

Uni- and duo- verbations in Hindi-Urdu causal chains

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In searching for so-far-unnoticed phenomena in Hindi-Urdu grammar I encountered a curious example:

- (1) अब कंपनी ने इसकी कीमत बढ़ी बढ़ा दी है।¹

ab **kampanī-ne** is.kī kīmat **barh.ī=barh.ā dī** hai.

now company-ERG its price rose=raise GIVEN PRES

'Now the company has raised its price.' ✓ (from a report by Tanay Mishra, dated Mar 02, 2023)

[patrika.com/car-news/toyota-innova-hycross-prices-hiked-for-first-time- ... 8077565]

Example (1) appears to have two subjects: (i) an agential subject *kampanī* 'company' of the transitive *barhā dī* 'has raised' marked with the ergative postposition *ne* and, in the same sentence, (ii) *iskī kīmat* 'its price' the nominative subject of intransitive *barhī hai* 'has risen' which also serves as direct object of the transitive. A literal (albeit barbarous) English translation would require use of a solecism known as an "anacoluthon"²:

- (1') 'Now the company has raised its price has risen.' (!)

In (1) we find two separate although related ideas are combined into a single utterance expressing both cause and effect and doing this without having recourse to a clausal complementizer to tie together the two ideas. Neither in Hindi-Urdu or cross-linguistically is this common. Another rare instance:

- (2) उन्होंने राजा सगर के 60 हजार पुत्रों का उद्धार किया था और उन्हें मुक्ति मिली दिलाई थी।

unhō-ne rājā sagar ke 60 hajār putrō-kā uddhār.kiyā thā aur **unhē** **mukṭi mil.ī=dilā.ī thī**.

she-ERG King Sagar's 60,000 sons-GEN rescued had and them.DAT release got=given PST

'She (the goddess Ganga) saved 60 thousand sons of King Sagar and had given them (spiritual) release.'

[timesnowhindi.com/spirituality/...ganga-dussehra-2022-daan-donation...shubh-muhurat-time-date/412312] ✓

The two clausal components of (2) share not one but two noun phrases: (i) *unhē* 'them', the dative indirect object of the action of giving expressed by *dilāī thī* 'had given' as well as the subject of the intransitive verb *milī thī* 'had gotten' (which in Hind-Urdu is a verb that requires dative of subject) and (ii) *mukṭi* 'release', the direct object of the transitive *dilāī thī* and the surface subject of the intransitive *milī thī*. Example (2) features two different (though semantically related) finite verbs. As in (1) there is no complementizer in (2)'s structure that binds the expression of cause and effect into one "causal chain" (Bashir 1989).

Contrast (1) and (2) with the only somewhat less rare type of clause combination in examples (3) and (4):

- (3) कब करा दें ये फलूदा इज़्ज़त का ये हम नहीं आपको खुद ही पता चल चलवाएंगे।

kab karā dē ye faludā izzat-kā ye **ham** nahī **āp-ko** khud hī **patā** **čal=čal.vā-ēge**

when do^{CAUS} GIVE this faluda respect-GEN this we NEG you-DAT self only awareness move=move^{CAUS}-FUT

'When you complete this faluda³ of your reputation it's not us but you who'll come to know of it yourself.'

[sahityapedia.com/post/289563/] ✓

- (4) और 2 हैवी मोटरें पहुँचा कर इस त्रासदी से हमेशा के लिए राहत मिल दिलाई।

aur 2 haivī motrē pahūč.ā-kar is trāsdī-se hamešā-ke.lie **rāhat mil=dilā.ī**

and 2 heavy vehicles deliver-GER this tragedy-from always-for relief got=gave

'And by (X's) sending 2 heavy vehicles, (X) gave (Y) relief from this tragedy forever.'

[threads.com/@_prdeep_kumar_cohan/post/DZSgPrKjz9a/ ...] ✓

In (3) and (4) conjugation of the left-hand members of the verb pairs *čal-čalvāēge* and *mil-dilāī* is absent. Of them only the bare roots *mil* and *čal* remain. They have been incorporated as inert appendages of the finite verbs *dilāī* and *čalvāēge*. Examples (3) and (4) contain verbal univerbations. By way of opposing contrast, examples (1) and (2), with two finite verbs each, may be termed verbal "duoverbations".

¹ Colors: Elements of the transitive clause are in **red** and of the intransitive in **blue**. Elements shared by both are in **purple**.

² "An anacoluthon is a sudden break in a sentence that changes its grammar or thought halfway through." (quote from AI.)

³ Faluda is a popular layered dessert. Turning one's reputation into a faluda suggests making oneself a laughing stock.

One of the pressures (if I may speculate) prompting a replacement of duoverbations by univerbations is the morphological divergence in desinence between the clausal components. In (5) and (6), for instance, the transitive causes are in the form of infinitives while the intransitive effects are conjugated in the subjunctive:

(5) निगम को इस समस्या का समाधान जल्द से जल्द हो करवाना चाहिए।

nigam-ko is **samasyā.kā samādhān** jald-se jald **ho=karvā-nā** čāhiye
 corporation-DAT this problem's resolution fast-than fast become.SBJNC=do^{CAUS}-INF should
 'The corporation should resolve this problem as soon as possible.'
 [jagran.com/punjab/patiala-13666536.html] ✓ (updated: Wed, 02 Mar 2016)

(6) उसे कठोर से कठोर सजा मिले दिलाने के लिए सरकार को त्वरित पहल करनी चाहिए

use **kāthor-se kāthor saajā** **mil-e=dil.ā-ne** **ke.liye sarkār-ko** tvarit pahal kar-ni čāhiye
 him.DAT severe-from severe punishment get-SBJNC=give-INF for gov't-DAT immediate step take-INF should
 'The government should take immediate steps for ensuring that he gets the harshest punishment.'
 [facebook.com/RadhikaKhera/videos/.../1331615565175355/] Parikshit Narayan Suresh on 31.10.2025 ✓

Univerbation of the duoverbation **mil-e dilāne ke.liye** in (6) to **mil dilāne ke.liye** in (7) avoids the complexity for speakers of producing divergent desinences and for hearers the burden of processing them:

(7) किसानों को ... भंडारण सुविधा और बेहतर बाजार मूल्य मिल दिलाने के लिए सरकार ने एक बड़ी पहल की है।

kisānō-ko **bhandāraṇ suvidhā** aur behtar bāzār **muly mil=dil.ā-ne** **ke.liye sarkār-ne** ek baṛī pahal kī hai
 farmers-DAT storage facility and better market prices get=give-INF for gov't-ERG a big step made has
 'The gov't has taken a big step toward providing storage facilities and better market prices to farmers ...'
 [gaonjunction.com/khabar-junction/world-s-largest-grain-storage- ...] ✓ (U. Mishra, updated 27 Mar 26)

Or perhaps in choosing to use univerbation as in (7) over duoverbation as in (6) a tiny bit of mental effort is transferred from speaker to hearer.⁴

Abbreviations

Small caps are used in glosses for abbreviations and for vector verbs in the senses of their etymological sources.
 ✓ = unexpired link CAUS = causative DAT = dative ERG = ergative FUT = future GEN = genitive GER = gerundial
 IMPER = imperative INF = infinitive NEG = negative PRES = present PST = past SBJNC = subjunctive

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⁴ The clarity of presentation in this squib was improved by comments and suggestions from Hsin-hsin Liang, Sunil Kumar Bhatt and Tatiana Oranskaia. The concept of 'causal chain' I owe to Elena Bashir. For pioneering studies of reduplication in South Asia: see A.P. Barannikov, Murray Emeneau, and Anvita Abbi. See Annie Montaut (2008) for an analysis of the affectual properties of reduplication in Hindi-Urdu. NB: Not every native speaker will accept all the data presented here.