

“COMPOUND VERBS” IN KOMI: GRAMMATICALISATION
WITHOUT A GRAMMATICAL MORPHEME?

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Abstract

This paper explores Komi-Zyryan compound verbs. A small class of verbs can be formally recognised in posterior constituents of compound verbs, and compounds involving each of these verbs exhibit semantic and grammatical properties characteristic of their posterior constituents. On the other hand, the individual compound verbs are semantically non-compositional. The posterior constituents cannot be taken to be form–meaning complexes, i.e., morphemes. Therefore, some other, non-morpheme-based linguistic analysis is needed. This is a peculiar case of grammaticalisation where the result is not a grammatical morpheme.

1. Introduction

This paper is intended to make a contribution to the issue of the definition of grammaticalisation. There are a number of known types of grammaticalisation; yet its most typical type is perhaps the case where an independent morpheme whose meaning refers to some piece of extralinguistic reality assumes a grammatical function, i.e., one that belongs to the linguistic system (or else it comes closer to having such a function than it did earlier). A characteristic instance of this is a noun referring to some place becoming a postposition or a case suffix (a locative one, which can later turn into a grammatical one) or a verb with some concrete meaning becoming an auxiliary or a bound morpheme that marks tense, aspect, Aktionsart, etc.

There are constructions in languages that cannot be unproblematically segmented into constituent morphemes. Such constructions can also come about by way of grammaticalisation; for instance, when a phonological alternation gets morphologised because the phonological context that has triggered it disappears. If, in such cases, the morphologised alternation simultaneously (or subsequently) assumes some function within the

grammatical system, we can speak of grammaticalisation without being able to point out a grammatical morpheme.¹

In what follows, a Finno-Ugric (Komi-Zyryan) example will be presented in which the original elements to be grammaticalised can be analysed as morphemes, the arising grammaticalised constructions nevertheless definitely contradict, on a large scale, the assumption that the meaning of a larger linguistic form is composed of the meanings of smaller linguistic forms that it is composed of (as well as the meaning of the construction type itself). The constructions figuring in this example are known as “compound verbs”.

By this term, I will refer to lexical items that end in a recognisable verb, preceded by some element that either occurs on its own (as a noun, an adjective, an adverb, etc.) or it does not. I will ignore verbs that are derived from compound verbs. I will exclude from the range of compound verbs those constructions of two verbs both stems of which are conjugated. (These are called “paired verbs” in Komi linguistics anyway.) The corpus investigated comes from the most recent Komi–Russian dictionary (Beznosikova et al. 2000). That dictionary contains approximately four times as many such words as the earlier largest Komi–Russian dictionary (Lytkin 1961) does.²

I only consider compounds that are written solid in the dictionary. There are additional cases in which a verb is immediately preceded by a nominative noun/adjective or by an onomatopoeic item or else an item that does not occur on its own but which are written as two words (e.g., *ńurs kįskįnį*³ ‘grow gaunt, perforate with hunger (said of somebody’s stomach)’ vs. *ńursmunnį* ‘be compressed, shrink’; *ruź leźnį* ‘weaken, relax’ vs. *ruźmunnį* ‘lose strength, become weaker’.) Unfortunately, obviously due to its genre, the dictionary does not offer any explanation of the two kinds of spelling. The presumable reason is as follows. According to the relevant literature,⁴ compound verbs (primarily those with an onomatopoeic first constituent) get split in negation: either the negative verb (perhaps more precisely: negativ auxiliary) comes between the

¹ For the analysis of Umlaut structures of this type, cf. Hockett (1954/1957).

² For the purposes of comparison, I have collected compounds whose last constituent is *munnį* down to *į* according to the Latin alphabet: this means 73 compounds that are located in various parts of the dictionary according to the Cyrillic alphabet. Of these, Lytkin’s dictionary includes a mere 20.

³ In this paper, verbs are cited in the infinitive; *-nį* is the infinitive suffix.

⁴ Bartens (2000, 271); Sidorov (1953, 83).

first and last constituent, or the anterior constituent comes to follow the posterior one. It appears that the compounds that the dictionary spells solid do not get split up in negation. This guess has been corroborated by a native speaker:⁵ the verbs making up the corpus here do not get split from their anterior constituents in negation (except for a few verbs ending in *kerni* or *ležni* that can occur with anterior constituents that do split). (Of course, the possibility that some items in which the preverbal element does not get split are also written as two words in the dictionary cannot be totally excluded, either.)

In order to be able to present a unified picture, I have not added items taken from other sources to those occurring in the dictionary.⁶

The meanings of the verbs at hand will only be investigated on the basis of the dictionary mentioned; their use could at most be discussed as it emerges from the sample sentences that the dictionary gives. The occurrence of such verbs in running texts is extremely rare. Part of the reason is that they are stylistically marked, they often exhibit synonymy (both among one another and with items of a different morphological makeup) and it is frequently the case that their meanings, onomatopoeic ones in most cases, make it unlikely that they should often occur in everyday texts. On the other hand, even their investigation in texts would not answer a number of questions (like that of their interchangeability). For our purposes here, the meaning specifications that are given in the dictionary are quite sufficient.

I think it is important to emphasise that this research is a synchronic one; therefore I will question or deny certain connections between first elements of compound verbs and other words that are likely or even straightforward in terms of historical-etymological criteria.

⁵ I wish to thank Nikolai Kuznetsov here for the help he has provided while I was writing this paper. I would also like to thank Péter Siptár for his help with the English translation.

⁶ Since some members of the audience have expressed doubts as to the validity of the data taken from the dictionary, I take it to be my duty to point out that Nikolai Kuznetsov has corroborated the validity of the data used here. He only found a couple of verbs he had not known: in view of the fact that this is a peripheral part of the word stock and a large number of data is involved, the corpus can be taken to be totally valid.

2. Compound verbs

2.1. General description

The verbs that occur fairly often as posterior constituents of Komi-Zyryan compound verbs are *munni*, *kivni*, *vižni*, *kerni*, *vartni*, *večni*. But even the number of such compounds is uneven: the corpus contains 281 verbs with *munni* as their last constituent but only 16 with *večni*. The number of occurrences of the other four verbs falls between those two extremes but there are no two verbs whose occurrence would be roughly equal. Verbal posterior constituents other than the six listed above only occur in a handful of examples, or even in just a single one. In what follows, compound verbs will be characterised in terms of their posterior constituents first; then we will look at the anterior constituents.

2.2. Compounds ending in *munni*

The corpus contains a total of 281 verbs whose posterior constituent is *munni* ‘go’. Of these, only a small number are such that their anterior constituents can be identified with some noun, adjective, or non-onomatopoeic adverb.⁷ Therefore, adverbs of an onomatopoeic character will be separated from other adverbs and treated here together with onomatopes.⁸

Of the verbs ending in *munni*, the following have a noun as an anterior constituent:

⁷ It is virtually impossible to tell onomatopoeic words and adverbs of an onomatopoeic character apart, given that in Komi any onomatope can be used as an adverb, cf. *He walked along the corridor knock knock* ‘He walked along the corridor with pattering steps’.

⁸ By ‘onomatopes’ I will mean both onomatopoeic adverbs and onomatopoeic sentence-words here. The use of the term as denoting a part of speech is not new in the literature, cf., e.g., Bereczki (2002, 170). Corresponding items are referred to as ‘ideophones’ by Raija Bartens who characterises them as follows: “[...] sanoja, jotka perustavat ääneasun kuvailevuuteen ja sisältävät siksi usein kielessä muuten periferisiä foneemeja ja foneemiyhdistelmiä. [...] Lauseasevaltaan ne ovat substantiivin attribuutteinakin, ja joskus ne edustavat lauseen predikaatinkin. [...]” (Bartens 2000, 326).

(1) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>bustumni</i>	dip into a dust-like substance	dust
<i>čukirmunni</i>	get wrinkled	wrinkle, fold
<i>gijmunni</i>	crash down	thunder, storm
<i>išlovmunni</i>	sigh once	sigh, breath
<i>kusińmunni</i>	bend, get crooked	bend, crook, curvature
<i>ligismunni</i>	lose strength, get tired	weakness, tiredness, fatigability
<i>njrmunni</i>	come to life, revive, be reborn	sprout, germ
<i>njrgormunni</i>	snort	snort, snore ('nose' + 'sound')
<i>ńorovmunni</i>	bend, bow down	bend, curvature
<i>ńukirmunni</i>	be seized in a cramp; sink (of heart)	cramp
<i>ńummunni</i>	start smiling	smile
<i>oĵjrmunni</i>	doze off, fall into a slumber	slumber, doze, light sleep
<i>ońišmunni</i>	become sleepy, droop	sleepiness, languishment
<i>šemęsmunni</i>	be astonished, be surprised	astonishment, surprise
<i>šenmunni</i>	be astonished, be surprised	astonishment, surprise
<i>špińmunni</i>	start smiling	smile
<i>vašmunni</i>	start smiling	smile (dialectal)

There are some cases in which the connection between the noun and the verb is unclear: *piž* ‘flour’ : *pižmunni* ‘get smashed, get broken’. In other cases, the forms are not quite identical, though the meaning can be reconciled easily: *šıl* ‘smooth, calm water surface’ : *šılkmunni* ‘become smooth’. The relatedness of *tivivmunni* ‘get drenched, soak through, become saturated’ and the compound noun *tiviv* ‘surface of lake’ is even more doubtful. The anterior constituent of *jugmunni* ‘flash, gleam, shine’ is a bound stem recognisable in *juĵer* ‘light’ and *juĵid* ‘light’. (The formally doubtful cases are mentioned here because I do not want to exclude the possibility of finding some morphological regularity later that explains formal changes like the deletion of a suffix.)

In a majority of cases, the verb expresses getting into some state. The noun itself may refer to that state (astonishment, sleepiness, light sleep, feebleness) but not in all cases (cramp, bend, smile). All in all, there are comparatively few such cases, and the examples we have are semantically not uniform. The construction is not productive, new words are not derived according to this pattern.

In another group of noun-initial compounds a third constituent, *ser*, divides the nominal anterior constituent and the verbal posterior constituent. There is a noun of that form, meaning ‘pattern, ornament, colouring; pock-mark; ripple (of water); carving, engraving, etc.’. As

can be seen from the examples below, such meaning is not found in the compound verbs:

(2) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>gördšermunnŷ</i>	bleed to death	blood
<i>gumšermunnŷ</i>	spear, shoot up	stalk
<i>jajšermunnŷ</i>	gain weight, recover, recuperate	flesh, body, muscle
<i>kokšermunnŷ</i>	lengthen, grow tall	leg
<i>lŷšermunnŷ</i>	become a bag of bones, grow thin	bone
<i>ňajtšermunnŷ</i>	become mud	mud
<i>nŷršermunnŷ</i>	become long-nosed	nose
<i>ňumšermunnŷ</i>	start smiling	smile
<i>špiňšermunnŷ</i>	start smiling	smile
<i>viršermunnŷ</i>	bleed to death	blood

The semantic relation between the first constituent and the verb is variegated here, too; in addition, the meanings of *ňumšermunnŷ* and *ňumšermunnŷ* are not distinct. (The difference between *nŷrmunnŷ* and *nŷršermunnŷ* can be traced back to two different meanings of *nŷr*.) The item *šer* in itself does not form a compound either with any of the first constituents, or with *munnŷ*; therefore, there are no formal or semantic arguments to favour either [N + [*šer* + *munnŷ*]] or [[N + *šer*] + *munnŷ*]; moreover, the ‘flat’ structure [N + *šer* + *munnŷ*] cannot be excluded, either (of course, ‘structure’ is meant purely formally here).

There are a few examples of adjective-initial compounds as well:

(3) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>bugžŷŷlmunnŷ</i>	cast a malicious glance at	malicious, nasty
<i>čatermunnŷ</i>	lean back, tilt backwards	retroflexed, leaning back
<i>čažmunnŷ</i>	hit something creaking	dry, creaking
<i>čŷrmunnŷ</i>	become crumbly, friable	crumbly, friable
<i>čošmunnŷ</i>	supervise, start listening	attentive, prick-eared
<i>žugŷŷlmunnŷ</i>	grow sad, be sad	sad
<i>labmunnŷ</i>	lose strength, weaken	weak
<i>luňmunnŷ</i>	droop, sag, swetler	wilted, dangling (tail)
<i>lasmunnŷ</i>	be squashed, be flattened out	flat
<i>vekišmunnŷ</i>	grimace, pull faces	crooked, disstorted
<i>žermunnŷ</i>	split, burst open (wound)	open, opened
<i>žermunnŷ</i>	petrify	stoned (e.g., tooth)

As the examples suggest, there is a strong tendency for the verb to mean that the subject begins to be characterised by the property referred to by the adjective. Perhaps the verb *pašmunnĭ* ‘break in pieces, get broken; creep out, escape’ can be seen as belonging here, too (cf. *paš* ‘open, opened’). Though semantically doubtful, the relationship between *šlupmunnĭ* ‘lose weight, grow thin, shrink, weaken’ and *šlup* ‘loose-fitting (dress)’ cannot be excluded, either. Also, the verbs *lotmunnĭ*, *lut-letmunnĭ* ‘droop’ are not unrelated to this type, even though the adjectives *lot*, *lut-let* ‘dead on one’s feet, sagging, sweltering’ can only be used predicatively (not attributively).

In two cases, it is dubious whether the anterior constituent is related to an adjectival stem. In the case of *pešmunnĭ* ‘get hot, suddenly start feeling warm’, the first constituent *peš* can be related to the compound verb either as a noun (‘heat’) or as an adjective (‘hot’), whereas *čevmunnĭ* ‘stop talking’ can be based not only on the adjective *čev* ‘silent, not talkative’ but also on the verb *čevnĭ* ‘stop talking’. In these cases, we need not take a stance on which part of speech there is in the first constituent.

With respect to verbal anterior constituents, there is just one clear case: *tirmunnĭ* ‘quiver, shudder’ from *tirnĭ* ‘tremble, quake’. In two other cases, the relationship is more complex: *čušmunnĭ* ‘flare up’ vs. *čušnĭ* ‘hurt sy, damage’, *žurtovmunnĭ* ‘squeak once’ vs. *žurnĭ* ‘squeak’.

Of adverb-initial compounds, a lot more can be found:

(4) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>dvmunnĭ</i>	become motionless, stare sy out	motionless
<i>ĭrsmunnĭ</i>	spring up, start running, run away	suddenly, fast
<i>puš-pašmunnĭ</i> ⁹	get broken, break to pieces	to pieces
<i>ruz-pazmunnĭ</i>	collapse, fall to pieces	in every direction; (dial. :) to pieces
<i>ruz-razmunnĭ</i>	collapse, fall to pieces	in every direction; (dial. :) to pieces
<i>šĭrkunnĭ</i>	fall down lifeless, collapse	lifelessly
<i>šuv-šavmunnĭ</i>	disperse, break up	dispersedly
<i>šuvk-šavkmunnĭ</i>	disperse, break up	dispersedly
<i>šaj-pajmunnĭ</i>	be astonished, get confused	confusedly, disconcertedly
<i>šlĭvmunnĭ</i>	pass swimming/in silence	swimming, in silence
<i>tračmunnĭ</i>	crackle, make a cracking sound	with a crack
<i>turbĭlmunnĭ</i>	fall down head over heels	head over heels
<i>vuš-vašmunnĭ</i>	talk under one’s breath	whispering

⁹ Reduplicative first constituents are only considered where they are also used on their own. If only half of them are used independently, and a semantic relation

Again, in a large majority of examples, the verb expresses getting into the state specified by the adverb. On the other hand, in the case of *šlīvmunnī* and *turbīlmunnī*, the verb partly retains its meaning: it expresses motion. There are, again, a few unclear cases: *tur-barmunnī*, *tur-bormunnī* ‘have a row, start arguing’, *tur-bar*, *tur-bor* ‘(speak) fast, hardly understandably’.

The number of cases in which the anterior constituent can be identified with some onomatope and the compound verb expresses that the given sound is being emitted is also considerable:

(5) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>buł-bołmunnī</i>	splash, bubble up	sound of bubbling
<i>bursmunnī</i>	dip into a dust-like substance	sound of dipping into dust ¹⁰
<i>gerć-gerćmunnī</i>	quack	sound of quacking, quack!
<i>gīł-gołmunnī</i>	rattle, clang, rustle	rattling sound
<i>gołmunnī</i>	rattle, clang, rustle	sound of metal rattling
<i>gołsmunnī</i>	rattle, clang, rustle	rattling, creaking sound
<i>gułs-gołsmunnī</i>	rattle, clang, rustle	rattling sound
<i>kammunnī</i>	start knocking	knocking
<i>kažmunnī</i>	crack	cracking, crick-crack
<i>kočmunnī</i>	hit sg with a thud	thud, pat!
<i>klopunnī</i>	bang, clack, go plop	bang!, plop!
<i>kovmunnī</i>	start rattling, bang	bang!, plop!
<i>kuw-kovmunnī</i>	bang	bang!, plop!
<i>ločmunnī</i>	crack once	sound of joints cracking
<i>lujk-lajkmunnī</i>	swing, stagger	swinging, staggering
<i>ruč-račmunnī</i>	crack	act of cracking
<i>škovmunnī</i>	boom, bang, crack	bang!, plop!
<i>škuw-škovmunnī</i>	a big bang can be heard from far	bang!
<i>šlopunnī</i>	bang (door), go plop	bang!, plop!
<i>tič-točmunnī</i>	knock, rap	knock knock, rat-a-tat
<i>tričmunnī</i>	crack, snap, click	sound of breaking
<i>tołsmunnī</i>	splash, spill, squirt	sound of splashing
<i>vuz-vazmunnī</i>	crack once	cracking, crick-crack

With these examples, too, we can observe that the verb does not only refer to the sound emitted but also to some event that is accompanied by the sound concerned. There are cases where the latter is the dominant piece of meaning:

can be assumed between that half and the compound verb, I will indicate in the third column which half of the reduplicative first constituent is involved.

¹⁰ It is conspicuous how much this item resembles the noun *bus* ‘dust’ that forms a similar compound verb. (Nikolai Kuznetsov tells me the verb can also refer to the sound of dipping into water — in that case, the relation is even more dubious.)

(6) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>buz-bazmunni</i>	fall into (with a sound)	sound of splashing
<i>čarsmunni</i>	catch fire	sound of a match being struck
<i>žummunni</i>	swish, scuttle, scurry	sound of scuttling
<i>dižmunni</i>	fall over, overturn with a sound	bang! plop!
<i>gil-golmunni</i>	get broken, break to pieces	rattling sound
<i>golmunni</i>	get broken, break to pieces	sound of metal rattling
<i>jirkmunni</i>	fall down with a sound, fall over	knocking sound
<i>jirk-jirkmunni</i>	fall down with a sound, fall over	knock knock!
<i>kažmunni</i>	split, crack	cracking
<i>kolsmunni</i>	hit sg with a thud, split, crack	sound of thud, clack
<i>kovmunni</i>	hit sg with a big thud	bang!, plop! crack!
<i>šlopmunni</i>	burst, spring open; splash into	bang!, plop!
<i>šlapmunni</i>	fall into, splash into; collapse	plop!
<i>šlopmunni</i>	fall into, splash into	plop!
<i>šmotmunni</i>	get off, alight, fall down	plop! bang!
<i>švačmunni</i>	crack, break, fall, fall down	sound of cracking, rattling
<i>švuč-švačmunni</i>	fall with a sound, fall down	plop!
<i>tersmunni</i> I.	get broken, break to pieces	sound of breaking
<i>tur-tarmunni</i>	be startled, stagger	knocking, loud
<i>tivkmunni</i>	fly away (e.g., arrow)	up!, oops!
<i>topmunni</i>	drip, dribble	drip-drip!
<i>tvmunni</i>	swish in, scurry in somewhere	sound of scuttling
<i>vazmunni</i>	break in, break out, force in (glass)	cracking
<i>zižmunni</i>	fall down with a knock, fall down	bang! plop!
<i>ziirk-zerkmunni</i>	bump (on a road with potholes)	<i>ziirk</i> : sound of rumbling
<i>zur-zarmunni</i>	bump into, collide with	with a sound, cracking
<i>zurk-zerkmunni</i>	bump (on a road with potholes)	with a sound, cracking
<i>žbirmsunni</i>	fly up, fly out, fly away	waft of wings
<i>žbirkmunni</i>	fly up, fly out, fly away	waft of wings

There are, furthermore, some cases in which the effect of Russian verbs (most of them derived from onomatopes) can be observed:

(7) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	CORRESPONDING RUSSIAN VERB
<i>brižmunnĭ</i>	squirt apart (e.g., raindrops), splash	<i>брызнуть</i>
<i>dregmunnĭ</i>	quiver, shudder, tremble	<i>дрогнуть</i>
<i>drežmunnĭ</i>	quiver, shudder, tremble	<i>дрожать</i>
<i>jokmunnĭ</i>	throb	<i>ёкнуть</i>
<i>kačmunnĭ</i>	swing, stagger, topple	<i>(по)качнуться</i>
<i>očmunnĭ</i>	come to, regain consciousness; grasp, see	<i>очнуться</i>
<i>razmunnĭ</i>	collapse, fall to pieces	<i>раз(валиться?)</i>
<i>trešmunnĭ</i>	crack, split, get broken	<i>треснуть</i>
<i>zdragmunnĭ</i>	shudder	<i>вдрогнуть</i>

The first constituents occurring in these examples are not loanwords proper: they are not used on their own as any part of speech (one could say that some Russian verbs were borrowed into Komi as anterior constituents of compounds; in other words, they were completed with a posterior constituent rather than with a derivational suffix). Especially noteworthy is the verb *brižmunnĭ* ‘squirt apart’ as there is a Komi onomatopoe *briž* ‘bang!, plop!’: that is, the similar-sounding Russian verb overtrumps the expected, semantically transparent meaning.

Similar cases can be found elsewhere. For instance, *luv-lav* is an onomatopoe meaning the barking of a dog (‘bow-wow’); the meaning of *luv-lavmunnĭ* is nevertheless ‘be heard from a distance, sound in a distance’. The mewling of a cat (‘miaow’) is *ňav*, yet the only meaning of *ňavmunnĭ* is ‘catch fire’.

The overwhelming majority of anterior constituents of compound verbs ending in *munnĭ* cannot be identified with any word used on its own.¹¹ Also, verbs with an identifiable first constituent may have meanings that are unrelated to that of the first constituent. It is conspicuous, however, that verbs with an unidentifiable anterior constituent often have meanings similar to those with an identifiable anterior constituent. We could say that compound verbs tend to have typical meanings.

Examples of such meanings include the following:¹²

¹¹ In this paper, obviously, only the material of the dictionary can be taken into consideration: it is imaginable that some first constituents that we take to lack an independent use do have one but it does not, for some reason, appear in the dictionary.

¹² It is highly likely that the compounds involving the anterior constituents listed are not fully synonymous; the core of their meaning is nevertheless the same.

Verbs of sound emission: ‘crack (grind, creak)’: *žaz-*, *jars-*, *kov-*, *krač-*, *kroč-*, *luč-lač-*, *ňaz-*, *roč-*, *ruz-raz-*, *širk-*, *šark-*, *šur-šar-*, *šars-*, *šloc-*, *trač-*, *troč-*, *vars-*; ‘rattle, cling’: *brin-*, *žil-*, *žil-žol-*, *žol-*, *žolk-*; ‘peal forth, toll, resound’: *iz-*, *jur-*, *jurk-*, *trin-*, *tron-*; ‘squirt, splash, splutter’: *priš-*, *šar-*, *šav-*, *šavk-*, *šol-*, *šul-šal-*.

Motion verbs: ‘tremble, shudder’: *čur-*, *čur-čer-*, *ilk-*, *irk-*, *irs-*, *kez-*, *oč-*, *pirk-*, *tirk-*, *tur-tar-*; ‘fall down, fall over’: *čur-čer-*, *iz-*, *las-*, *švac-*, *švuls-*; ‘tilt, tip, roll over, tumble over’: *čer-*, *kíp-*, *lajk-*, *šatov-*, *šutov-šatov-*, *tur-tar-*; ‘start running, run away, rush away’: *brins-*, *vils-*, *viž-*, *živ-*.

Verbs denoting physical change of state: ‘get broken, break to pieces, fall apart, split’: *čuž-čaž-*, *kov-*, *paž-*, *švac-*, *tač-*, *žil-*, *žil-žol-*, *žol-*, *žolk-*, *žul-*; ‘collapse, tumble down’: *iz-*, *šlap-*, *val-*, *var-*, *vark-*; ‘catch fire; burn down’: *čaž-*, *čiš-*, *iz-*, *ňaleb-*,¹³ *ňav-*, *ňuv-ňav-*; ‘burn out’: *čis-*; ‘get torn, get ragged’: *čaš-*, *čaž-*, *šlap-*; ‘get crooked, bend, stoop’: *čukir-*, *ňukir-*, *ňukir-ňakir-*, *turbil-*; ‘open’: *kalk-*; ‘subside’: *lap-*, *las-*, *šmot-*, *šnap-*; ‘droop, sag, wither, become limp’: *kil-*, *ňar-*, *rop-*.

Verbs denoting a psychological/physiological change of state: ‘start crying’: *čukir-*; ‘start smiling’: *šeš-*, *šijn-*, *žer-*; ‘lose strength, weaken, become weary’: *čuš-*, *liž-*, *las-*, *lizgir-*, *majis-*, *ruž-*; ‘fall asleep’: *lizgir-*, *ňirov-*, ‘growl, snarl, scowl’: *čoš-*, *iš-*.

The individual categories are not clearly separable (e.g., drooping is a change of shape and a sign of weakening at the same time); and the individual verbs may have several meanings, often ones that do not exhibit any kind of relatedness.

Let us say a few words about anterior constituents. As we saw, most first constituents do not occur on their own. It appears that a *k* at the end of anterior constituents does not have a distinctive role: *dilmunnj* ~ *dilkmunnj* ‘start feeling uneasy, start to be annoyed’; *rojmnunnj* ~ *rojkmunnj* ‘rot, moulder, burn to ashes’; *šavmnunnj* ~ *šavkmunnj* ‘jump away; squirt, spurt, scatter’; *ševmnunnj* ~ *ševkmunnj* ‘lie, stretch out, spread’; *šlivmnunnj* ~ *šlivkmunnj* ‘pass swimming, in silence’; *tarmunnj* ~ *tarkmnunnj* ‘knock, tap’; *tirmunnj* ~ *tirkmnunnj* ‘quiver, shudder’; *trinmnunnj* ~ *trinkmunnj* ‘ring, toll’; *varmnunnj* ~ *varkmnunnj* ‘collapse; be down-trodden, be ruined’; *žolmnunnj* ~ *žolkmnunnj* ‘rattle, clang, fall apart rattling’; *žbirmnunnj* ~ *žbirkmunnj* ‘fly up, take flight, fly away’. There are

¹³ Although there exists an adverb *ňaleb-en* ‘burning, in flames’, in which *-en* is the instrumental suffix.

also a few counterexamples: *éermunni* ‘tremble, shudder’ vs. *éerkmunni* ‘tilt, tumble over’; *kilmunni* ‘droop, sag, wither’ vs. *kilkmunni* ‘lose heart, sink’. Of reduplicative first constituents, there is not much to say: they are not very frequent, it is only in a few cases that one of the constituents is used on its own, and even then, no semantic relationship can be traced.

Nor is it possible to give a general meaning of the posterior constituent. The single feature that almost all verbs ending in *munni* share is instantaneousness (and a concomitant perfective aspect): the verb invariably refers to the beginning or end of something or expresses a momentary event. (There is an exception here, too: one meaning of *varmunni*, *varkmunni* is ‘be downtrodden, distorted, ruined, compressed’.) In addition, the subject tends to be a patient or experiencer, rather than an agent.

2.3. Compounds ending in *kivni*

The corpus contains a total of 178 verbs whose posterior constituent is *kivni*.¹⁴ The primary meaning of the verb is ‘hear’; but it also occurs in the meanings ‘feel; smell; listen to’ as well as ‘be heard; be felt’.

A formal feature of the compounds belonging here is that their anterior constituents almost exclusively end in *-a*. This is not some kind of linking vowel, and not part of the verb stem either, since it appears on both halves of reduplicative first constituents. Thus, in identifying the first constituent, that “thematic” *a* must be ignored (both *a*’s must be ignored in the case of reduplicative first constituents).

There are only two examples where the anterior constituent is unambiguously a noun: *dojakivni* ‘hurt, ache’ : *doj* ‘pain’; *južakivni* ‘crunch (said of snow)’ : *juž* ‘thick, dense, compact snow’. The connection between *sirkakivni* ‘quake, wobble, tremble’ and *sirk* ‘fringe’ is a lot more uncertain.

An adjectival first constituent occurs in a single case: *čažakivni* ‘crack, creak’ : *čaž* ‘dry, cracking (e.g., twigs)’. There is also an uncertain case: *gerćakivni* ‘gnash, grind (one’s teeth)’ : *gerć* (dialectal) ‘clenched (teeth)’. The lack of *k* in the adjective is not an insurmountable difficulty given that, as we saw with *munni*-final compounds, *k* of-

¹⁴ The verb *kučkivni* ‘hit’ cannot be part of this set given that it is not a compound whose last constituent is *kivni* but rather a form of *kučkini* ‘hit’ involving the instantaneous suffix *-iv*.

ten occurs without any function in compound verbs: the same applies to *kivni*-final ones. Another minor problem is that the adjective *gerc* only appears dialectally; the main problem is that the onomatopoe *gerc* ‘sound of grinding’ is classified as non-dialectal (which in this context must mean that it occurs in at least a majority of dialects). Hence, at least synchronically, it is more likely that the compound is related to the onomatopoe, not the adjective.

We have two examples of verbal first constituents: *iška-poškakivni* ‘pant, gasp, breathe’ : *iškini-poškini* ‘id.’; *šepkativni* ‘keep whispering’ : *šepkini* ‘whisper’. The verb *tačkativni* ‘knock, tap, rap, clatter, flap’ can also be related to the verb *tačkini* ‘id.’, but both can be derived from the onomatopoe *tač* ‘knock! pat!’, too.

On the other hand, there are a few cases in which we can recognize an adverbial first constituent (obviously by ignoring “thematic” *a*). These adverbs, in turn, are in almost all cases of an onomatopoeic character. (Except for *izakivni* ‘blow (wind), be draughty’; but the relation of this verb to the adverb *iz* ‘wide open’ is uncertain. A similar case is *tura-barakivni* ‘mumble, murmur’ : *tur-bar* ‘(speak) fast, unintelligibly’.) Given that adverbs of an onomatopoeic meaning are difficult to tell apart from onomatopoes, both categories will be presented together:

(8) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>bulska-bolskativni</i>	splash into; chomp, squelch	<i>bul-sols</i> sound of squelching/splashing
<i>buła-bolakivni</i>	bubble	sound of bubbling
<i>bulska-bolskativni</i>	splash, lap, sprinkle	<i>bul-sols</i> sound of bubbling
<i>žurkativni</i>	grate, burr	sound of burring
<i>gira-garakivni</i>	rumble, rattle	in a rumbling/rattling manner
<i>golativni</i>	jangle, rattle	sound of metal rattling
<i>golskativni</i>	jangle, rattle	rattling, creaking
<i>grīma-gramativni</i>	thunder, rumble, rattle	<i>grīma-grama</i> in a thundering/rattling manner
<i>gula-golativni</i>	rattle, jangle	clinking, knocking, rattling
<i>izakivni</i>	seethe, splash; splash about	splashing
<i>izakivni</i>	buzz (beetle)	buzzing
<i>kirkativni</i>	knock loudly, clack, rattle	knocking, tapping, knock knock
<i>jirka-kamakivni</i>	knock loudly, clack, rattle	noisily, loud
<i>jirka-tarkativni</i>	knock loudly, clack, rattle	knocking, tapping, knock knock
<i>kažativni</i>	crack, crackle, grate	in a cracking/grating manner

(cont.)

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>klopakívni</i>	keep flapping, hitting, beating	plop! bang!
<i>klopkakívni</i>	keep flapping, hitting, beating	<i>klop</i> plop! bang!
<i>klonakívni</i>	sound, be heard	clinking, knocking, rattling
<i>kluna-klonakívni</i>	thunder, rumble, rattle, clack	sounding hollow, rattling, clacking
<i>kočkakívni</i>	walk pattering, be heard (knock)	pattering, knocking
<i>kovakívni</i>	thunder, rumble, rattle	plop! bang!
<i>kuvakívni</i>	be heard dully	bang! plop!
<i>kuža-kažakívni</i>	crack, crackle, grate	cracking, grating
<i>ločkakívni</i>	crack (joints)	sound of joints cracking
<i>luča-lačakívni</i>	crack, burr; break with a crack	loudly
<i>račkakívni</i>	burr; break to pieces with a crack	cracking
<i>škovakívni</i>	thunder, rumble, crack	bang!
<i>šmotakívni</i>	bump into, splash into	plop! bang!
<i>tačkakívni</i>	knock, patter, clatter, crack	<i>tač</i> crack! knock!
<i>tička-tačkakívni</i>	knock, clatters	<i>tič-tač</i> rat-a-tat!
<i>trička-tráčkakívni</i>	crack, burr; break with a crack	<i>trič</i> snap!
<i>trina-tronakívni</i>	reverberate	reverberating, sounding hollow
<i>ura-varakívni</i>	growl	noise, din
<i>uva-avakívni</i>	noise/din can be heard; shout	noise, din
<i>vazakívni</i>	crack, is compressed cracking	in a cracking manner
<i>zymakívni</i>	bump; walk pattering	bang! plop!
<i>zirkakívni</i>	crack/thunder can be heard	thunder, roar, cracking
<i>žbirakívni</i>	flutter, fly about	waft of wings

As can be seen, the onomatope (adverb) can be related to the verb ending in *kívni* in various manners: the compound can refer to the emission of the sound concerned or to an event during which the given sound is produced; the onomatope involved sometimes does not specify the type of sound, it just suggests loudness; in other cases, it only partially corresponds to the sound referred to by the verb. Next, we list cases in which the verb denotes some other sound than the first constituent does in itself:

(9) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>brunakívni</i>	hum, purr, whirr, buzz	bang! plop!; splashing
<i>ženakívni</i>	toll, tinkle, jangle	bang! plop!
<i>žurskakívni</i>	knock, crack, clatter	squeaking
<i>gurakívni</i>	rumble; rattle, clatter	crunching, clattering, jangling
<i>švačkakívni</i>	squeak, crunch, creak	jangling, plop! bang! knock!
<i>vura-varakívni</i>	rumble	fast, with a swing

In addition, we have to consider cases in which the verb does have a meaning that corresponds to that of the first constituent, but it also has some that do not. The verb *izakivni*, presented earlier, does not only mean ‘seethe, bubble, splash; splash about’ and ‘buzz (beetle)’, both corresponding to *iz*, and the dubitably corresponding ‘blow (wind), be draughty’, but also ‘make a noise/racket’ and ‘chatter, babble’.

There are, again, some verbs ending in *kivni* that are paralleled by a Russian verb:

(10) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	CORRESPONDING RUSSIAN VERB
<i>čavkakivni</i>	chomp, smack, squelch	<i>чавкать</i>
<i>pal'skakivni</i>	splash, sprinkle	<i>плескать</i>
<i>ropkakivni</i>	grumble, grouse, be grumpy	<i>роптать</i>
<i>šarkakivni</i>	shuffle one's feet, rustle, sigh	<i>шаркать</i>

The remaining verbs have some typical meanings here, too: ‘crack, crackle, grate, squeak’: *čala-*, *čarska-*, *čaža-*, *čuža-čaža-*, *žaza-*, *žaža-*, *žiža-žaža-*, *žuža-*, *žuža-žaža-*, *giža-gaža-*, *jarska-*, *kova-*, *kračka-*, *kroža-*, *mučka-*, *murčka-*, *murka-*, *murć-murć-*,¹⁵ *ňaza-*, *ňaža-*, *ňuza-ňaza-*, *ňuža-ňaža-*, *ročka-*, *ručka-*, *ručka-račka-*, *ruza-raza-*, *šara-*, *šarka-*, *špora-*, *špura-špora-*, *tačka-*, *tračka-*, *tračka-*, *tručka-tračka-*, *vurka-varka-*; ‘jangle, toll, tinkle’: *briňa-*, *bruna-brona-*, *žina-*, *žinka-*, *gila-gola-*, *kona-*, *tarka-*, *tiňa-*, *trana-*, *troňa-*, *truna-trona-*, *turk-tark-*,¹⁶ *žatka-*, *žila-*, *žila-žola-*, *žina-*; ‘rustle, sigh, whisper’: *čarska-*, *čirka-*, *kiša-*, *kiša-kaša-*, *iša-poša-*, *šara-*, *špora-*, *špura-špora-*, *šura-*, *šura-šara-*; ‘hiss, fizzle’: *mura-*, *žaza-*, *žaža-*, *žiža-žaža-*; ‘chirp, pip, peep’: *čipka-čupka-*, *čiva-luva-*, *čuva-čava-*, *živa-*, *tiňa-*; ‘splash, sprinkle, lap’: *solka-*, *šala-*, *šalka-*; ‘break with a cracking noise’: *kračka-*, *kreča-krača-*, *račka-*, *ručka-*, *ručka-račka-*, *špura-špora-*; ‘mutter, mumble’: *nama-*, *numa-*, *numa-nama-*; ‘flutter, fly about’: *pura-para-*, *purka-parka-*, *špora-*, *šura-*.

Once again, no total synonymy is involved; for instance, *jarskakivni* belongs to the ‘crack, grate’ group, but is only used for noises made while chewing; while *kovakivni* is only used for noises caused by cold weather. The list is not exhaustive but it shows quite clearly that primarily verbs of sound emission and verbs denoting events involving sound emission belong here. There are just a few exceptions like *mojakivni* ‘hurt, ache’ (rhyming with the synonymous *dojakivni*). (It is debatable

¹⁵ In this case, the *a* is missing.

¹⁶ In this case, the *a* is missing.

whether *špura-šporakivni* ‘swing, sway, shake, flutter’ or *švirkakivni* ‘spin fast, twirl, make circles’ belong to the exceptions since we do not know if they can be applied to movement without a noise.)

As can be seen from the foregoing, this verb partly retains its basic meaning in the compounds in that it mainly occurs as last constituent of verbs related to sound. We have to point out, however, that in its independent uses it may not only refer to the perception of sounds; also, in that case, its primary meaning is ‘hear’ rather than ‘be heard’ and never ‘make heard’. Therefore, we have to conclude that the independent uses of this verb and its uses as a last constituent of compounds are rather distinct.

It is a general feature of verbs ending in *kivni* that they refer to events that take some time (or are repeated in rapid succession),¹⁷ their Russian equivalents are imperfective verbs, and they are all intransitive.

With respect to first constituents it can be observed that certain anterior constituents of similar shape¹⁸ result in verbs of similar meaning — although exceptions are numerous. In the case of reduplicative forms, their first part usually contains a high vowel (*i, u*), whereas their second part contains a mid or low vowel (*o, a*); again, there are exceptions. The rest of the sound shape rarely varies. As to the independent occurrence of reduplicative anterior constituents, in some cases the first, and in some other cases the second part occurs on its own or in other compounds ending in *kivni*; or else both are, or neither.

2.4. Compounds ending in *vižni*

The corpus contains a total of 150 verbs whose posterior constituent is *vižni*. The primary meaning of the verb, used on its own, is ‘defend, guard, watch’. In addition, it also occurs in the meanings ‘save up’, ‘hold (in one’s hand)’, ‘keep (an animal)’, ‘(turn out to) graze’, etc. The dictionary contains another verb *vižni*, in a separate entry, meaning ‘spend (money)’, ‘use (up)’.

Some compounds have a noun as their anterior constituent:

¹⁷ Except *ćunakivni* ‘one’s ears are buzzing; shoot once, stab once, hit strongly, slap’.

¹⁸ The difference is usually not more than a single phoneme, e.g., a different vowel, an added *k*, or reduplication.

(11)	VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
	<i>čutvižni</i>	be seen (said of a solitary object)	point
	<i>žarvižni</i>	shine, glitter, glisten	light
	<i>žuvvižni</i>	filter in (light)	ray/beam/spot of light
	<i>jokmiľvižni</i>	lie sprained, contorted	knot, gnarl
	<i>kivvižni</i>	answer	word
	<i>kopirvižni</i>	be in a bent position	bow
	<i>ńukivrižni</i>	be downcast with pain	spasm
	<i>ńumvižni</i>	smile	smile
	<i>šer-šervižni</i>	look gaudy	šer pattern, colouring, frill, etc.
	<i>špivrižni</i>	smile	smile
	<i>vašvižni</i>	smile	smile (dialectal)
	<i>vezvižni</i>	hang (like a thread)	thread

There are some uncertain cases, too. The meaning of *jošvižni* is ‘protrude, jut out, be conspicuous’ but that of *još* is ‘thorn, prickle; sharp, pointed small stick; knitting-pin’; *kejvižni* means ‘sit curled up’ but *kej* means ‘little white vermin, mite (in meat)’; *ńimvižni* is ‘start speaking’ but *ńim* is ‘name’.¹⁹ In these cases, the connection between the noun and the compound verb cannot be excluded but it is semantically more or less problematic. On the other hand, the connection between *jugvižni* ‘shine, glitter, glisten etc.’ and *juger, jugid* ‘light’ is semantically clear but the first constituent of the compound is a bound stem.

There are somewhat more examples of adjectival anterior constituents:

(12)	VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
	<i>čatervižni</i>	look up, walk with one’s head tossed back	bending back, bent back
	<i>čošvižni</i>	take note of, prick up one’s ears	light
	<i>čemvižni</i>	stand like a wall	dense, solid
	<i>donvižni</i>	be clear (sky); gleaming and spotless	clean, empty
	<i>duvvižni</i>	stand motionless, do nothing	motionless
	<i>gerdvižni</i>	become red, be red	red
	<i>ježidvižni</i>	be white	white
	<i>kalkvižni</i>	be half-open	half-open
	<i>lasvižni</i>	lie low; sing small	smooth, plain, flat
	<i>ležvižni</i>	be blue	blue
	<i>murišvižni</i>	sit grumpily, scowl	grumpy, gloomy
	<i>pašvižni</i>	be open wide	wide open
	<i>šedvižni</i>	be black	black
	<i>vekišvižni</i>	grimace, pull faces	crooked, distorted

¹⁹ The connection would be more transparent if the verb meant ‘address, start speaking to’.

(cont.)

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>vežvižni</i>	be green	green
<i>vežavižni</i>	feel ashamed; be modest, be polite	holy
<i>vižvižni</i>	be yellow	yellow
<i>zumišvižni</i>	scowl; cloud over	gloomy, sad; cloudy
<i>žanvižni</i>	be open, uncovered, undone	open
<i>žuglvižni</i>	be sad, grieve, mope	sad, mournful, woeful

A less certain case is *lapvižni* ‘squat; sit doing nothing, sing small’: *lap* ‘short of stature (dialectal)’. The bound stem of *ježid* ‘white’, that is, *jež*, also occurs as a first constituent: *ježvižni* ‘be white’.

Here are a few compounds with an adverbial first constituent:

(13) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>bronvižni</i>	be motionless; stand like a column	motionless
<i>goñvižni</i>	sit/lie with head up, crane one’s neck	craning the neck
<i>guvvižni</i>	be open wide	wide open
<i>pláštvížni</i>	lie outstretched, prostrated	flatly, evenly
<i>plavvižni</i>	lie on water, spread, stretch	swimming
<i>tanvižni</i>	stand like a column, like a pillar of salt	dumbfounded, rooted to the spot

The following case is a special one: *ćusvižni* ‘hardly glow/burn/give warmth; can hardly be seen, give a little light, flicker’: *ćus* ‘totally, perfectly’. On the basis of the independent meaning of the first constituent, one would expect the verb to mean an increased, intense degree of something; but what we find is just the opposite.

The rest of the verbs fall into typical semantic classes again. However, here we can observe a peculiar zone of interrelated meanings:

‘do nothing, sit/be unoccupied’: *brun-*, *dič-*, *diž-*, *lajk-*, *laš-*, *laš-*, *lap-*, *šjñ-*, *šlap-*, *šljp-*, *šlop-*, *šlap-*, *šmjñ-*, *švac-*, *tič-*, *zič-*, *zuč-*, *žbot-*, *žmot-*. Specific subcases of this:

‘sit with clasped hands’: *guñ-*, *sić-*, *tjt-*;

‘sit and stare at one point’: *gud’-*;

‘lie, rest, unbend oneself’: *nuž-*;

‘sit in silence, modestly’: *rum-*;

‘loll about, laze’: *žuj-*.

Another meaning that is close to the above:

‘stand/be motionless; do not move’: *brun-*, *brut-*, *but-*, *diž-*, *gip-*, *šlap-*, *šnap-*, *šnoć-*, *šnop-*, *švać-*, *toč-*, *tran-*, *tuč-*, *žbot-*. Its specific subcases are:

‘stay somewhere for a longer period’: *žbot-*, *žmot-*;
 ‘lie motionless’: *žbut-*.

Yet another meaning close to the above:

‘be upright, tower above, protrude, jut out, pierce out’: *čer-*, *čur-*, *žav-*, *žir-*, *diž-*, *dovk-*, *duv-*, *gir-*, *gevk-*, *šar-*, *šav-*, *šev-*, *šlip-*, *šlop-*, *šlap-*, *švać-*, *ton-*, *tor-*, *tork-*, *tran-*, *trin-*, *tut-*, *top-*, *zim-*, *zum-*, *zumbir-*. A specific subcase is:

‘stick out, stand on end (hair)’: *čoš-*, *čuč-*, *žar-*, *šav-*, *zar-*, *zars-*;
 and another one is ‘sit ruffling up its feathers’: *puzgir-*.

What protrudes or sticks out

‘can be seen clearly, from a distance’: *žav-*, *žir-*, *deṽ-*, *eč-*, *ers-*, *eš-*, *gevk-*, *gol-*, *šar-*. A specific subcase is

‘exhibit oneself in public, sit in a place that can be seen well’:
žirk-.

But it is not only what sticks out that is clearly visible:

‘stretch out, sprawl, run through’: *čer-*, *deṽ-*, *guv-*, *iz-*, *luž-*, *nuž-*, *pav-*, *ševk-*, *šilk-*, *šivk-*, *šlin-*, *šlip-*, *šliv-*, *šlivk-*, *šlivk-*; ‘be uncovered, be open, gape’: *eč-*, *ers-*, *eš-*, *jars-*, *up-*, *van-*; ‘burn (be in flames, flicker)’: *čus-*, *ir-*, *žuz-*.

Another, much smaller group of semantically connected compound verbs is: ‘sit or lie hunched up’: *ježgil-*, *kutkir-*, *puzgir-*; ‘bend, bow, stoop’: *gumbir-*, *tingir-*, *vučkir-*; ‘squat’: *kekur-*, *lajk-*, *laš-*, *laž-*, *ničil-*. There are examples of the opposite meaning, too: ‘lie outstretched, prostrated’: *čer-*, *luž-*, *nuž-*.

A few more, typical meanings: ‘look grumpy, knit one’s brows, frown, scowl’: *čoš-*, *duz-*, *zumbir-*; ‘smile’: *pit-*, *šeš-*, *šijn-*, *šmiijn-*; ‘be clean, smart, orderly’: *ševk-*, *šilk-*, *šivk-*, *šlin-*, *šlip-*, *šliv-*, *šlivk-*. The opposite of the last group: *turbil-* ‘be desolate’.

It is conspicuous that while for verbs ending in *munni* or *kivni* onomatopoeic meanings dominated, in this group there is not a single example of that. On the other hand, compound verbs that refer to ‘seeing’ abound. This is not really connected with the present meanings of

vižni, but it can be assumed that the earlier meaning of this verb must have been ‘see’²⁰ (today, another verb derived from the root *viž-*, namely *vižedni*, is used in that meaning). At any rate, there is no direct semantic link today between the independent uses of the last constituent and those in compounds. Aspect is characteristic again, verbs ending in *vižni* express continuous/durative events or states. (Exceptions can be found again: one meaning of *duvvižni* is the same as that of *duvmunni*: ‘freeze, jellyfy’.)

Reduplicative first constituents cannot be found; there is a single instance of doubled anterior constituent: *šer-šervižni* ‘look gaudy’. Functionless *k* is found in fewer cases than its lack.

2.5. Compounds ending in *kerni*

The corpus contains a total of 82 verbs whose posterior constituent is *kerni*. The primary meaning of the verb, used on its own, is ‘do, make’. (Its secondary meanings refer to various processes of work.)

Very few instances of nouns can be found as first constituents:

(14)	VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
	<i>išlovkerni</i>	sigh (once)	sigh, breath, breathing
	<i>mjčkerni</i>	have a short break	short break
	<i>řumkerni</i>	start smiling	smile
	<i>swtovkerni</i>	stop	stop, stopping
	<i>špiňkerni</i>	start smiling	smile

As a unique example, we have to mention a case with a pronoun as first constituent: *mijkekerni* ‘be watchamacalliting’ : *mijke* ‘something’ — this form is used when the speaker is temporarily unable to recall the required verb.

There is a single example of adjectival first constituent, and a somewhat uncertain one at that: *lug-legkerni* ‘fluff, relax’ : *lug-leg* ‘wobbly, battered’.

There are several examples of adverbial first constituents; all of them reduplicative:

²⁰ This etymology is given in Lakó (1967–1978) under Hungarian *vigyáz* ‘watch, guard’. The compounds suggest that, in Komi, the semantic change must have been a late development. In the Luza dialect this meaning is still preserved (Bartens 2000, 271).

(15)	VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
	<i>gumil-gamilkerni</i>	swallow, absorb, gulp down	hastily, fast
	<i>guñ-goñkerni</i>	look round, glance around	attentively
	<i>lujk-lajkkerni</i>	swing, stagger something	swinging, bouncing ²¹
	<i>purk-parkkerni</i>	complete some job fast	urgently, in haste
	<i>puš-paškerni</i>	break/smash to pieces	to pieces
	<i>šurk-šarkkerni</i>	do fast, hastily	fast, hastily
	<i>vur-varkerni</i>	eat fast, crunching	fast, dynamically
	<i>vuš-vaškerni</i>	whisper	under one's breath

Observe that while *šurk-šarkkerni* appears to be fully transparent,²² *gumil-gamilkerni* and *vur-varkerni* are given special extra meanings. Among the uncertain cases, we can mention *duv-dovkerni* ‘shake, sway, wag, dangle, give a swing, make swing’ that may be connected with the adverb *dov* ‘floating’.

There are also a few compounds whose first constituents are onomatopes or adverbs of onomatopoeic meaning. These tend to be reduplicative to begin with, or get reduplicated as anterior constituents:

(16)	VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
	<i>but-batkerni</i>	sound like an exhauster, puff	plop! bang!
	<i>čuš-čaškerni</i>	tear with a sound	loudly, noisily
	<i>gaš-gaškerni</i>	start clanking, start tolling	clanking, jingle
	<i>gerč-gerčkerni</i>	quack	quack!
	<i>gul-golkerni</i>	clank, toll	clinking, knocking, jingle
	<i>jirk-jirkkerni</i>	knock loudly, knock once	knock knock
	<i>klup-klopkerni</i>	hit, beat, lash	bang! pop!
	<i>koč-kočkerni</i>	knock, throb, clack	<i>koč</i> knocking, rapping, pat!
	<i>kuč-kočkerni</i>	tap lightly, hit	<i>kuč</i> knocking, rapping, pat!
	<i>šur-šarkerni</i>	crack, clatter	cracking
	<i>švuč-švačkerni</i>	hit loudly, strike	bang!
	<i>tup-tapkerni</i>	pat, tap	rat-a-tat!

There is a single case in which the anterior constituent is parallel to a verb stem: *ńam-ńamkerni* ‘eat’ : *ńamni* ‘id.’— but in this case chances are that both come from the onomatope *ńam* ‘gulp!’.

²¹ Predicatively, *lujk-lajk* may also mean ‘wobbly, decrepit’; but this has no direct connection with the meaning of the compound verb.

²² The meaning of *kerni* is rather underspecified.

Russian effect on these compounds can only be seen in a single example: *tav-tavkerni* ‘yap’, cf. Russian *тявкнуть*.

Here again, most first constituents are not used on their own. Typical meanings are as follows: ‘knock, tap, snap, flip, smack, etc.’: *čols-*, *šloč-*, *tač-táč-*, *tap-tap-*, *trać-*, *tuč-táč-*; ‘crumple, compress, stamp on’: *ćumbir-ćambir-*, *ńumjil-ńamjil-*, *ńumjir-ńamjir-*, *puś-paś-*; ‘shake, sway, wag, dangle, give a swing’: *duvk-dovk-*, *leg-leg-*, *let-let-*, *lug-leg-*, *lut-let-*, *pirk-*, *pirk-pirk-*, *šumjir-šamjir-*, *šutov-šatov-*; ‘break with continuous cracking’: *vur-var-*, *vurk-vark-*, *vuz-vaz-*; ‘fumble, feel, touch’: *kurmiš-karmiš-*, *leg-leg-*, *lug-leg-*, *muljś-maljś-*.

Some meanings are only represented in one or two examples, but these meanings have already been seen in other compound verbs whose first constituents are not used on their own: *but-batkerni* ‘mumble, mutter, say unintelligibly’; *žurkkerni* ‘give a creak/squeak’; *gil-golkerni* ‘rattle, ring, start jingling’; *ńumjovkerni* ‘start smiling’;²³ *śul-śalkerni* ‘splash, lap’, etc.

Verbs ending in *kerni* can be perfective and imperfective. An interesting pair in this respect is *lapkerni* and *lap-lapkerni*: both mean ‘hit, strike, beat’ but while the first means a single event, the second means a repeated one. It is, however, not usually the case that non-reduplicative items should refer to single (or perfective) acts whereas reduplicative ones should refer to multiple (or continuous) actions. In some cases, verbs ending in *kerni* and *munni* form synonymous pairs; nevertheless, the issue of synonymy of the posterior constituents does not arise, among other things, because the subjects of compound verbs ending in *kerni* are often agents.

The first constituents of compound verbs ending in *kerni* are mostly reduplicative ones.

2.6. Compounds ending in *vartni*

The corpus contains only 21 verbs whose posterior constituent is *vartni*. The meaning of the verb, used on its own, is ‘hit; thrash’. Adverbial first constituents can be recognised in two cases: *purk-parkvartni* ‘complete

²³ In this case, the meaning of the verb may be strongly influenced by the fact that the noun *ńum* ‘smile’ can be recognised in it and that *ńumjov* as a bound stem is used elsewhere, e.g., *ńumjovtas* ‘a smile’, *ńumjovtni* ‘to smile’. Nevertheless, we have to discuss it here since the first constituent does not occur on its own.

some job fast’ : *purk-park* ‘urgently, in haste’; *puš-pašvartni* ‘break to pieces’ : *puš-paš* ‘to pieces’.

It is not only in the last-mentioned example, but also in general, that the verb more or less retains its meaning. The meaning ‘hit, keep hitting’ is found with the following first constituents: *diž-*, *šlop-*, *švac-*, *švuć-*, *tać-*. The meaning ‘break, crush under one’s feet, compress’ is even more frequent: *čas-*, *caž-*, *žag-*, *klop-*, *park-*, *paš-*, *prak-*, *puš-paš-*, *vaz-*. Of course, these forms are not perfect synonyms, they differ in their uses or shades of meaning, therefore the compounds can by no means be said to be transparent.

Even though they have a single example each in this group, typical meanings seen earlier occur here, too: *duzvartni* ‘get hurt, look grumpy, be dissatisfied’; *ipvartni* ‘catch fire, burst into flames’; *kalkvartni* ‘open slightly’, etc.

Compounds ending in *vartni* are partly transitive, and their subjects tend to be agents. There are only two examples of reduplicative first constituents.

2.7. Compounds ending in *vėćni*

The number of verbs whose posterior constituent is *vėćni* is also low: 16. The meaning of the verb, used on its own, is ‘do, make, deal with something’.

A nominal first constituent can only be found in a single case, and even that involves the component *šer* discussed in the case of *munni*-final compounds: *girdšervećni* ‘beat sy until he bleeds’ : *gird* ‘blood’.

In three examples, the first constituent is an adverb: *cuš-časvėćni* ‘tear apart with a sound’ : *cuš-čas* ‘with a sound, with noise’, *purk-parkvėćni* ‘complete a job fast’ : *purk-park* ‘urgently, in a hurry’, *puš-pašvėćni* ‘break, smash to pieces’ : *puš-paš* ‘to pieces’.

It is conspicuous that some of the compounds are synonymous with verbs of the same first constituent but *kerni* as their last constituent: *čumbjir-čambjir-*, *cuš-čas-*, *dovk-dovk-*, *gul-gol-*, *lut-let-*, *purk-park-*, *puš-paš-*, *tuvk-tuvk-*. The items *lug-legvėćni* and *šur-šarvėćni* only differ from the corresponding *kerni*-final verbs in that they are only used in the primary meanings of the latter. In fact, we can conclude that whenever the first constituent is the same, the two compound verbs will be synonymous. This is obviously not unrelated to the fact that the two last constituents at hand are synonymous themselves.

2.8. Rare posterior constituents

- (17) Compounds ending in *leźni* ‘let, allow’ (4):

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>tićleźni</i>	loosen; subside, be dulled (pain) ²⁴	
<i>tuńleźni</i>	let down, lower, haul down	wilted, dangling (tail)
<i>ńivleźni</i>	yield, surrender, give in	
<i>ńivkleźni</i>	yield, surrender, give in	

In the last two cases, the first constituent may be related to the postposition *ńiv* ‘along’ and/or to the noun *ńivk* ‘slope’, but the connection is semantically unclear — at the same time, the presence or absence of *k* does not make a difference, and that makes the connection unlikely. The verb more or less retains its meaning in all four cases.

- (18) Compounds ending in *petni* ‘exit, go out’ (4):

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>gaćpetni</i>	fall on one’s back, turn onto one’s back	on one’s back
<i>kraćpetni</i>	make a cracking sound	
<i>ńivropetni</i>	doze off, fall asleep	
<i>šujpetni</i>	weaken, lose strength	

The second and third examples are synonymous with the corresponding *munni*-final verbs.

- (19) Compounds ending in *siźni* ‘penetrate; hit; affect sg/sy’ (5):

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>ćerepśiźni</i>	shudder, quiver, tremble	rift for beam head
<i>ńumśiźni</i>	start smiling	smile
<i>tinśiźni</i>	resound, ring empty, boom	
<i>tińśiźni</i>	resound, ring empty, boom	ringing, tinkling
<i>tińśiźni</i>	resound, ring empty, boom	ringing, tinkling

²⁴ Cf. *lić oz leźli* ‘bother, plague, do not leave sy alone’.

(20) Compounds ending in *ruašni* ‘steam, fog over, get blurred’ (3):

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>jejruašni</i>	play the fool, romp, frolic; rage, be furious	crazy, fool, mad, lunatic
<i>kokńiruašni</i>	play the fool, be flippant	easy
<i>varuašni</i>	steam, let out steam	water

With respect to the last example, it is clear that the verb retains its original meaning. In the first two cases, metaphors are used (the connection between obscurity and foolishness is easy to see).

(21) Compounds ending in *kutni* ‘catch, get hold of; hold’ (3):

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>jarkutni</i>	tear off (head of corn)	
<i>kikutni</i>	become engaged	hand
<i>kjvutni</i>	answer for, be responsible	word

In the first case, the verb retains its meaning (although the first constituent cannot be identified). In the second and third cases the verb apparently loses its original meaning. In fact, however, the connection between the two constituents of the compound is metaphorical (cf. Hungarian *kézfogó* ‘engagement; lit. hand-holding’, *tartja a szavát* ‘be as good as one’s word, lit. hold one’s word’): the connection is not obscure but is rather expanded while retaining transparency.

(22) Compounds ending in *kajtni* ‘repeat’ (2):

VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>okajtni</i>	be sighing, lament, groan	ow! ouch!
<i>ojkajtni</i>	groan, moan, be sighing, lament	ow! ouch!

The meaning of the compounds can be taken to be transparent; cf. Hungarian *jaj-gat* ‘lament, i.e., repeat “ouch, ouch”’. As Nikolai Kuznetsov has pointed out to me, however, these are more likely to be Russian loanwords (*оxамь, оўкамь*). The etymology of these words is therefore unclear: it is possible that both sources have contributed to the development of these words—synchronic analysis makes it possible for us to take them to be compound verbs.

In sum, in the case of posterior constituents appearing in just a handful of words the verbal posterior constituent usually more or less retains its meaning but the semantic relationship between first and last constituents is not always quite clear. The number of compounds whose anterior constituents are not used on their own is relatively high again.

2.9. Posterior constituents occurring just once

There are four cases in which the noun *kív* ‘word’ occurs with four different last constituents (each of which belongs to the set of last constituents that only occur once): *kertavni* ‘connect’ : *kívkertavni* ‘summarise results, draw a final conclusion’; *vežítni* ‘cross, put across’ : *kívvežítni* ‘contradict’; *šetćini* ‘yield, give in’ : *kívšetćini* ‘agree’. In the fourth case, the verb is not even used on its own: *ńilídavni* (*ńilíd* ‘along’) : *kívńilídavni* ‘agree’ (rare) — in this case, then, we should assume a structure like [[*kív* + *ńilíd*] + *av-*] rather than [*kív* + [*ńilíd* + *av-*]]. In all four cases, the compound is used metaphorically, but the meaning that the metaphor is based on comes about regularly from the components (cf. the discussion of *kívkutni* ‘answer for, be responsible’ above).

The meaning of *varuavni* is similar to that of *varuaśni*, discussed above; except that whereas the subject of the latter is the thing that lets out steam, the subject of the former is steam itself (unfortunately, the dictionary does not provide sample sentences).

The verb *vužedni* ‘carry across’ takes a nominal first constituent: *gagvužedni* ‘be nauseated; be disgusted; feel sick’ (*gag* ‘beetle, vermin, (dialectal:) pimple’). In this case, a shared connotation can be felt between the first constituent and the whole compound, but connection of the last constituent and the compound is unclear. Perhaps some kind of metaphorical use is involved here, too.

Another compound verb that involves a nominal anterior constituent is *lunpukni* ‘gather for needlework during daytime’. The noun *lun* means ‘day’; **pukni* is not used any more but its original meaning ‘sit’ can be recognised in its derivatives still used today: *pukavni* ‘sit, be sitting’, *puksa*, *puksen* ‘while sitting’, *pukśini* ‘sit down’, *puktini* ‘make sit; make stand, put, place somewhere’, *pukištini* ‘sit for a short while’, and other items derived from these. Thus, even though the last constituent is not used on its own, we have to take this to be a transparent compound (with a specialised meaning, of course).

We find a single case with adjectival first constituent, along with the verb *kiašni* ‘hit’: *kokńikiašni* ‘be short-tempered, be quick with one’s hand’ (cf. *kokńi* ‘easy’). The construction is rather transparent. Its structural analysis takes some care, however, since it can be not only [*kokńi* + [*ki* + *aš-*]] but also [[*kokńi* + *ki*] + *aš-*]. The noun *ki* means ‘hand’: the meaning of the latter structure is metaphorical, but then *kiašni* ‘hit’ itself is already that (or rather, metonymical).

There are a few examples of adverbial first constituents, too: taking the verbs *jurašni* ‘grow a head (e.g. cabbage); cover; stack’, *juređni* ‘direct, turn; turn over, turn upside down’ and adding *uvlań* ‘down(wards)’ in front of them, we get the meanings ‘turn round, turn a somersault, roll over’ and ‘turn sg round, make sg somersault, make sg roll over’, respectively. Notice that while the two original verbs are not really similar in their meanings, the two compound verbs only differ in that one of them is medial, and the other causative. Since that difference corresponds to the meaning of the derivational suffix *-eđ-*, we have to discard the assumption that we have compounding here: the structure of the two words is [[*uvlań* + *jur*] + *aš-*] and [[*uvlań* + *jur*] + *eđ-*], respectively. (The noun *jur* means ‘head’, hence the construction is rather transparent.)

On the other hand, the last constituent is underived in *gegervonni* ‘understand’. From the component parts (*geger* ‘round’, *vonni* ‘get, arrive’) we would expect something like ‘go a full circle, get round’. Again, we have a metaphorisation of the original meaning here.

There are other examples of adverb-initial compounds, too: *šaj-pajvajeđni* ‘astonish, shock, surprise’ (*vajeđni* ‘bring’, *šaj-paj* ‘confused, in a puzzle’). The construction bears a striking similarity to Hungarian *zavarba hoz* ‘confuse, lit. bring into confusion’. The root of this verb (*vaj-*) also appears as a last constituent: *parkvajni* ‘be frightened, grow alarmed’ (*vajni* ‘bring’, *park* is not used on its own).²⁵ If we compare the two compound verbs, we can see that one is causative, while the other is medial. Such a difference is not indicated in the dictionary between *vajni* and *vajeđni*, the two verbs appear to be synonyms. As we saw in the Hungarian parallel (*zavarba hoz*), there is no need to attribute *vajeđni* a causative meaning in itself. Given that there is no **šaj-pajvajni* ‘be astonished, be shocked, be surprised’, we have no reason to question that *šaj-pajvajeđni* is a compound verb.

²⁵ The noun *park* ‘park’ cannot be brought into connection with the anterior constituent.

The same stem appears in yet another peculiar form: *urvajtņi* ‘devour, gollop’. Neither *ur*, nor *vajtņi* is used on its own. The element *-t* could be another causative suffix, but there is nothing to contrast the compound with (since there is no causativity in its meaning). In this case, we have to consider this form as the borrowing of Russian *ырвaтb* ‘tear off’ (Nikolai Kuznetsov’s explanation).

Another derived last constituent can be found in *šampuritćiņi* ‘embrace, clasp, hang on to’. The element *-ć-* can only be a reflexive suffix. The only transitive meaning of *puritņi*, i.e., the only meaning in which it is able to take a reflexive suffix, is ‘lug’. The meaning ‘embrace, clasp’ may not be very directly related to the expected meaning ‘be lugged’, there may be a metaphorical/metonymical connection between the two. The first constituent does not occur on its own, but there is a verb *šamavņi* ‘be injured/damaged’. Given that *-av-* ~ *-al-* is a rather productive derivational suffix that is quite often added to nominal stems in the meaning ‘be (like) something’, we can easily deduce a potential root *šam* ‘injured, damaged’. But this does not help us make sense of the compound.

The last constituent of causative *ševpašķedņi* ‘swing, flourish; open wide, spread, expand’ is *pašķedņi* ‘widen’, but its first constituent is unfamiliar. The meaning component of ‘wideness, expansion’ appears in both verbs. The last constituent of *čēčkertņi* ‘make level, cut off, trim off; shorten, sever, crop’ is *kertņi* ‘bind; (dialectal:) spin (yarn)’, and its first constituent occurs in the meanings ‘together; also’. In this case, the semantic features of the compound verb and those of the adverb/conjunction plus the verb used on its own seem to be opposed to one another: while the compound refers to dividing, separating, the constituents both express some kind of linking or joining. (Maybe the meaning of the compound should be interpreted as ‘link by making similar’?) (Nikolai Kuznetsov thinks that the interpretation of the form as a compound is unfounded, although he does not suggest anything better. But he drew my attention to *čēčkēs* ‘plain, straight, smooth, flat’ and *čēčkjir*²⁶ ‘trimmed flat and short’ that are semantically close to *čēčkertņi*.)

Another peculiar case is that of *kilk-šerektņi* ‘burst out laughing’ (cf. *šerektņi* ‘start laughing’; the first constituent is not used on its own), since this is the only case in which the dictionary has a hyphen between the first and last constituents. It is unclear why this item is any different from those spelt solid or from those spelt as two words.

²⁶ I have not found this form in any dictionary.

2.10. Pseudo-compounds

In the foregoing, we have already presented items that we could suspect to be compound verbs at first sight but that turned out, upon closer scrutiny, to be verbs derived from a phrase. In what follows, we will review cases in which a derivational suffix or a cluster of derivational suffixes happens to be homonymous with a verb. (We have already seen one such case: with respect to the form *kučkivni* ‘hit’ we claimed that it was not a compound but a derived form.)

2.10.1. Pseudo-compounds ending in *gini*

The sequence *gini* occurs at the end of quite a number of what seem to be compound verbs (the verb of the same form means ‘swarm, teem’). The element *g* is a relatively frequent verb forming suffix, regularly followed by epenthetic *i* (to avoid three-consonant clusters). On the other hand, in the verb *gini* the *i* is part of the root, not epenthetic, hence it is retained before vowel-initial suffixes, too. Therefore the homonymy of the root *gi-* and the suffix *-g(i)-* is not total, they just happen to be homonymous in their dictionary forms, by chance, as it were. In fact, there are no compound verbs whose last constituent would be *gini*.

2.10.2. Pseudo-compounds ending in *tɛdni*

The verb *tɛdni* means ‘know, be familiar with’. It is homonymous with the cluster of suffixes *t+ɛd*. Since phonotactically they do not behave dissimilarly, each case has to be semantically analysed. The table in (23) overleaf shows some of these.

It can be seen clearly that in most cases the verb stem ending in *-tɛd-* is paralleled by another verb stem ending in *-t-*, and the meaning difference either corresponds to the causative function of *-ɛd-* or there is no such difference (if the original meaning is of a causative character, too). In the case of *šektɛdni*, the addition of the suffix *-ɛd* results in elision of the vowel of the adjectival stem and the first of the two obstruents that have become adjacent undergoes voicing assimilation. (The same processes also apply when noun-forming suffixes are added to the same stem). In this case, then, *t* is part of the adjectival stem, and is underlyingly *d*, not *t*. For *jumovtɛdni*, there is no other (verbal) form it could be contrasted with, and it is formally conceivable that this single example should be a compound verb; however, it would be strange that in the only compound verb with *tɛdni* as its last constituent the meaning

(23) VERB	MEANING OF THE VERB	MEANING OF THE FIRST CONSTITUENT
<i>cezirtedni</i>	shudder, grimace (with disgust)	<i>cezirt-</i> V: wrinkle
<i>zugiltedni</i>	worry, make uneasy	A: sad, <i>zugilt-</i> V: make uneasy
<i>dorovedni</i>	make sy falter, upset	<i>dorov-</i> V: bend, turn sg aside, tilt
<i>jumovedni</i>	make sweeter	A: sweet
<i>muztedni</i>	tire	A: tired, <i>muzt-</i> V: tire
<i>objirtedni</i>	be sleepy	N: nap, <i>objirt-</i> V: doze off
<i>svutedni</i>	make sy/sg stand (up)	<i>svut-</i> V: stand up, get up
<i>sektedni</i>	trouble sy, incommode	<i>sekid</i> A: heavy; <i>seкта, sekted</i> N: weight, load
<i>svutedni</i>	shake	
<i>satovedni</i>	make falter, upset, swing	<i>satovt-</i> V: make falter, upset, swing
<i>sutovedni</i>	take away, carry away	N: whistle; <i>sutovt-</i> V: whistle; go away, run away, escape
<i>utovedni</i>	take away, turn out to grass	<i>utovt-</i> V: go away, run away

of the posterior constituent would be identical to that of the homonymous cluster of suffixes (rather than to that of the verb used on its own). Therefore, even in this case, it makes more sense to claim that the cluster of suffixes is involved. The same is true of *jejtédlini* ‘play the fool, dupe sy’ (cf. *jej* ‘crazy, stupid’).

2.11. Anterior constituents

As was seen in the foregoing, only some (a minority) of the first constituents of compound verbs occur on their own. However, this does not directly imply that they are not morphemes: it is well known that some morphemes never occur independently but are found in similar meanings in several word forms each. Such are, for instance, the bound stems of Hungarian onomatopoetic verbs: *patt-*: *pattog* ‘crackle’, *pattan* ‘crack’, *pattint* ‘snap’; *kop(p)-*: *kopog* ‘knock’, *koppan* ‘thud’, *koppint* ‘rap’; *röp(p)-*: *röpül* ‘fly’, *röppen* ‘flush’, *röpít* ‘let fly’, since the 18–19th-century language reform, also as a first constituent of compounds: *röppálya* ‘trajectory’, *röplabda* ‘volleyball’, etc.

In order to deny morpheme status of such items not occurring on their own, it is to be proved that they either occur in a single compound or they occur in several but with meanings that cannot be directly related to one another. This is easy to prove: more than half of all compound verbs have an anterior constituent that does not occur in any other compound.

This means that it is only about 145 first constituents that occur more than once.²⁷ Some of these also crop up as independent words, but then those occurring independently also include items that only occur once as an anterior constituent. (In addition, there are anterior constituents that do not occur on their own but do occur with derivational suffix(es) as well as in one or more compounds. But even stems that appear with derivational suffixes do not cover the whole set of anterior constituents that occur in a single compound and do not occur alone.)

In some cases, identity is beyond reasonable doubt. The compounds *ćumbjir-ćambjirkernj* and *ćumbjir-ćambjirvećnj* both mean ‘push down, tread down, crumple’; in the case of *čošmunnj* and *čošvižnj*, synonymy is observable in a number of hardly interrelated meanings: ‘take notice, start listening; look grumpy, frown; roughen one’s coat’. In other cases, synonymy is but partial: *šul-šalmunnj* ‘splash, lap’, *šul-šalvećnj* ‘id.’, but also ‘rinse, flush out’; *ševkmunnj* ‘stretch, extend, range as far as, spread, lie about, lie spread-eagled’, *ševkvižnj* ‘stretch, extend; have a nice and smart appearance’.

But it is not only full or partial synonymy that can suggest that a morpheme is present. There are some examples in which the meanings of two compound verbs are not the same but are nevertheless so close to one another that the connection between their anterior constituents cannot be denied. For instance, *ćuž-ćažmunnj* ‘fall to pieces cracking’, *ćuža-ćažakjvñj* ‘crack, creak, crunch’; *lićmunnj* ‘feel better, be more at ease’, *lićležnj* ‘loosen, subside, be dulled (pain)’; *pjirkmunnj* ‘be cold, be numbed with cold; tremble, shiver; wince’, *pjirkkernj* ‘shake off, shake out’.

It is to be noted that with anterior constituents that occur in several compounds and whose meanings are also similar across compounds it is quite often the case that they also occur alone. On the other hand, there are instances in which formally identical anterior constituents cannot be identified as instances of the same morpheme: *ćermunnj* ‘tremble, shudder’, *ćervižnj* ‘lie outstretched/sprawling; tower above, protrude, jut out, pierce out’ (in similar meanings also *ćurmunnj* and *ćurvižnj*); *dovkmunnj* ‘stagger, be lodged; become unsatisfied’, *dovkvižnj* ‘stand out, tower (building)’, *dovkvećnj* ‘shake one’s head; nod’; *parkvartnj* ‘break, smash, tread on; scatter, throw all over the place’; *parkvajnj* ‘get frightened, grow

²⁷ Exact calculation is made difficult by the issue whether reduplicative first constituents and their first or second parts occurring alone in another compound should be counted as the same or as different.

alarmed'; *šarmunnĭ* 'start swishing, rustling, buzzing', *šarakĭvniĭ* 'swish, rustle, buzz', but *šarvižniĭ* 'jut out, can be seen clearly'.

2.12. Summary

Komi-Zyryan compound verbs can be divided into two large groups. The first one comprises verbs whose posterior constituents often occur as posterior constituents of compound verbs. These are *munniĭ*, *kĭvniĭ*, *vižniĭ*, *kerniĭ*, *vartniĭ*, *većniĭ*. Such last constituents lose their original meanings and contribute no discernible meaning to the compound even if we just consider compounds involving first constituents that also occur independently and have a recognisable meaning of their own. Most first constituents, however, have no independent meaning at all; such compounds—though they tend to fall into typical semantic classes—express shades of meaning that do not follow from the meanings of their individual constituents. What we have to assume, therefore, is that the combination of first and last constituents has been lexicalised in these cases, with the last constituent itself carrying information that concerns the verb's Aktionsart and the thematic role of the subject at most (but even these are mere tendencies). The individual last constituents co-occur with first constituents of some specific character: thus, verbs ending in *kĭvniĭ* are characterised by a "thematic" *a* after the first constituent, verbs ending in *vižniĭ* or *vartniĭ* normally have a non-reduplicative first constituent, while those ending in *kerniĭ* tend to have a reduplicative first constituent. Some first constituents recur in several compounds but most of them only occur once; and even those that occur more widely carry some common meaning component (and are therefore to be reckoned with as morphemes) in part of the cases only. The number of compounds involving the individual last constituents also varies widely.

The other group comprises verbs whose last constituents only occur in one to five compounds each. In such compounds, the last constituent usually retains its meaning, and the relation between the two constituents often remains transparent, though the compound is used in a metaphorical sense in a number of cases.

3. An analysis of the compound verbs

3.1. Segmentation into morphemes

In analysing compound verbs, then, we have to discard the null hypothesis that the meanings of the anterior and posterior constituents are mechanically added up. This naïve idea cannot be generally upheld for most compounds: think of English examples like *windmill*, *water-mill*, *pepper mill*, *cylinder mill*, *praying mill*, *diploma mill*, etc. In these cases, we either have to say that in order to decipher the meanings, we have to rely on our (extralinguistic) knowledge of the world, or else that such compounds are lexicalised, their meanings are encoded in a precompiled form. (Or the two accounts can be combined in some manner.) Only a small subset of all compounds (like ones with the name of some material as first constituent, noun + noun compounds referring to some part-whole relation, compound numerals, etc.) are such that their meanings can be mechanistically computed from those of their individual components.

Given that, in the compounds under scrutiny here, the first constituent cannot be attributed any meaning of its own in most cases, the idea that extralinguistic knowledge might be relied on in their interpretation must be discarded to begin with. In a morpheme-based linguistic analysis, we should conclude that an overwhelming majority of Komi “compound verbs” consist of a single morpheme, that their meaning cannot be divided between their anterior and posterior constituents. What is more, we could conclude that whenever some kind of division seems to be possible, it is the exception rather than the rule; it is accidental, rather than typical. In fact, therefore, divisibility is but apparent even in such cases, what we really have are undivided single morphemes. It is obvious that such a move would seem to be too radical; but if we did not do that, we would draw a sharp distinction among verbs of similar meanings, sharing a number of properties, on the basis of whether or not the recognisable verbal morpheme in them is preceded by another recognisable morpheme. The material surveyed here does not warrant such sharp distinction.²⁸ It is, therefore, expedient to find a framework of analysis in which that strict demarcation (between one morpheme and two morphemes) is somehow absolved.

²⁸ For instance, in anterior constituents of *kivni*-final verbs, “thematic” *-a-* occurs irrespective of whether or not the first constituent is used on its own.

Before turning to a possibility of that sort, let me explain why in the title of this paper the term “compound verb” is given in quotes. Traditionally, we speak about a compound if two words that also occur separately join up to form a new word. With respect to most Komi “compound verbs”, this is out of the question since they cannot be divided into component morphemes. This problem was already discussed by Bloomfield in the famous *cranberry* case.²⁹ He argued that *cran-* has to be taken to be a morpheme³⁰ since, even though its meaning cannot be determined, it is clear what *berry* means and whatever is left over is ‘cran’, i.e., the meaning of *cran*. However, this example differs from the case at hand in that *cranberry* is the only problematic item among a number of *berries*, in all the other *berry*-compounds the first constituent can be recognised easily (although the meanings of the constituents are far from being mechanistically added up). In our case, however, unidentifiable “first constituents” form a majority, and the meanings of the posterior constituents cannot unambiguously be delimited, it is at most their forms that can be recognised. This fact raises the theoretical problem of how to tell apart exocentric compounds like Hungarian *lúdláb* ‘a type of dessert, lit. goose-foot’, *oroszlánszáj* ‘a type of flower, lit. lion-mouth’, *lócitrom* ‘horse’s droppings, lit. horse-lemon’ from pseudo-compounds like *borsó* ‘pea’, *‘wine-salt’ or *közgáz* ‘University of Economics’, *‘public gas’.³¹ However we might wish to twist our words, it is clear that Komi “compound verbs” differ in a number of respects from what we like to call compounds.

3.2. A redundant description: the constructional approach

In what follows, the outlines of a non-formal analysis will be presented.³² All linguistic objects exhibiting formal, semantic, and grammatical properties that do not follow from anything else (another construction) are

²⁹ Bloomfield (1935/1965, 160–1).

³⁰ Or at least a form: “*unique elements*, which occur only in a single combination, are linguistic forms,” *ibid.*, 160. In such a case, the meaning of the element that does not occur on its own is whatever the meaning of the combination differs in from that of the other element used alone. But that meaning can not always be satisfactorily circumscribed.

³¹ Cases like *villamos* ‘tram’, *‘fork-wash’ are simpler since compounds of the structure N+V (cf. *villa* ‘fork’, *mos* ‘wash’) are nonexistent in Hungarian.

³² For more details on constructional grammars, cf. Kálmán (2001).

called ‘constructions’. In this sense, constructions include not only various grammatical structures but also each individual lexeme. In addition, constructions can be characterised by other properties like frequency, productivity, stylistic value, etc. Individual constructions can be embedded in one another, they can partially overlap, and indeed whether something belongs to some construction is not necessarily a question of yes or no.

Although an approach like this appears to be a lot less exact than a rule-based description, it is excellently suitable for accounting for cases in which rules fail. If, for instance, a derivational suffix often joins stems of particular properties, we are inclined to posit a rule. That rule, however, often fails to apply to other stems of the same properties. If we discard the rule on that basis, we cannot account for formal and functional/semantic parallels. As opposed to a rule, a construction does not force us to expect that the given parallel works in each and every case, in an unlimited manner. A construction merely tells us that the given parallel does occur. If we think of grammars as descriptions of what the language user knows, constructions are a lot more adequate means of description than rules are: constructions do explain speakers’ ability to understand structures that they have not previously encountered (like new derivations or compounds), and also the way linguistic games work, non-productive derivational suffixes turn into productive ones, etc.

In the case of Komi compound verbs, the following constructions are to be reckoned with. First of all, there would be a general construction involving compounds whose posterior constituent is *munni*, *kivni*, *vižni*, *kerni*, *vartni* or *večni*. (The other compounds will be ignored henceforth since the present inquiry is primarily concerned with grammaticalisation.) Within that general framework, the sets of compounds whose anterior constituents are nouns, adjectives, adverbs, or onomatopes all constitute separate constructions. These constructions may involve information about their meaning (e.g., ‘get into a particular state’, ‘become characterised by the given property’, ‘emit the given type of sound’, etc.). Constructions whose meanings are as expected are typical; others will be less typical or atypical. It is actually a matter of free choice whether we posit an individual construction for each hapax-initial compound verb or whether we consider them to be items belonging to the general construction but not belonging to any anterior-constituent-specific construction. Separate constructions would be needed, however, for anterior constituents involving *-šer-*, *-a-* (and possibly *-k-*), as well

as for reduplicative anterior constituents, although the latter issue would probably go far beyond the range of compound verbs.

What are far more interesting for us here are posterior-constituent-specific constructions. There is a separate construction for each individual posterior constituent, containing both its formal properties (e.g., that *kivni* takes anterior constituents with the “thematic” vowel *-a-*, that *kerni* prefers reduplicated anterior constituents, etc.) and its semantic properties (primarily Aktionsart-related ones). Within posterior-constituent-specific constructions, individual typical meanings form separate constructions again. (Given that constructions may overlap, these constructions of typical meanings could unite compounds whose first constituents do refer to the meaning of the compound with other compounds whose first constituents are totally meaningless. An analysis built on morphemes would draw a sharp line between the two cases.)

Necessarily, each individual compound verb would be a construction itself, since their exact meanings would not be deducible from other constructions in general. It is partly a matter of arbitrary choice which compounds (other than Komi compound verbs) should or should not be taken to be independent constructions. This depends on what properties are spelled out in the overall constructions. It is conceivable that each and every compound (in all languages) should be taken to be a separate construction.

The question may arise as to what is the point in such an analysis, if all compounds at hand are taken to be separate constructions. In what way is this better than taking each compound verb to be a separate morpheme? In addition, a drawback of the constructional description is that it is lengthier, since it assumes a number of constructions that have no role whenever a given compound is interpretable without them.

A point in favour of the constructional analysis is that it can explain the way the speaker behaves when he encounters a verb ending in *munni*, *kivni*, *vižni*, *kerni*, *vartni* or *věčni* that he has so far been unfamiliar with. He will assume some aspectual property, transitivity or intransitivity, a thematic role for the subject, he will assume some typical meaning, and he will try to reconcile all these with the context; he will be more suspicious of a *kivni*-final form in which the first constituent does not end in *a*, etc. All that is unexplainable if one does not posit the redundant constructions, too. (Of course, a morpheme-based description can also be complemented with some reference to these properties, but that will have no theoretical relevance.) Redundancy, then, is not a weakness

of this description, but rather a characteristic feature of the material described. If the grammar tries to model the speaker’s competence, it has to describe all mobilisable pieces of knowledge, including ones that are not formulable as strict rules.

4. The grammaticalisation of Komi verbs

In terms of the foregoing, it is clear that six Komi verbs³³ *munni*, *kivni*, *vižni*, *kerni*, *vartni*, *večni* have lost their original meanings in a number of constructions (now in the theory-neutral sense) but they have remained clearly recognisable as formal elements. Although they cannot be singled out of most such constructions as grammatical morphemes, the constructions formed with them do exhibit characteristic formal properties and meanings.

If we try to approach this phenomenon with the notion of morpheme, we cannot even speak of grammaticalisation since the original morpheme gets lost in these structures and the whole “compound verb” constitutes a single unanalysable morpheme. In such cases, what we have instead is the lexicalisation of constructions involving the given verbs. It is questionable, however, if a significant number of such constructions did not exist beforehand in a different form (e.g., with a separable first constituent) or in a different meaning. The possibility cannot be excluded that many of these constructions did not arise from earlier (looser) combinations but analogically, following the model of existing other constructions of the sort. This appears to be supported by the high number of hapax (once-only) anterior constituents and by the existence of typical meanings. What all that seems to suggest is that many of these forms have been created by a playful, emotionally coloured word formation process. If this is so, we cannot speak of direct lexicalisation of the verb; rather, what we have is a two-step process: in the first step, a few combinations

³³ According to Raija Bartens (2000, 272), ‘onomatopoetic verbs’ (*deskriptiiviverbit*) already existed in Proto-Permian (*kantapermi*). She presents forms like Udmurt *čupkarini* and Komi *čup kerni*, (dialectal) *čup karini* ‘kiss, lit. do “smack”’ as evidence. The Komi item does not figure in our set of examples since here the onomatopoetic item gets separated from the verb in negation. Such constructions occur with many more verbs. The consolidation of the connection of the verb and the additional element only took place in Komi and only with the six verbs given, hence grammaticalisation — at least its final stage — is an exclusively Komi(-Zyryan?) phenomenon.

with the given verb are lexicalised; and in the second, constructions of the given form start proliferating in an analogical manner. (This is not a case of the posterior constituent turning into a suffix since it should exhibit a lot more striking common properties then.)

With respect to the grammaticalisation process, we cannot ignore the role of verb phrases (i.e., combinations that get split in negation) that involve other adverbs or onomatopes (as well as nouns or adjectives in a similar role) and that are semantically often rather close to the (inseparable) compound verbs. It is unclear whether the merger (into compound verbs) of verb phrases involving *munni*, *kivni*, *vižni*, *kerni*, *vartni*, *večni* took place before or after their proliferation began and why it was exactly these verbs that participated in the process. A thorough investigation of verb phrases that have not turned into compounds could perhaps tell us that there is a continuum, a range of transition between the original meanings of these verbs and their semantically depleted uses in compounds and hence the two kinds of uses are not as much detached from each other as the analysis of just the compounds suggests. In that case, the description presented here would be worth thinking over anew.

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