i ***tʰak-ʊ.***
have-CP stay-1
'We always keep using these (certain linguistic constructions) while keep talking at our home.'

(Conversation)

(14) *moi* *ɦɔdai* *ɦe-tʊ-k* *lo-i* *lɛptɔp-tʊ*
1SG always that-CLF-DAT take-CONJ laptop-CLF

lo-i-e *boh-i* ***tʰak-ʊ.***
take-CONJ-RES sit-CP stay-1
'I always remain sitting with my laptop only' (I always take my laptop and remain sitting only)

(Conversation)

(15) *mazu-tʊ* *tini* *mah* *tʰak-i* *pela-i*
middle one-CLF three month stay-CP throw-CONJ

mazu-tʊ *gɔr-ɔt-e* *ḍuka-i* ***tʰak-il-e.***
middle one-CLF house-LOC-RES die-CP stay-PFV-3
'The middle one died at home staying alive for three months after his birth'

(Narrative)

[9] This morpheme is a reduced version of plural morpheme *-bʊr*. The language of this example represents one variety of Assamese (upper Assam variety) in which *-r* remains unpronounced or it is reduced in the medial and the final position of a word. Sometimes the preceeding vowel is lengthened to compensate this reduction and in some cases, particularly, when *-r* is followed by *-i* vowel, the semi-vowel *j* is used in the position of *-r*.

Examples (12) and (13) have the habitual or repetitive reading. Example (14) has durative reading, and (15) has the change of state reading.

The sequences with *pela* 'throw' and *tʰɔ* 'keep' have the sense of completion. However, they do not just talk about the completion of an event. Additionally, each vector seems to add a sense of relaxation that comes as a result of completing an action, to the event, as illustrated in (16)-(18). *pela* can pair with both transitive and intransitive verbs while *tʰɔ* cannot occur with intransitive verbs.

(16) *gotike* *ɦi* *zep-or* *pora* *rumal-kʰɔn*
therefore 3INFR.M.DIST pocket-GEN from handkerchief-CLF

ulia-i *mozia-kʰɔn* *sapʰ* *kor-i* ***pela****-l-e.*
take out-CONJ floor-CLF clean do-CP throw-PFV-3
'Therefore, he took out the handkerchief from the pocket and then cleaned up the floor with it.'
(an143_EmilleCorpus_CQPweb)

(17) *kʰur-kʰɔn* *mʊ-r* *kɛp-tʊ-t* *lɔga-i* *ɦoru*
blade-CLF 1SG-GEN cap-CLF-LOC stick-CONJ small

ɦoru *suli-bʊr* *kʰura-i* ***pela****-l-e.*
small hair-PL shave-CP throw-PFV-3.
'(He) fixed the blade to my cap (razor) and shaved off the small hairs.'
(an149_EmilleCorpus_CQPweb)

(18) *ɦorubap-e* *tiket* *kor-i-e-i* ***tʰo****-is-e.*
younger son-ERG ticket do-CP-RES-EMPH keep-PF-3
'The younger son has already done the ticket.'
(amm65_EmilleCorpus_CQPweb)

Along with the meaning of completion, Post (2004) says that *pela* carries the meaning of disposal perfect. This meaning is much closer to the lexical meaning of the vector. Example (17) expresses a kind of disposal meaning.

The meaning contributed by *lɔ* 'take' and *de* 'give' to the event comes from their lexical counterparts. The common meaning expressed by *lɔ* 'take' is that something is done for the benefit of self (self-benefactive (Post 2004) (see examples (19) and (20)) whereas the meaning expressed by *de* 'give' is that something is done for the benefit of others (Examples (21) and (22)). The latter is also used frequently in the sense of purposefulness or willfulness of an activity (Post 2004). (23) is the illustrative example. Both vectors can occur with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

(19) *aru* *moi* *ɲabi-l-ʊ* *ɦei* *segɔte* *ɲidio-tʊ*
and 1SG think-PFV-1 that moment video-CLF

kor-i ***lɔ-ʊ.***
do-CP take-1
'..and I thought, I will take the video at that opportunity.'
(Narrative:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N07_VEazZik)

(20) *maina-k* *mane* *ɦʊnkale* *ɖu-a-i* *pɔkʰɔl-a-i*
Maina-DAT means quickly wash-CAUS-CONJ rinse-CAUS-CONJ

au *kʰu-a-i* *bua-i* *mane* *azori*
and eat-CAUS-CONJ redup-CONJ means free

ho-i ***lo-l-ʊ.***
become-CP take-PFV-1
'(I) gave Maina a bath quickly, fed him quickly, and then became free.'
(Narrative: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDbxcvcURko)

(21) *ma-e* *ɦɔdai* *ɲat* *zetia* *bɔna-j* *tetia*
mother-ERG always rice when cook-3 then

ami *ki* *kɔr-ʊ,* *usɔr-ɔt-e* *ro-i* *i-tʊ* *ɦi-tʊ*
1PL what do-1, near-LOC-RES stop-CONJ this-CLF that-CLF

kat-i *di-ʊ,* *ta-r-pis-ɔt-e* *mɔsɔla-sɔsɔla* *pisi*
cut-CP give-1, that-GEN-back-LOC-RES spice-REDUP grind

di-a-t *ɦɔhai* *kor-i* ***di-ʊ.***
give-AN-LOC help do-CP give-1
'When my mother cooks rice, then what we do is, we stay beside her, help her cutting one or more than one (vegetables), and then help her grinding spices.'
(Conversation)

(22) *parboti-e* *bol-e* *bɔrdeuta-r* *gɔr-ɔr* *renu* *ba*
Parbati-ERG say-3 father's elder brother-GEN house-GEN Renu or

zodumɔni-k-e *mat-i* *an-ʊ.* *sitʰi- kʰɔn* *pɔrh-i*
Zadumoni-DAT-RES call-CP bring-1. letter-CLF read-CP

di-ɔk-hi.
give-IMP-PROX

'Parbati says, I am going to call either Renu or Zadumoni from my paternal uncle's house. Let her/him read the letter to you.'

(amm84_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(23) *azi* *ratipua* *ekdɔm* *kuhumia* *pani* *kʰu-a-i* ***di****-s-ʊ.*
today morning entirely warm water eat-CAUS-CP give-PF-1
'I have strictly made (her) drink warm water this morning.' (on purpose)

(Conversation)

za 'go' and *ah* 'come' pair mostly seems to retain their lexical senses and they occur with both transitive and intransitive verbs. In most sequences, *za* 'go' implies the movement away from the speaker and *ah* 'come' signals the movement towards the speaker, as shown in (24) and (25).

(24) *ɦi* *kali-e* *gʰɔr-oloi* *gʰur-i* *go-l.*
3INFR.M.DIST yesterday-RES house-ALL round-CP go-PFV
'He went back home yesterday itself.' (early interpretation of the restrictive particle: earlier than expected)

(25) *e-pʰal-ɔr* *pɔra* *bɔn-kʰini* *kat-i* *ah-a.*
one-side-GEN from grass-CLF cut-CP come-2FAM
'Keep cutting the grass from one side.'

(self-elicited)

However, similar with other vectors, *za* and *ah* have a variety of extended meanings, three of which are presented in (26)-(28).

(26) *oi,* *mʊ-r* *pepar-kʰɔn-ɔr* *review* *ah-i* ***go****-l.*
hey 1SG-GEN paper-CLF-GEN review come-CP go-PFV
'Hey, I have received the review of my paper.'

(Self-elicited)

(27) *ramdʰɔn-e* *epʰal-ɔr* *pora* *sitʰi-kʰɔn* *pɔrh-i* ***go****-l.*
Ramdhan-ERG one side-GEN from letter-CLF read-CP go-PFV
'Ramdhan read the letter right from the beginning.'

(Self-elicited)

(28) *kɔka-r-ɔr* *deha-ʊ* *por-i* ***ah****-is-e.*
grandfather-2INFR.POSS-GEN health-ADD fall-CP come-PF-3
'The health of grandfather has also been getting weaker.'

(Self-elicited)

Example (26) carries the meaning of fulfillment of an expectation in the context in which the speaker has received the review of a paper for which s/he has been eagerly waiting.

(27), on the other hand, carries the implication of continuity, i.e, Ramdhan was carrying the reading event right from the beginning. (28) denotes the meaning of progression.

Of *pa* 'get' and *sa* 'see' sequences, the former usually carries a sense of achievement (example (29)) and the latter gives a tentative aspectual meaning (see Post 2004), as shown in (30). Both vectors can combine with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

(29) *mɔnʊzʊg-ere* *porh-il-e* *tat* *tʰɔk-a* *kɔtʰa-bʊr*
attention-INS read-PFV-LOC there stay-NMLZ matter-PL

ḭal-koi *buz-i* ***pa**-b-a.*
good-ADVLZ understand-CP get-FUT-2FAM
'If you read with attention, you will understand the matters written there well.'
(amt36_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(30) *ɔŋɦuman-e* *komisɔnar-e* *ɦɔḭa-t* *por-ibɔ* *lɔg-a*
Angshuman-ERG commissioner-ERG meeting-LOC read-INF need-NMLZ

ɦi *likʰ-a* *ɔḭiḭaɦɔn-kʰɔn* *e-bar* *kʰɔr-ḍɔr-koi*
3SG.INFR.F.DIST write-NMLZ public address-CLF one-time quick-ADVLZ

porh-i ***sa**-l-e.*
read-CP see-PFV-3
'Angshuman quickly read once the public address that he wrote for the commissioner who needed it to read in the meeting.'
(ash16_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

As Post (2004) said, *pa* 'get' is used to give the meaning of achiving something in (29) while *sa* 'see' is used 'when an actor performs an action cautiously or with a view toward evaluating the result' in (30).

an[10] 'bring' and *ne* 'take away' pair seems to retain their lexical sense. The former mostly gives the meaning of carrying some actions towards the reference point (31) and the latter gives the meaning of carrying some actions away from the reference point (32). These two can combine only with transitive verbs.

(31) *moi* *tʊma-k* *kiliar-koi* *kʰorosi* *mar-i*
1SG 2FAM-DAT clear-ADVLZ thorough do-CVB

ko-i *an-is-ʊ* *nɔhɔj.*
tell-CP bring-IPFV-1 confirmation
'I have almost discussed you clearly leaving nothing incomplete.'
(amm40Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

[10] This pair is a bit complex in comparison to other pairs for the reason that they commonly occur as main verbs in a verbal sequence, i.e. main verb + main verb and encode two distinct events occurring one after another.

(32) *hur* *hurkoi* *dɔba-pita* *boroɦun-e* *pahar-ɔr* *dati-r*
with a loud sound heavy rain-ERG hill-GEN side-GEN

bat-tʊ *poriskar-koi* *d̪u-i* ***ni-s-e.***
road-CLF clean-ADVLZ wash-CP bring-PF-3
'The heavy rain coming with a loud sound has neatly washed away the road besides the hill.'
(ahu04_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

ut^{h} 'rise' and *pɔr* 'fall' pair seems to retain its inherent lexical sense of movement upwards and downwards. Both the verbs usually denote a change of state. In addition, *ut*^{h} has one more common meaning, i.e., the completion of an event, as shown in (34). The former of this pair can combine with both transitive and intransitive verbs while the latter can pair only with intransitive verbs.

(33) *ɦind̪u-gɔŋga-k* *lo-i* *utɔr* *b̪arɔt* *aru* *brɔhmɔputrɔ-k*
Sindhu-Ganga-DAT take-CONJ north India and Brahmaputra-DAT

lo-i *ɔɦɔm-ɔr* *ɦɔb̪jɔta* *gorh-i* ***ʊt*^{h}*-is-e.***
take-CONJ Assam-GEN civilization form-CP rise-PF-3
'The civilization of north India has flourished on the rivers Sindhu-Ganga and of Assam has developed on the river Brahmaputra.'
(art12_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(34) *b̪at* *k*^{h}*a-i* *ut*^{h}*-i* *ɦi* *kirɔn-ɔr* *kot*^{h}*ali-t*
rice eat-CP rise-CONJ 3SG.INFR.M.DIST Kiran-GEN room-LOC

boh-i *as-il.*
sit-CP be-PFV
'After finishing launch, he was sitting in Kiran's room.'
(an130_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(35) *ɔlɔp* *pasɔte* *tini-ʊ-zoni* *ɦalika* *mati-t* *d̪ɔpkoi*
few after three-ADD-CLF myna earth-LOC suddenly

ɦor-i ***por****-il.*
drop-CP fall-PFV
'After a few moments, all the three mynas fell down suddenly on the ground.'
(nmm148c_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

Similar to *ut*^{h}, *tʊl* 'raise, lift' sequence also talks about a change of state. However, what *tʊl* contributes to the event is that there is a cause which is responsible for the change of state. It can combine with both transitive and intransitive verbs.

(36) *ta-r* *birudḍe* *srɔmik* *sreni-e* *krɔmannɔe*
that-GEN against labour class-ERG gradually

protirʊḍ *ɦɔŋgram* *gorh-i* ***tul**-is-e.*
hindrance war form-CP raise-PF-3
'The labour class has gradually formed a preventative war against that.'
(apo04_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(37) *ditijɔ* *mɔhaɦɔmɔr-ɔr* *dabanɔl-e* *biswɔ*
second world war-GEN uncontrolled fire-ERG universe

kɔ̃p-a-i ***tul**-is-e.*
shiver-CAUS-CP rise-PF-3
'The uncontrolled fire of the second world war has made the universe shiver.'
(atr09a_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

6.1.2 -i in multi-clause constructions

In multi-clausal constructions, *-i* is used to mark dependent constructions which signal a temporal relation of chronological succession (underlying 'and then' relation (Longacre 2007), complement relations, and different kinds of adverbial relations, as presented in the following examples.

(38) *kerela-tʊ* *kʰa-bo-le* *za-õt-e* *ɔlɔp* *bɔil*
bitter gourd-CLF eat-NMLZ-ALL go-NMLZ-LOC a few boil

kor-i *lo-b-o* *pɔtʰɔm-ɔt-e.* *bɔil* *kor-i* *ḭitɔr-ɔr*
do-CP take-FUT-3 first-LOC-LOC boil do-CONJ inside-GEN

guti-bilak *ulia-b-o,* *guti-bilak* *ulia-i,* *guti-bilak-ɔr*
seed-PL take out-FUT-3, seed-PL take out-CONJ, seed-PL-GEN

lɔg-ɔt *ɔlɔp* *mɔsɔla* *d-i,* *ɔlɔp* *ada-nohoru*
company-LOC a few spice give-CONJ, a few ginger-garlic

d-i, *ei-bilak* *pis-ibɔ.*
give-CONJ this-PL grind-3
'While going to eat the bitter gourd, first (she) will boil it. After boiling, (she) will take the seeds out from it. After taking out the seeds, (she) will add a few spices with the seeds, will add a little amount of ginger and a few cloves of garlic, and then (she) will grind these.
(Conversation)

(38) is an example of chaining constructions which reports a sequence of three successive events that are denoted by a sequence of two non-finite clauses followed by a final finite clause. The same sequential events can also be expressed by a sequence of finite clauses in the languages, as shown in (39).

(39) *guti-bilak* *ulia-b-o,* *guti-bilak-ɔr* *lɔg-ɔt* *ɔlɔp*
seed-PL take out-FUT-3, seed-PL-GEN company-LOC a few

mɔsɔla *di-b-o,* *ɔlɔp* *ada-nohoru* *di-b-o,*
spice give-FUT-3 a few ginger-garlic give-FUT-3

tar *pisɔt* *ei-bilak* *pis-ibɔ.*
that after this-PL grind-3
'(She) will add a few spices to the seeds, will add a little amount of ginger an a few cloves of garlic, and then (she) will grind these.'

Each non-finite verb in (38) is replaced by its finite counterpart in (39). The non-final clauses in this construction do not seem to carry any adverbial relation to the main clause. Rather they talk about three successive events which took place before the event denoted by the main clause, *-i* is used in (38) as a conjunctive participle which serves the function of conjoining two or more than two successive events in a sequence.

In addition to its function of conjunctive participle, *-i* is used to code the dependent event in subordinate relation for encoding the complement relation of the main clause, as shown in (40).

(40) *aru* *suzi-ʊ* *ma-e* *kʰa-i* *tʰik* *ne-pa-j.*
and semolina-ADD mother-ERG eat-INF like NEG-get-3
'And mother does not like having semolina too.'
(Conversation)

In (40), the *-i* marked subordinate clause encodes the complement relation of an object of the main clauses.

Further, *-i* codes the dependent event in subordinate relations of adverbials, such as reason, as shown in (41).

(41) *moi* *apʊna-lʊk-ɔr* *nat-kʰɔn* *sa-i* *ɦɔsa-koi*
1SG 2HON-PL-GEN drama-CLF see-CVB true-ADVLZ

ɔ̰bi̯u̯tɔ *ho-is-ʊ.*
amused become-PF-1
'I have truly felt overwhelmed by watching your drama.' (the drama that you(pl) have directed)
(amr56_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

The subordinate clause in (41) signals the semantic relation of reason of the events encoded in the main clauses. The subordinate status of this dependent clause can be identified by using sentential interrogation and negation, as in (42) and (43).

(42) *moi* *apʊna-lʊk-ɔr* *nat-k^{h}ɔn* *sa-i* *ɦɔsa-koi*
1SG 2HON-PL-GEN drama-CLF see-CVB true-ADVLZ

ɔβ̤iβ̤utɔ *ho-a* *naj.*
amused become-NMLZ NEG.be
'I have not truly felt overwhelmed by watching your drama.'

(Self-elicited)

This sentence means that 'I have watched your drama, but not truly felt overwhelmed'. Here, the dependent clause is shielded from the scope of the negation and thus, the proposition expressed by this clause is presupposed.

Similarly, if the sentential interrogation is applied, the dependent clause is again prevented from the scope of the interrogation.

(43) *moi* *apʊna-lʊk-ɔr* *nat-k^{h}ɔn* *sa-i* *ɦɔsa-koi*
1SG 2HON-PL-GEN drama-CLF see-CVB true-ADVLZ

ɔβ̤iβ̤utɔ *ho-is-ʊ-ne?*
amused become-PF-1
'Have I felt truly overwhelmed by watching your drama?' (Is it the case that I have felt truly overwhelmed by watching your drama? or Is it after watching your drama that I have felt truly overwhelmed?).

Here, what is being questioned is that I have felt truly overwhelmed, not that I have watched your drama.

In addition, *-i* marked verbs are reduplicated to indicate the intensity, iterativity of the action (repeated action) or the event of the dependent clauses, as in (44) and (45).

(44) *ɦoru-t*[11]*-e* *ma-e* *zetia* *maŋɦɔ* *bona-j* *tetia*
small-NMLZ-LOC mother-ERG when meat cook-3 then

ma-e *bona-õt-e* *ɦei-bilak* *sa-i* *t^{h}ak-ʊ.*
mother-ERG cook-NMLZ-LOC that-PL watch-CP stay-1

[11] This morpheme is the reduced form of *-õt* '-NMLZ'. The word *ɦoru-t-e* 'small-NMLZ-LOC' is the reduced version of the subordinate clause *ɦoru t^{h}ak-õt-e* 'small stay-NMLZ-LOC' meaning 'when (anyone) was young'. The verb *t^{h}ak* 'stay' is omitted and the suffixes attached to the verb are added to the predicative adjective. In this process, the vowel from *-õt* is also deleted.

pot^{h}om-ɔt-e	*dek^{h}-i*	*dek^{h}-i-e*	*moi*	*ei-bilak*
first-LOC-LOC	see-CVB	see-CVB-RES	1SG	this-PL

bostu	*bona-bo-le*	*ɦiki-l-ʊ*	*aru.*
thing	cook-NMLZ-ALL	learn-PFV-1	too

'When my mother cooked meat in my childhood (while I was young), I kept watching her cooking meat. First, I watched repeatedly her cooking and learnt to cook these things too.'

(Conversation)

(45)

eneke	*ma-e*	*keneke*	*bona-j*	*ki*	*kɔr-e*
this way	mother-ERG	how	cook-3	what	do-3

ei-bilak	*sa-i*	*t^{h}ak-ʊ.*	*sa-i*	*sa-i*	*e-din*
this-PL	watch-CP	stay-1	watch-CVB	watch-CVB	one-day

teneke-i	*ɦiki-l-ʊ*	*aru.*
that way-RES	learn-PFV-1	too

'…In this way I kept watching the things how mother cooked food, what she did when she cooked food. In that way, I watched repeatedly her cooking and learnt to cook one day.'

(Conversation)

It is noted here that the constructions marked by this form are inherently subjectless. They always share the subject of the main clause, as shown in (38)-(45).Further, the internal structure of these constructions is always more clause-like in terms of three morpho-syntactic properties. Firstly, the verb marked by this form functions as a head of the constructions. Secondly, the verbs in these constructions use identical forms for marking the dependents as they do in finite clauses in terms of morphological properties. Thirdly, the verbs can take same range of adverbial modifiers as the verbs in finite clauses. However, the constructions differ from a finite clause in that the verbs lack all the morphological properties that a finite verb has. Example (46) shows these properties.

(46)

*sowali-zoni-**e***	*aji*	*ḍunia-koi*	*ḅat-mut^{h}-Ø*
girl-CLF-ERG	today	good-ADVLZ	rice-CLF-ABS

k^{h}a-i	*skul-oloi*	*go-l.*
eat-CONJ	school-ALL	go-PFV

'The girl had the meal beautifully today and then went to the school.

(Self-elicited)

The head of the non-finite construction in (46) is *k^{h}a* 'eat'. This verb takes the subject in the ergative case and the object in the unmarkded absolutive case as it does in finite

clauses. Moreover, the verb takes the adverbial modifier as finite verbs do. The finite counterpart of this clause is given below.

(47) *sowali-zoni-**e*** *aji* *ḍunia-koi* *ḅat-mut^{h}i-Ø* *k^{h}a-l-e.*
girl-CLF-ERG today beautiful-ADVLZ rice-CLF-ABS eat-PFV-3
'The girl ate the rice beautifully today.'
(Self-elicited)

The only difference between this finite clause and the non-finite counterpart is that the non-finite verb does not inflect for any morphological category of the finite verb. It is interesting to see that even if the main clause is headed by an intransitive verb in (46), the subject is not marked accordingly. The subject of the intransitive verb is normally found in the unmarked absolutive case. But in this example, the subject is marked according to the non-finite verb which is transitive. Further supportive evidence of this is provided in (48) and (49). The subject is marked according to the intransitive non-finite verb in (49), not to the transitive main verb.

(48) *dui-eta* *sɔrai-**e*** *muk^{h}-ɔt* *ekʊ-ta* *mas* *lo-i*
two-one bird-ERG mouth-LOC something-CLF fish take-CONJ

dur-oloi *ur-i* *go-is-e.*
distant-ALL fly-CP go-PF-3
'One or two birds have taken a piece of fish in their mouths and flew away to a distant place.'
(asm13_U08_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(49) *ramɔnna-**Ø*** *gaɔ̃-loi* *go-i* *gaʊ̃burha-k*
Ramanna-ABS village-ALL go-CONJ village head-man-DAT

ko-i *e-k^{h}ɔn* *gorugari* *ɔn-a-l-e.*
ask-CONJ one-CLF bullock cart bring-CAUS-PFV-3
'Ramanna went home, asked the village head-man, and brought a bullock cart.'
(stl18_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

It must be noted here that this is the usual behaviour of the constructions of this type. If a construction has a dependent clause with a transitive verb and a main clause with an intransitive verb, the shared subject of these two clauses is normally marked according to the dependent transitive verb. However, if the word order is changed by placing the subject in the main clause, the subject will be marked according to the intransitive main verb, as shown below.

(50) *aji* *ḍunia-koi* *ḅat-mut^{h}i-Ø*
today good-ADVLZ rice-CLF-ABS

kʰa-i	***sowali-zoni-Ø***	*skul-oloi*	*go-l.*
eat-CONJ	girl-CLF-ABS	school-ALL	go-PFV.

'After having the meal beautifully today, the girl went to the school.' (The girl had the meal beautifully today and then went to the school.)

In (48) and (49), the subjects are placed in the initial position, which are immediately followed by the non-finite construction in which the transitive verb functions as the head of the construction. Because of the verb, the subject is marked by *-e* in these examples. In contrast, the subject of (50) is not marked by *-e* for the reason that the subject has been moved from the non-finite construction to the finite construction in which the intransitive verb *za*[12] 'go' functions as the head of the construction.

The kind of alternative marking on the subject in these constructions seems to be largely motivated by the position of the subject, whether it is placed with transitive verbs or intransitive verbs irrespective of the distinction of dependent and main clause.

However, it does not imply that this is the only way of marking subjects in this kind of constructions. The alternative way of marking subjects in *-i* marked constructions is that the subject is always marked according to the main verb, as illustrated below.

(51)

ɦoru	*mʊma-ek-Ø*	*gaɔ̃-r-e*	*e-g̈ɔr-oloi*
small	maternal uncle-3POSS-ABS	village-GEN-RES	one-house-ALL

ɦɔkam	*kʰa-bo-loi*	*go-is-e.*
religious function	eat-NMLZ-ALL	go-PF-3

'The younger maternal uncle has gone to a certain house in the village to attend a religious function.'

(asm13_U28_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

People often tend to use subjects according to the main verb when they talk consciously. Otherwise, both patterns seem to be present in speech.

6.2 -ʊ̃t

-ʊ̃t occurs with *-e* in multi-clausal constructions and codes the dependent events only in adverbial subordinate relations. Without *-e*, *-ʊ̃t* cannot occur in this construction. *-e* is an older form of the locative case which is used in this construction to mark adverbial subordination. Since the locative *-e* is not productive anymore, it remains as a frozen form with *-ʊ̃t* and both the forms, *-ʊ̃t* and *-e*, behave as a single converbal morpheme. The subordinate clauses marked by this morpheme frequently encode the underlying temporal relation of overlap or simultaneity (underlying 'while', 'at the same time' relation (Longacre 2007)). It is noted here that even though *-ʊ̃te* can morphologically be analyzed as the combination of two morphemes, syntactically, it serves the function of converb.

[12] *za* is the root form of 'go'. *za* becomes *gɔ* when it occurs in the past tense and in the non-finite construction marked by *-i*.

Two clauses are usually combined in this construction and they encode two events which signal the temporal relation of simultaneity. It should be noted here that the subordinate clauses marked by this suffix have the ability of taking an overt subject which is not coreferential with the subject of the main clause, and they also have the ability of sharing the subject of the main clause, as shown below.

(52) *tʊma-lʊk-e* *ɦei* *indur-ɔt* *tʰak-õt-e* *eneke*
2FAM-PL-ERG that Indore-LOC stay-NMLZ-LOC this way

maŋɦɔ-saŋɦɔ *kʰa-is-il-a-n* *naj?*
meat-REDUP eat-PF-PFV-2FAM-QUES NEG.BE
'Have you had meat in this way while staying in Indore?'
(Conversation)

(53) *moi* *batʰrum-ɔt* *tʰak-õt-e* *peha* *ʊla-i*
1SG bathroom-LOC stay-NMLZ-LOC paternal uncle exit-CP

go-l.
go-PFV
'The paternal uncle went out while 1 was in the bathroom.'
(nmm111_Emille-CIILAssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

The subordinate clause in (52) shares the subject of the main clause while in (53) it has an overt subject which is different from the main clause.

Similar to *-i* marked reduplicated verbs, *-õte* marked verb can also be reduplicated and carries the meaning of intensity, iterativity etc. within the subordinate clause. The subordinate clause of this type encodes the semantic relation of manner, cause/relation etc., as demonstrated in the following examples.

(54) *mɔɔm* *kɔ-õt-e* *kɔ-õt-e* *zedi* *ho-i*
affection do-NMLZ-LOC do-NMLZ-LOC stubborn become-CP

go-i *as-e.*
go-CP be-3
'As a result of showering (her) too much affection, (she) is becoming stubborn (day by day).
(Conversation)

In (54) the reduplicated subordinate verbs signal a kind of repetitive action or duration.

In addition to these two constructions, *-õte* is used to mark more than one event coded by non-final clauses and it encodes the relation of temporal overlap of each event with the event denoted by the main verb.

(55) *bas-ɔt* *za-õt-e,* *rel-ɔt* *za-õt-e,* *hal*
bus-LOC go-NMLZ-LOC, train-LOC go-NMLZ-LOC ploughing implement

ba-õt-e, *ɦɔo̯a-ɦɔmiti-t* *bɔh-õt-e,*
operate with hands-NMLZ-LOC, meeting-committee-LOC sit-NMLZ-LOC,

ɔpʰis-kesari-t *anki* *ɦous* *kor-õt-e-ʊ* *tʊpɔni-a-j*
office-court-LOC in fact stool do-NMLZ-LOC-ADD asleep-VB-3

buli *e-ta* *bea* *bɔdnam* *as-e.*
quot one-CLF bad reputation have-3
'(The people of that community) have a bad reputation that they fall asleep at the time of travelling in a bus, travelling in a train, plouging with hands, sitting in a meeting-committee, going to an office-court, in fact at the time of defecating.'
(amr42_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

Chowdhary (2008) refers to another meaning carried by *-õte* marked subordinate clauses. According to her, *-õte* marked subordinate clauses are used to "imply a pluperfective aspect in a *pisɔt* 'after' clause describing a past situation completed before some other past situation denoted by the matrix predicate" (P. 228), as in (56).

(56) *ɦahu-ma* *ḍuka-õt-e-i* *teõ*
mother-in-law die-NMLZ-LOC-RES 3SG.FAM

gɔr-oloi *go-is-il.*
house-ALL go-PF-PFV
'He went home immediately after the mother-in-law had died.'
(Self-elicited)

Chowdhary (2008) pointed out that the subordinate clause presented in (56) can occur with the main clauses having non-future tense only. However, in the genre of imaginative story or narrative, counter-examples can be found, as presented in the following example.

(57) *giri-ek-e* *kɔ-õt-e* *tai* *citʰi-kʰɔn*
husband-3POSS-ERG tell-NMLZ-LOC 3SG.F.INFR.DIST letter-CLF

kʰul-ib-ɔ *aru* *porh-ib-ɔ.*
open-FUT-3 and read-FUT-3.
'She will open and read the letter immediately after her husband had asked to do so.'
(Self-elicited)

In addition, *-õte* marked subordinate clauses can also carry the sense expressed by a *agɔte* 'before' clause, as demonstrated in (58).

(58) *kiba* *e-ta* *kam* *kɔr-õt-e* *ami*
something one-CLF work do-NMLZ-LOC 1PL

e-ɦɔ-bar *ḭab-ibɔ* *lag-e.*
one-hundred-times think-INF need-3
'We need to think hundred times before we do something.'

(Self-elicited)

Similar to *-i* marked construction, the internal structure of *-õte* marked construction is also more clause-like. Apart from the lack of finite morphology with the verb, all the arguments of this non-finite construction are mostly marked in a similar way as that of finite constructions. The subjects, objects or any other constituents of *-õte* marked verbs are usually marked in an identical manner to their finite counterparts. The verbs can take same range of adverbial modifiers as the finite counterparts. However, there is a construction in which the notional subject of the non-finite construction functions as the object of the main clause and thus marked by the dative case, while the combination of the object and the non-finite verb marks the modifying relation of time adverbial with the main verb, as demonstrated below.

(59) *ɦi* *mʊ-k* *rasta* *par* *hɔ-õt-e* *dek^{h}-is-il.*
3INFR.SG.DIST.M 1SG-DAT road cross be-NMLZ-LOC see-PF-PFV
'He saw me while crossing the road.'

(Self-elicited)

This construction may have two readings, and accordingly the internal structure of both the subordinate and the main construction changes. According to the first reading, *He saw me while I was crossing the road*. This reading demands the subject of the subordinate clause to be the object of the main clause. The subject of the main and the subordinate clause is different according to this reading. In the second reading, both the subordinate and the main clause share the same subject – *He saw me while he was crossing the road*. However, this kind of potential ambiguity is resolved by some linguistic means, such as word order (60), presence of adverbial modifiers (61), semantics of constituent (62), and by the discourse context (63).

(60) *ɦi* *rasta* *par* *hɔ-õt-e* *mʊ-k* *dek^{h}-is-il.*
3INFR.SG.DIST.M road cross be-NMLZ-LOC 1SG-DAT see-PF-PFV
'He saw me while he was crossing the road.'

(Self-elicited)

(61) *zen* *onuraḑa-k* *zʊakali-he* *duporija* *kolez-oloi*
as Anuradha-DAT yesterday-RES noon college-ALL

za-õt-e	*kentin-ɔr*	*kaɦ-ɔt*	*e-zak*	*soali-r*	*ɦoite*	*dek^{h}-a*
go-NMLZ-LOC	canteen-GEN	side-LOC	one-PL	girl-GEN	with	see-CP

pa-is-il,	*orunaḇ-ɔr*	*ene*	*lag-il.*
get-PF-PFV,	Arunabh-GEN	like this	feel-PFV

'Arunabh felt like it was only yesterday that he saw Anuradha with a group of girls besides the canteen while going to the college at noon.'

(nmm138_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(62)

prohori-zon-e	*mʊ-k*	*dʊkan-bʊr-ɔt*	*sʊma-bo-loi*
sentinel-CLF-ERG	1SG-DAT	shop-PL-LOC	enter-NMLZ-ALL

za-õt-e	*ɦuḏ-il-e,*	*moi*	*Melina-r*	*pora*	*kei-ta*
go-NMLZ-LOC	ask-PFV-LOC	1SG	Melina-GEN	from	how many-CLF

boza-t	*za-m.*
time-LOC	go-FUT.1

'While I was going to the shops, the sentinel asked me, at what time I will leave from Melina.'

(atr02_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(63)

nodi-r	*pora*	*pani*	*an-ib-oloi*	*za-õt-e*	*lok^{h}imi-k*
river-GEN	from	water	bring-NMLZ-ALL	go-NMLZ-LOC	Lakhimi-DAT

dek^{h}-i	*rɔmakantɔ*	*mugḏɔ*	*hɔ-j.*
see-CONJ	Ramakant	spellbound	beome-3

'Ramakanta saw Lakhimi while she was going to bring water from the river, and became spellbound.'

(acr03_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

In (60), the object is placed after the subordinate clause which gives us the meaning that the main and the subordinate clauses share the same subject, i.e., *ɦi*. The presence of the adverbial modifiers *kentin-ɔr kaɦ-ɔt* 'besides the canteen' and '*e-zak soali-r ɦoite*' 'with a group of girls' in (61), implies that *Anuradha* cannot be the subject of the dependent clause. She was the one who was besides the canteen accompanied by a group of girls and Arunabh saw her while going to the college. The semantics of the word *prohori* in (62) implies that he was not the one who was going to enter into the shops; rather he was the one who was standing outside keeping an eye on the shops. Here, the dative marked constituent is the notional subject of the dependent clause. The discourse context in (63) says that the dative marked constituent is the notional subject of the dependent clause. *Ramakanta* was the one who was crossing the riverside road while Lakhimi was going to bring water. He saw Lakhimi on his way and became spellbound. In (62) and (63), the subjects of the dependent and main clauses are not coreferential.

6.3 -(i)bɔ

Similar to *-i* and *-a*, *-(i)bɔ* occurs both in single and multi-clausal constructions. This form occurs in three constructions –

(a) *-ibɔ* marked verb without having any other suffix.

(b) *-ibɔ* marked verb with the allative case *-loi*,

(c) *-ibɔ* marked verb with the genitive suffix *-r* and a relator noun or a noun which functions as the head of the construction.

-ibɔ without *-loi* occurs in both single and multi-clausal constructions whereas *-ibɔ* with *-loi* occurs only in multi-clausal constructions. The former one occurs with (i) modal verbs *lag* 'need' and *par* 'can' and forms complex predicates which encode the meaning of necessity, obligation, and ability, and (ii) desiderative verb *bisar* 'want' and *kʰʊz* 'desire' and carries the complement relation. When *-ibɔ* occurs with *-loi*, the construction in which it occurs signals both complement relations and adverbial relations. When it is associated with the genitive suffix *-r*, it functions as a complement of a relator noun or a noun. The use of *-ibɔ* in these three constructions is discussed below one by one.

(a) *-ibɔ* without *-loi*:

The *-ibɔ* marked construction without the suffix *-loi* encodes the complement relation with desiderative verbs, such as *bisar* 'want', *kʰuz* 'desire' in (64) and (65). The non-finite constructions in these constructions share the subject of the main clause. *-ibɔ* with *par* 'can' and *lag* 'need' occurs only in single clauses by forming complex predicates, as shown in (66) and (67).

(64) *mɔi-ʊ* *tʊ-r* *dɔre-i* *tʰak-ibɔ* *bisar-ʊ*
1SG-ADD 2INF-GEN like-CONTR.FOC stay-INF want-1
'I want to stay like you.'
(nmm141_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(65) *apuni* *apotti* *no-kor-il-e* *apʊna-r* *ɦɔntan-tʊ-k*
2HON objection NEG-do-PFV-LOC 2HON-GEN child-CLF-DAT

ami *daŋɔr* *kor-ibɔ* *kʰʊz-ũ.*
1PL big do-INF desire-1
'If you do not have any objection, we want to raise your child.'
(nmm103_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(66) *ɦei* *kam* *moi-ʊ* *kor-ibɔ* *par-ʊ.*
that work 1SG-ADD do-CP can-1
'I can also do that work.'
(nmm178_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(67) *mɔi* *azi* *za-bɔ* *lag-ibɔ.*
1SG today go-CP need-FUT
'I need to go today.'

In (64) and (65), *-ibɔ* marked clauses occur with the desiderative verbs *bisar* 'want', *k^{h}uz* 'desire' and serve the function of complement of the main clauses. In (66) and (67), *-ib* forms complex predicates with the modal verb *par* 'can' and *lag* 'need' and encode the meaning of ability, necessity, obligation. It is noted that the meaning encoded in (67) is expressed by a multi-clausal construction in English as reflected in the English translation. However, *lag* 'need' in this example does not occur as a main verb in Assamese since the subject of this clause *mɔi* '1sg' cannot be the subject of *lag*. *lag* in Assamese always demands subject to be in the dative form, not in the ergative form, as in (68) shown below.

(68) *mʊ-k/*mɔi* *tɔka* *lag-ib-ɔ*
1SG-DAT/1SG money need-FUT-3
'I need money.'

In English *I* is the shared subject of both *need* and *go*. But in Assamese, *mɔi* is the subject of only the dependent verb *za* 'go' in (67), which serves the function of main verb. *lag* functions as an auxiliary and adds the meaning of obligation to the event expressed by the main verb. As pointed out by Haspelmath (1989), the situations expreseed by the *-ibɔ* marked constructions presented in (64-67) denote two types of modalities. In (64) and (65), the situation is irrealis-directive since it "is presented as not realized, and its possible realization is expected for the future," (P. 298) while in (66), the situation is irrealis-potential on the ground that even if the situation is not realized here, "it is not expected to be realized sometime in the future; rather, it is presented as potentially occurring anytime" (P. 298). In (64) and (65), *-ibɔ* functions as an infinitive. Thus the constructions in which it occurs are named as infinitival constructions.

(b) *-ibɔ* with *-loi*: *ibɔ-loi*

The subordinate clauses marked by this suffix have the ability of taking an overt subject which is not coreferential with the subject of the main clause as well as the ability of sharing the subject of the main clause as *-ũte* marked constructions. The followings are the examples of this construction.

(69) *ma-deuta* *aru* *n̪onti* *bokak^{h}at-oloi* *bɔrdin-ɔr*
mother-father and younger sister Bokakhat-ALL christmas-GEN

karɔne *bozar* *kor-ib-oloi* *go-is-e.*
for market do-NMLZ-ALL go-PF-3
'My parents and younger sister have gone to Bokakhat to do the shoping for Chirstmas event.'

(amr17_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(70) *mɔi* *e-kʰɔn* *bia* *kʰa-bo-loi* *go-is-il-ʊ.*
1SG one-CLF marriage eat-NMLZ-ALL go-PF-PFV-1
'I had gone to attend a marriage.'
(nmm139a_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(71) *moi* *maz-ɔt-e* *kelsiam-ɔ:* *teblet* *regula* *kʰa-i*
1SG middle-LOC-RES calcium-GEN tablet regular eat-CP

as-il-ʊ. *kʰa-i* *tʰak-ũt-e* *biɦ-siɦ* *kom-i*
be-PFV-1. eat-CP stay-NMLZ-LOC pain-REDUP reduce-CP

as-il-e. *etia-he* *kʰa-bo-le* *ej-i* *di-l-ʊ.*
be-PFV.3 now-RES eat-NMLZ-ALL leave-CP give-PFV-1
'I was taking calcium tablets regularly a few months back. The pain was reduced at that time. It was now only that I gave up taking them.'
(Conversation)

(72) *b̤at* *kʰa-bo-loi* *b̤al,* *bɔna-bo-loi-he* *bea.*
rice eat-NMLZ-ALL good, cook-NMLZ-ALL-RES bad.
'It is nice to have rice but not nice to cook only.'
(Self-elicited)

(73) *ma-e* *mʊ-k* *pʰʊn* *kor-ib-ole* *ko-is-il-e.* *moi*
mother-ERG 1SG-DAT phone do-NMLZ-ALL ask-PF-PFV-3. 1SG

mane *kɔr-a-e* *no-ho-l* *aru* *kibakibi*
means do-CP-RES NEG-become-PFV further some

karɔn-ɔt.
reason-LOC
'My mother had asked me to make a phone call. It was not done yet for some reasons.'
(Conversation)

(74) *ɔrunab̤-e* *nilɔkɔntʰɔ-k* *za-bo-loi* *ko-l-e.*
Arunabh-ERG Nilakantha-DAT go-NMLZ-ALL ask-PFV-3
'Arunabh told Nilakantha to leave.'
(nmm104_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

Examples (69)-(74) present six subordinate constructions which are marked by *-ibɔ* in association with the allative suffix *-loi*. In (69), the *-ibɔ* marked construction encodes the adverbial relation of purpose, in (70), it expresses the adverbial relation of direction, in (71), it signals the complement relation of an object while in (72), it denotes the complement relation of a subject. Even though the subordinate constructions in (69) and (70) signal the

adverbial relations, the construction presented in (69) is optional or free while in (70), it is obligatory. It is noted that except (73) and (74), all the subordinate and main clauses presented in (69)-(72) share the same subject. The subordinate and mian clauses in (73) and (74), on the contrary, do not share the same subject. The notional subject, i.e. the agent of these subordinate constructions, functions as the indirect object of the main clause and is accordingly marked by the dative case. The *-ibɔ* marked form serves the function of the direct object of the main clause.

(c) *-ibɔ* with the genitive *-r* followed by a relator noun or a noun

In this construction, the verb suffixed by *-ibɔ* takes the genitive suffix *-r* and is followed by the relator noun *karɔne* or *babe* 'for' and *pɔra* 'from', as shown in the following examples. Similar to the construction marked with *-ibɔloi,* the construction marked by this suffix have the ability of taking an overt subject which is not coreferential with the subject of the main predicate and also have the ability of sharing the subject of the main predicate.

(75) *maŋɦɔ bona-bɔ-r* *karɔne* *ei-bilak* *mɔsɔla* *kut-is-ʊ.*
meat cook-NMLZ-GEN for this-PL spice cut-PROG-1
'I am cutting these spices for cooking meat.'
(Conversation)

(76) *ɦeie* *teõ* *ketiaba* *ko-is-il,* *poisa* *ɦãs-il-e*
therefore 3SG.FAM.DIST sometime say-PF-PFV, money save-NMLZ-LOC

ki *ho-bo?* *ḭɔgɔban-e* *ama-k* *kʰa-bɔ-r* *karɔne*
what become-FUT? God-ERG 1PL-DAT eat-NMLZ-GEN for

di-s-e.
give-PF-3
'That's why he had said sometimes, 'what will happen by saving money?' God has given us to eat.'
(dmm42_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(77) *daktor-e* *hat* *ḍu-bɔ-r* *babe* *zɔgɔdiɦ-e* *lʊta-r*
doctor-ERG hand wash-NMLZ-GEN for Jagadish-ERG water pot-GEN

pani *bak-i* *di-s-il.*
water pour-CP give-PF-PFV
'Jagadish had poured water from the pot for the doctor to wash his hands.'
(amr05_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(78) *ditijɔ-zoni-Ø* *ah-ib-or-e* *pora* *ɦi-hõt-ɔr*
second-CLF-ABS come-NMLZ-GEN-RES from 3INFR.M.DIST-ASS.PL-GEN

ɦɔŋɦar-ɔt *koli* *ɦoma-l.*
domestic life-LOC negative energy enter-PFV
'The negative energy entered into their house from the time his second wife came.'
(nmm177_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

In these four examples, the *-ibɔ* marked forms function as complements of relator nouns *karɔne* 'for' in (75) and (76), *babe* 'for' in (77), and *pɔra* 'from' in (78). The subordinate construction presented in (75) shares the subject of the main clause while the construction presented in (76)-(78) shares a different subject. In (76), the notional subject of the *-ibɔ* marked construction functions as the indirect object of the main predicate and is marked by the dative *-k*. The *-ibɔ* marked form followed by the relator noun forms an NP which functions as a purposive adverbial modifier of the main predicate. In addition, the verb suffixed by *-ibɔ* takes *-r* and is followed by a noun, as presented in (79).

(79) *mʊ-r* *nam-ibɔ-r* *ɦɔmɔj* *ho-l*
1SG-GEN get down-NMLZ-GEN time become-PFV
'It is time for me to get down (from the bus).'
(amt38_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

In (79), the notional subject of the *-ibɔ* marked predicate is inflected by the genitive *-r* and the *-ibɔ* marked form functions as a modifier of the noun which occurs as a part of the predicate.

-ibɔ used with *-loi* (see (b)) and with *-ɔr* (see (c)) is analyzed here as an action nominalizer in terms of allowing the nominal inflection to occur with. The constructions of these types are analyzed here as action nominal constructions and all the *-ibɔ* marked verbs function as action nominals. The syntactic difference between *-ibɔ* marked infinitival constructions discussed in (a) and the action nominal constructions discussed in (b) and (c) is that the subordinate construction functioning as an infinitival complement shares the same subject with the main clause while the action nominal constructions have the ability of taking different subjects as well as of sharing the same subject with the main clause.

It should be noted here that the action nominals are not considered as inflectional verb forms in various typological descriptions in the same line as participles, infinitives, and converbs are (Ylikoski 2003). As discussed by Ylikoski (2003), the action nominals are treated as derived deverbal nouns in traditional Hungarian grammar or in eastern European languages in the sense that "they function as heads of NPs whose functions are similar to NPs headed by underived nouns" (P. 188). However, Ylikoski (2003) also provides some counter examples in which he mentions the name of some languages, such as Caucasian, English, Latin, where the action nominals are treated as verbs. The action nominals in Assamese have some of the nominal properties, but not all.

An NP headed by an underived noun can occur in complement positions – both subjects and objects – as well as in adverbial positions – both obligatory and free adverbials.

Similarly, the construction headed by an action nominal can also occur in subjects, objects, and in both types of adverbial positions, as demonstrated in (69)-(74). From this syntactic perspective, the action nominals in Assamese behave as underived nouns. However, the action nominals in Assamese cannot inflect for all the properties of nouns. They do inflect for case, classifiers, and numbers but cannot take the full range of these categories available in Assamese. Except from the allative, genitive, dative, and the locative case, the action nominals cannot take other case suffixes. Moreover, all action nominals are not equally eligible for taking the same range of categories. From this perspective, the action nominals are less nominal in Assamese. However, in spite of sharing these nominal properties, the action nominals in Assamese are considered as non-finite verbal forms on the same ground as discussed by Comrie (1976), Comrie and Thomson (2007), and Ylikoski (2003). According to Ylikoski (2003), the action nominals are regarded as verb forms due to the reason that "they preserve the "lexeme word-class" which determines the internal syntax of the phrase (or clause) headed by a non-finite" (P. 189). From this perspective, the action nominals in (69) – (74) are verbs for the reason that they can take adverbial modifiers, as shown in (80). Example (74) is presented here again to show that the action nominal allows the adverbial modifier *ɦʊnkale* 'early' to occur with, as illustrated in (80).

(80) *ɔrunaḇ-e* *nilɔkɔnt^{h}ɔ-k* *ɦʊnkale* *za-bo-loi* *ko-l-e.*
Arunabh-ERG Nilakantha-DAT early go-NMLZ-ALL ask-PFV-3
'Arunabh told Nilakantha to leave early.'
(Self-elicited)

Moreover, they can take all possible verbal arguments, such as subjects, objects, obligatory oblique arguments. Thus the action nominals in Assamese are verbs by their internal syntax, and nouns by their external syntax. However, the internal structure of *-(i)bɔ* marked action nominal construction is more clause-like than the noun-phrase-like, as it shares more clausal properties than the phrasal properties of nouns. `

6.4 -a

In contrast to *-õte*, *-a* occurs in both single and multi-clausal constructions. Among the four markers of non-finite, *-a* is the most heterogeneous in use. The use of this marker in both single and multi-clausal constructions is discussed in the following sections.

6.4.1 In single clause constructions

In single clauses, it is found in five constructions: canonical[13] constructions, impersonal constructions, passive constructions, and periphrastic negative constructions, as shown in the following examples.

Canonical construction:

[13] The term *canonical* is used here to refer to those constructions in which syntactic subjects are overtly or covertly present and verbs are marked by the subject indexes.

The most used verb in this construction is *dekʰ* 'see'. This verb is marked by *-a* and followed by a vector verb, such as *pa* 'get', *kɔr* 'do', *de* 'give' and *za* 'go', and a negative auxiliary.

(81) *eõ-k* *azi-he* *prɔtʰɔm* *dekʰ-a* *pa-is-ʊ.*
3FAM.PROX-DAT today-RES first see-CP get-PF-1
'I have seen him for the first time today only.'
(amt42_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

In (81), *-a* is added to the main verb of a two-verb sequence which encodes a single event. The sequence signals here the ability to see. *pa* 'get' can occur only with two verbs in this construction. One is *dekʰ* 'see', as presented in (81), and the other one is *ɦun* 'hear', as shown in the following example.

(82) *ɦi-hõt-e* *ɦɔbdɔ-bor* *ɦun-a* *pa-l-e.*
3SG.INFR.M.DIST-ASS.PL-ERG sound-PL hear-CP get-PFV-3
'They heard the sounds.'
(an136_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

Other verbal sequences that occur in this construction is *ḍɔr-a pɔr/de* 'catch-NMLZ fall/give', *er-a pɔr/de* 'leave-NMLZ fall/give', *ur-a mar* 'fly-NMLZ kill' etc.

Impersonal construction:

(83) *tetia* *ɦi-hõt-ɔr* *ḭori-r* *ɦɔbdɔ-r* *bahire*
then 3SG.INFR.M.DIST-ASS.PL-GEN foot-GEN sound-GEN except

ɔin *eko* *ɦɔbdɔ* *ɦun-a* *na-za-j.*
another any sound hear-CP NEG-go-IMPR
'Except from the sounds made by their (armies) feet, no other sound is heard.'
(smm02_ Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(84) *e-bar* *sesta* *kor-ibɔ* *por-a* *za-j.*
one-time try do-INF can-PASS go-IMPR
'One attempt can be made.'
(Self-elicited)

Passive constructions:

(85) *rig-ɔr* *ɦɔkɔlʊ kam* *bɔnḭdɔ* *kor-i* *di-a* *ho-is-e.*
rig-GEN all work stop do-CP give-PASS become-PF-IMPR
'All the works going on in the rig have been stopped.
(amr33_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(86) *kam-k^{h}ini* *kɔr-a* *ho-l.*
work-CLF do-PASS become-PFV
'The work was done.'

(Self-elicited)

This construction can be extended by adding the demoted subject NP, which is in the genitive case, as in (87), as opposed to the canonical construction with an ergative marked subject NP, as in (88).

(87) *d̪ɔn-ɔr* *kam-tʊ* *kɔr-a* *ho-l.*
Dhan-GEN work-CLF do-PASS become-PFV
'The work assigned to Dhan was done.'

(Self-elicited)

(88) *d̪ɔn-e* *kam-tʊ* *kor-il-e.*
Dhan-ERG work-CLF do-PFV-3
'Dhan did the job.'

(Self-elicited)

Periphrastic negative constructions:

This construction is formed by a sequence of *-a* marked main verb followed by a negative auxiliary. The construction is found only if the event denoted by the verb denotes perfect tense or perfective aspect. Two kinds of periphrastic negative construction are found – one is formed by a suppletive form of a negative auxiliary, and the other one is formed by adding a negative prefix to the auxiliary *as* 'be', as shown in (89) and (90).

(89) *dɔktɔr-e-tʊ* *mas* *k^{h}a-bo-le* *mana* *kɔr-a* *naj.*
doctor-ERG-CONTR fish eat-NMLZ-ALL prohibition do-CP NEG.be.3
'The doctor has not prohibited (you) from eating fish.' (It is not that the doctor has disallowed you to eat fish.)

(Conversation)

(90) *bon̪u-r* *g^{h}ɔr-oloi* *agɔte* *zʊ-a* *n-as-il-õ.*
friend-GEN house-ALL before go-CP NEG-be-PFV-1
'(I) have never gone to the friend's house (never visited my friend) before.'

(amm81_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

6.4.2 In multi-clausal constructions

In multi-clausal constructions, *-a* is used to mark a subordinate clause to signal complement, relative, and adverbial relations. Furthermore, *-a* marked clause can function as a complement of relator nouns and nouns. It is noted here that the *-a* marked clauses are capable of taking the subject of the main clauses as well as of taking a different subject, as shown below.

(91) *teũ-k* *dek^{h}-a-r* *pora* *tai* *ek* *ɔnɔnjɔ*
3SG.FAM.DIST-DAT see-NMLZ-GEN from 3SG.INFR.F.DIST one unique

akɔrɦɔn *ɔnuɸ̈ɔb* *kor-is-e.*
attraction feeling do-PF-3
'She has felt a unique attraction from the time she saw him'
(nmm026_ Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(92) *mohikantɔ-hɔ̃t-Ø* *notun* *g^{h}ɔr-ɔt* *t^{h}ak-ib-oloi* *aha-r*
Mohikanta-ASS.PL-ABS new house-LOC stay-NMLZ-ALL come-GEN

pas-ɔr-e *pora* *deukilal* *rati* *purɔni* *g^{h}ɔr-ɔr*
back-GEN-ADD from Deukilal night old house-GEN

baranda-t *ɦʊ-e.*
balcony-LOC sleep-3
'Deukilal sleeps on the balcony of the old house at night from the time that Mahikanta and others came to the new house to stay.'
(an132_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

The subordinate clause in (91) does not have overt subjects. They share the subject of the main clauses while in (92), the clause has an overt subject which is not coreferential with the subject of the main clause. Like *-õte* marked constructions, the verbs of *-a* marked constructions are also seen to take a subject in both the dative and the genitive cases, as exemplified below.

(93) *a.* *mɔn-ɔr* *soku-r* *ag-ɔt* *moi* *bimɔla*
mind-GEN eye-GEN front-LOC 1SG Bimala

mahi-k *t^{h}ɔr* *ho-i* *t^{h}ijɔ* *ho-i*
maternal.aunt-DAT expressionless become-CVB stand become-CP

t^{h}ɔk-a *dek^{h}-is-ʊ.*
stay-NMLZ see-PF-1
'I have seen Bimala mahi in my mind keeps standing expressionlessly.'
(amr41_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

b. *mɔi* *ta-k* *ah-a-r* *pɔra* *dek^{h}-a*
1SG 3INFR.SG.DIST.M come-NMLZ-GEN from see-CP

naj.
NEG.be.IMPR
'I have not seen him from the time of his arrival.'

(Self-elicited)

The construction (b) also has two readings. In the first reading – '*I have not seen him from the time of his arrival*' – the notional subject of the subordinate construction functions as the object of the main clause and is thus marked in the dative case. The remaining part of the subordinate construction denotes the modifying relation of time adverbial of the main clause. According to this reading the notional subject of the subordinate construction is different from the subject of the main clause. In the second reading - '*I have not seen him from the time of my arrival*' – the subordinate and the main clause share the same subject *mɔi* 'I'. However, this potential ambiguity is resolved if we place the NP *ta-k* '3INF.SG.DIST.M-DAT' immediately before the main verb, as given below.

(94) *mɔi* *ah-a-r* *pɔra* *ta-k* *dek^{h}-a*
1SG come-NMLZ-GEN from 3INFR.SG.DIST.M see-CP

naj.
NEG.be.IMPR
'I have not seen him from the time of my arrival.'

(Self-elicited)

The notional subject of the *-a* marked subordinate construction can appear in the genitive case similar to the dative, as discussed in the previous example (93b.). The following examples illustrate it.

(95) *tʊma-r* *sakori* *er-i* *ah-a-tʊ* *mane* *e-ta*
2FAM-GEN job leave-CP come-NMLZ-CLF means one-CLF

ḇul *ɦidḏantɔ* *as-il.*
wrong decision be-PFV
'Your leaving the job was a wrong decision.'

(Conversation)

(96) *mɔi* *tʊma-r* *lik^{h}-a-k^{h}ini* *pɔrh-il-ʊ.*
1SG 2FAM-GEN write-NMLZ-CLF read-PFV-1
'I read what you wrote.'

(Self-elicited)

The subordinate construction functions as the subject of the main verb in (95) and the object of the main verb in (96). The subject of the subordinate construction appears in the genitive in both examples.

Complement relation:

The subordinate clause marked by *-a* functions as both subject and object complements of the main predicate, as exemplified below.

(97) *raiz-ɔk* *ɦeua* *kɔr-a-tʊ* *sakori* *nɔ-hɔj*
people-DAT service do-NMLZ-CLF job NEG-COP

neki *amoi?*
QUES mother's or father's friend's wife
'Is serving the people not a job, amoi?
(an159_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(98) *uɦah-suɦah* *lʊ-a-bilak* *tai* *etia*
breath-REDUP take-NMLZ-PL 3SG.INFR.F.DIST now

buz-i *na-pa-j-tʊ.*
understand-CP NEG-get-3-CONTR
'She does not understand now the act of taking breath.' (She will understand as she will grow up)
(Conversation)

In (97), *-a* marked subordinate clause occurs in the subject position while in (98), it occurs in the object position. Their status of NP is understood by their occurrence with the nominal classifier *-tʊ* and the plural marker *-bilak*. Furthermore, the *-a* marked subordinate verb functions as a complement of a relator noun and a noun, as explained in the following examples.

(99) *ɦei-tʊ* *ho-a-r* *karɔne ze* *manuh-tʊ-r* *ḭitɔr-ɔt*
that-CLF become-NMLZ-GEN for that man-CLF-GEN inside-LOC

kiba *e-ta* *ho-is-e,* *ɦei-tʊ-tʊ* *nɔ-hɔ-j.*
something one-CLF become-PF-3 that-CLF-CONTR NEG-become-3
'It is not like that something has happened inside the body of the man because of that (the disease occurring in his skin).
(Conversation)

(100) *ɦi* *ɔh-a-r* *pɔra* *gaɔ̃-t* *kono*
3SG.INFR.M.DIST come-NMLZ-GEN from village-LOC any

bia *hʊ-a* *n-as-il.*
wedding become-CP NEG-be-PFV
'No wedding has been held in the village since his arrival.'
(an145_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

(101) *prɔtʰɔm* *dina* *rati* *b̤at* *kʰu-a-r* *pɔr-ɔt*
first day night rice eat-NMLZ-GEN time-LOC

aita-i *mu-r* *usɔr-ɔt* *boh-i* *lo-l-e.*
grandmother-ERG 1SG-GEN near-LOC sit-CP take-PFV-3
'The grandmother sat besides me at the time of having rice the first night.'
(amr07_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

In (99) and (100), the *-a* marked subordinate verb functions as a complement of the relator nouns *karɔne* 'for' and *pɔr* 'from', while in (101), it functions as a complement of the noun *pɔra* 'time'. In addition, the *-a* marked subordinate verb occurs in comparative constructions to express the underlying relation of 'is……than'. This construction functions as a subject of an adjectival predicate, as shown in the following example.

(102) *enedɔre* *riksawala-r* *ɔpɔman* *ɦɔzjɔ* *kor-i*
this way rikshaw driver-GEN disrespect tolerate do-CP

tʰɔk-a-t-koi *mor-i* *zu-a-i* *b̤al.*
stay-NMLZ-LOC-ADVLZ die-CP go-NMLZ-RES good
'It is better to die than to tolerate the disrespect shown by a rickshaw driver this way.'
(amr43_Emille-CIIL AssameseCorpus_CQPweb)

Here, two *-a* marked subordinate verbs occur in underlying 'is….than' relation and the subordinate clause as a whole encodes the relation of subject to the main predicate.

Relative relation:

This is the only marker which is added to the subordinate verb for marking relative relations, as shown in the following example.

(103) *pori-e* *akou* *b̤az-i* *di-a* *mas-tu* *ekebare*
Pori-ERG surprisingly fry-CP give-NMLZ fish-CLF completly

ne-kʰa-j.
NEG-eat-3
'Surprisingly, Pori does not eat the fried fish at all.'
(Conversation)

In this example, the *-a* marked subordinate clause functions as the modifier of the object NP of the main clause. The subordinate clause in this construction occurs in the attributive position. However, the *-a* marked subordinate clause can occur in the predicative position as well, as shown below.

(104) *deben hazoika* *gɔ̈r* *dok^{h}inpat-ɔ:-pa* *ɔh-a.*
Deben Hazorika house Dokhinpat-GEN-from come-NMLZ
'Deben Harzorika came from Dokhinpat.'
(Narrative)

(105) *tetia* *ama-r* *gɔ̈r-duar-bilak* *mane* *heji*
then 1PL-GEN house-door-PL means N

ḫɔg-a-sig-a *aru.*
break-NMLZ-shatter-NMLZ in addition
'Then our residence was weared and tattered.'
(Narrative)

In these examples, the subordinate clauses function as non-verbal predicates of the subject NP.

Adverbial relations:

The subordinate clauses marked by *-a* encode a number of adverbial relations, such as counterfactuality, conditionality, causation, result, reason etc, as demonstrated in the following examples.

(106) *ta-i* *metik* *di-a-heten* *gɔm*
3SG.INFR.F.DIST-ERG matriculation examination give-NMLZ-CTF information

pa-l-ʊ-heten *nohoj.*
get-PFV-1-CTF confirmation
'Had she appeared for the matriculation examination, I would have known it '
(Conversation)

(107) *dosa-tʊ* *k^{h}ʊ-a-t* *mʊ-r* *bɔmi* *ah-il.*
dosa-CLF eat-NMLZ-LOC 1SG-GEN vomiting come-PFV
'The vomiting came (I vomited) because of having the dosa.'
(Self-elicited)

Example (106) implies counterfactuality, (107) encodes the relation of causation.

If the internal structure is examined, the constructions marked by *-a* have the clausal properties as well as the phrasal properties of nouns. However, the action nominal construction of this type is more like noun phrases in comparison to the *-õte* and *-ibɔ* marked constructions.

6.5 -il

It is followed by two case morphemes – the older locative morpheme *-e* and the newer locative morphem *-ɔt*. *-e* was extensively used in early Assamese and is still used in a certain

type of reduplicated constructions such as *ɡɔr-e ɡɔr-e* 'in every house', *bɔn-e bɔn-e* 'in every forest' etc. It is not productive anymore and the function of it is carried by *-ɔt* in modern Assamese. Since *-e* is not productive any more, it is found to have fused with *-il* form and gave rise to the converb *-ile*. *-il* followed by *-e* marked constructions encode variety of adverbial relations, such as time adverbial in (108) and (109), conditionality in (110) and (111), counterfactuality (112). These constructions have the ability to share the subject of the main clauses as well as the ability to take a different subject. The subordinate constructions in (108-110) have overt subjects which are not coreferential with the subjects of the main clauses while the subordinate construction in (111) has the same subject reference with the main clause.

(108) *teõ* *ɦuɖ-il-e* *mɔi* *kɔ-õ.*
3SG.INFR.DIST ask-NMLZ-LOC 1SG tell-1
'I tell whenever he asks me.'
(Self-elicited)

(109) *teõ* *ɦud-il-e* *mɔi* *ko-is-il-õ.*
3SG.INFR.DIST ask-NMLZ-LOC 1SG tell-PF-PFV-1
'I used to tell whenever he asked me.'
(Self-elicited)

(110) *teõ* *ɦuɖ-il-e* *mɔi* *ko-m.*
3SG.INFR.DIST ask-NMLZ-LOC 1SG tell-FUT.1
'If he asks, I will tell.
(Self-elicited)

(111) *mas* *pa-l-e* *apuni* *mas* *kʰa-bɔ.*
fish get-NMLZ-LOC 2HON fish eat-FUT.2HON
'If you get fish, you will have it.'
(Conversation)

The subordinate clauses in this construction can occur with the main clauses in all tenses, as presented above. In (108) and (109), my telling is contingent on the time of his asking, in (110) my telling is contingent on his asking, and in (111), his eating fish is contingent on his getting fish.The subordinate clauses with non-future tense in (108) and (109) have habitual reading while in (110) and (111), they have hypothetical reading.

The construction with counterfactual reading allows the main clause to be in the past tense only, as in (112) in contrast to the construction with a hypothetical conditional reading, as exemplified in (110) and (111).

(112) *tɔi* *mat-il-e* *ɦi* *ah-il-e-hɛtɛn.*
2INFR call-NMLZ-LOC 3SG.INFR.M.DIST come-PFV-3-CTF
'Had you called, he would have come.'
(Self-elicited)

(112) implies that 'his possible coming was conditional on your calling'. Further it implies that 'you didn't call, and because you didn't call, he didn't come'.

-il marked construction followed by *-ɔt* locative referred to an action completed prior to the past time specified in the main clause, i.e., the meaning of plurperfect, as exemplified below.

(113) *tɔi* *mat-il-ɔt-he* *mɔi* *go-is-il-ʊ.*
2INFR call-NMLZ-LOC-RES 1SG go-PF-PFV-1
'I went only on your calling (after you had called).'

(Self-elicited)

The locative case *-ɔt* is used here to mark adverbial subordination similar to the marker *-e* in *-ile* construction. The subordinate construction of this kind is allowed to occur, only if the main clause is in the past tense. The main clause in the non-past tense leads to an ungrammatical construction, as shown below.

(114) **tɔi* *mat-il-ɔt-he* *mɔi* *za-m.*
2INFR call-NMLZ-LOC-RES 1SG go-FUT.1
'I will go only on your calling.'

(115) **tɔi* *mat-il-ɔt-he* *mɔi* *za-ũ.*
2INFR call-NMLZ-LOC-RES 1SG go-1
'I go only on your calling.'

7 Conclusion

This paper has discussed a set of five markers: *-i, -a, -ibɔ, -ũt*, and *-il*, the first three of which are distributed over both single and multi-clausal construction, while the last two occur only in multi-clausal constructions. In single clauses, *-i* , *-a*, and *-ibɔ* mark the first verb (main verb) of a complex predicate forming with two or three, usually two, verbs, in which the second and the third verb of the sequence play the role of vectors by adding some grammatical meaning to the event denoted by the main verb. The vectors used in *-i* marked constructions represent a large set in comparison to the vectors used in *-a* and *-ibɔ* marked constructions. This paper, however, has not discussed all the vectors occurring in these two constructions, since the focus of this paper is not to deal with complex predicates. The most used vectors with their common meanings have been presented in the paper. All these five markers are used in multi-clausal constructions to code the dependent events in various dependency relations. For instance, *-i* is used to mark the dependent events as sequential events as well as modifiers or complements of the main verb. *-a* is used to mark the dependent events in complement, relative, and adverbial relations.

This paper has also discussed whether the dependent clauses marked by these suffixes exibit a similar kind of dependency relations. Out of five suffixes, *-i* is the one which does not always mark subordination relations (see Section 5.2) in the sense that has been considered throughout the paper. The dependent clauses expressing sequential events cannot stand in a modifying relation. The non-modifying function of these dependent

clauses has been identified by looking at the scope of sentential negation and interrogation, but not by looking at the scope of other operators, such as tense and aspect. These tests reveal that even though the tense and the aspectual operators used in the final clause extend their scopes to the dependent clauses with all the four non-finite suffixes, they cannot decide whether a dependent clause simply stands in a dependent relation without being subordinate to the main clause. The negative and the interrogative operators, however, provide such basis for defining the clauses with a sequential meaning as non-modifying clauses, i.e., asserted information.

This paper has further described the internal structure of dependent constructions marked by each non-finite suffix. Except for the absence of tense, aspect, and person morphology, *-i* marked non-finite clauses have all the clausal properties of a finite verb. The subjects of *-õte* and *-ibɔ* marked constructions are found in the absolutive, ergative, and in the dative. The dative subject construction is not a canonical construction in Assamese. It is required only by a particular verb, i.e., *lag* 'need'. It is, however, taken by both intransitive and transitive verbs in non-finite constructions. The notional subject of a non-finite verb occurs in the dative, if that subject becomes the object of the main verb. Apart from subjects, other constituents, such as objects remain the same as in the finite construction. The subjects of *-a* constructions are found in the absolutive, ergative, dative and in the genitive. Similar to *-õte* and *-ibɔ* marked constructions, the notional subjects of *-a* marked predicates are marked by the dative case, only if those subjects become the objects of the main verb. When the genitive is added to the subject of a non-finite verb, the construction becomes nominal in which the non-finite subject enters into the possessor relation and the verb becomes the head.

The study reveals that the non-finite forms in Assamese cannot be clearly divided as action nominals, participles, infinitives, and converbs as in many other languages (Ylikoski 2003, Haspelmath 1995). Assamese does not have distinct markers which can show one-to-one correspondence between the non-finite forms and their functions. Rather, the same form is used to serve different functions. For instance, *-a* serves the function of action nominals and participles. Similarly *-ibɔ* functions both as an action nominal and an infinitive. The multiple functions of these forms depend on the constructions in which they occur and on the morpho-syntactic properties they possess.

As discussed Ylikoski (2003), non-finite verbs in the language show various continua rather than falling in distinct classes, such as action nominals, participles, infinitives, and converbs. If the behviour of *-(i)boloi* and *-õte* is observed, they seem to be in an intermediate position of action nominals and converbs. The former seems to be more like an action nominal than a converb while the latter seems to be more like a converb than an action nominal. Similarly, the combination of nominalizer *-il* and the earlier locative *-e* functionally appears as a converbal suffix. It seems that they are going to be gradually more like converbs rather than action nominals.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	First person	INF	Infinitive
2	Second person	INFR	Inferior
3	Third person	INS	Instrument

ABS	Absolutive
ADD	Additive
ADJ	Adjective
ADVLZ	Adverbializer
ALL	Allative
AN	Action nominalizer
ASS	Associative
CLF	Classifier
COP	Copula
CONJ	Conjunctive
CP	Compound marker
CTF	Counterfactual marker
CVB	Converb
DAT	Dative
DIST	Distal
ERG	Ergative
F	Feminine
FAM	Familiar
FUT	Future
GEN	Genitive
HON	Honorific
IMP	Imperative
IMPR	Impersonal
INT	Intransitive
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
NEG	Negative
NP	Noun phrase
OPT	Optative
PASS	Passive
PF	Perfect
PFV	Perfective
PL	Plural
PR	Present
POSS	Possessive
PROX	Proximal
PTCP	Participle
QUEST	Question word
REL	Relative pronoun
REDUP	Reduplication
RES	Restrictive
SG	Singular
TR	Transitive
V	Verb
VP	Verb phrase

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