

## VERBAL CONJUNCTIONS IN SLOVAK ROMANI\*

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A verbal conjunction is a multi-word (analytical) naming unit, which can be formed in Romani by joining a formative verb with a noun (*lel god'i* “to contemplate”, literally “to take reason”), with an adjective (*ačhel korkoro* “to be left alone”, literally “to be lonely”), with an adverb (*ačhel palal* “to be late”, literally “to be in the back”) and, in some specific cases, also with a verb (*del te šunel* “to show/manifest”, literally “to give to feel”). A verbal conjunction constitutes a complex unit, both from a lexical (it has a verbal meaning as a whole) and a syntactic point of view (it functions as a constituent of a sentence – predicate). Its grammatical categories, i. e., its person, number and tense, are expressed in the formative verb, which can also serve to express the lexical-grammatical category of progressivity or regressivity of a verbal action (*del kejščėň* “to lend”, *lel kejščėň* “to borrow”, *kerel žužo* “to make sth clear”, *ačhel žužo* “to clear up”) and aspectuality (the spatial orientation of action “out of”: *čhivel avri andal o them* “to banish”, *čhivel e jakh avri* “to peep out”; inchoativeness: *thovel roviben* “to burst into tears”). The lexical meaning of the formative verb is significantly weakened or completely lost in the verbal conjunction. The lexical meaning of the verbal conjunction is therefore often based on its non-verbal component (*chal dar* “to fear”, literally “to eat fear”), or both components lose their original meaning in the resultant phraseological unit (*čhivel phuripen* “to make excuses”, literally, “to throw old age”).

**Key words:** verbal conjunctions, formative verbs, verbo-nominal conjunctions, verbo-adverbial conjunctions, verbo-adjectival conjunctions, verbo-verbal conjunctions, Slovak Romani

### 1. The definition of verbal conjunctions

Although verbal conjunctions constitute an organic part of the lexis of Slovak Romani, they have not been subject to linguistic inquiry yet. Their character demonstrates that they have a lot of features in common with analytical verbo-nominal naming units in other languages. In the case of Slovak Romani, studies

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on Indian languages or Slovak are of particular importance. Romani has a shared ancient history with Indian languages,<sup>1</sup> and its long-term contact with Slovak<sup>2</sup> has had a significant impact on its lexis and grammar. Some verbal conjuncts in Romani, especially those that are related to traditional culture or that refer to everyday actions (activities, processes and states), have long been part of Romani lexis (*kerel jakhendar* “to subjugate”, *del pativ* “to honour”, *chal bida* “to live on the breadline”, *kerel dukh* “to trouble”); others are new formations derived from the need to name actions that have not had specific names in Romani yet. This has been particularly shown in the production of dictionaries<sup>3</sup>, where its authors invented counterparts to Slovak naming units (*del hakaja* “to emancipate”, *kerel amalipen* “to be friends”, *kerel čerišagos* “to alternate”, *lel sikhaviben* “to train”, *lidžal/del bare dumi* “to theorize”, *visarel e duma* “to interpret”). However, the rules of the formation of verbal conjuncts are also followed by new naming units: formal stability (an obligatory order of components), the role of the verbal component can only be undertaken by a verb belonging to a restricted range of formative verbs, the formative verb, which is partly or completely desemantised, then serves as the carrier of verbal categories in this unit,<sup>4</sup> and the other component usually carries the factual meaning of the conjunct (*kerel chasna* “to do good”, literally “to do benefit”; *čhivel doš/došalipen* “to blame”, literally “to throw blame”; *del angali* “to embrace”, literally “to give an embrace”; *chal dar* “to fear”, literally “to eat fear”; *lel troma* “to dare”, literally “to take courage”; *ačhel korkoro* “to be left alone”, literally “to become/be lonely”; *ačhel palal* “to be late”, literally “to be in the back” etc.).

Admittedly, in some cases both components are desemantised. What arises is a verbal conjunct whose factual meaning is not directly related to the lexical

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<sup>1</sup> For illustration we can mention Hindi, which was described, for example, in KOSTIĆ S. A Syntagmaticon of Hindī Verbo-Nominal Syntagmas. Besides other things, the author brought a detailed overview of many opinions to this issue. In the case of Bengali, the issue was addressed in BYKOVA, E. M. The Bengali Language.

<sup>2</sup> A detailed description of verbo-nominal analytical naming units in Slovak is part of, for example to KRALČÁK, E. Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine, where the author introduces views of Slovak and Czech linguists on this issue in Slovak and Czech.

<sup>3</sup> Especially CINA, S., KALIÁŠ, Š., SAMKO, M., RUSNÁKOVÁ, J. Slovensko-rómsky odborný terminologický slovník. [Slovak-Romani Dictionary of Terms], but also KOPTOVÁ, A., KOPTOVÁ M. Slovensko-rómsky rómsko-slovenský slovník. Slovačiko-romano romano-slovačiko lavustik. Slovačiqo-romano rromano-slovačiqo lavustik. [Slovak-Romani Romani-Slovak Dictionary].

<sup>4</sup> Given this function, the verb in the verbal conjunct has been termed “kategorické sloveso” [categorical verb] in Slovak and Czech literature.

meaning of either of its components (*čhivel phuripen* “to make excuses”, literally “to throw old age”; *del muj* “to invite”, literally “to give a mouth”; *cirdel pes band'ares* “to hesitate”, literally “to follow an arc”). In such cases we speak of figurative expressions (figurativeness is often typical of Romani), and the result is a phraseological unit with a fixed meaning.

Verbal conjunctions are sometimes represented by multiverbalised denotations of synonymous one-word naming units.<sup>5</sup> In most cases these have the same base as the non-verbal (most frequently nominal or adjectival) component of verbal conjunctions (*kerel chochaviben* : *chochavel* “to lie”; *thovel asaben* : *asal'arel*, *asavel* “to burst into laughter”; *anel nasval'ipen* : *nasval'arel* “to infect”; *ačhel khabňi* : *khabňol* “to get pregnant”; *ačhel murš/muršeder* : *muršol* “to grow into a man”; *lel troma/del pes troma* : *tromad'ol* “to dare”; *perel pro churde* : *churd'ol* “to crumble”; *kerel kerado* : *kerad'ol* “to overheat”). Synonymous one-word naming units, however, can be derived from a different base (*anel gindipena* : *inšpirinel (pes)* “to get inspired”; *kerel zoraleder* : *pherd'arel* “to reinforce”; *lel vera* : *solacharel* “to swear”, “to get married (at a registry office, in a church)”; *vakerel pre god'i* : *sikhavkerel* “to lecture”). Sometimes verbal conjunctions are the only way of naming a verbal action (*čhinel pativ* “to humiliate”). In some cases the original verbal conjunctions are strangely unverbated, an example might be *del muj – mujdel* “to invite”,<sup>6</sup> where the order of the individual components is reversed, with the verbal component at the end. Also formally, the conjunction thus acquires the form of a verb.

As is evident, verbal conjunctions usually consist of two components: a formative verb, which represents the base of the verbal conjunction, which is supplemented either by a noun, adverb, adjective or verb. According to the word class of the second component, verbal conjunctions can be divided into verbo-nominal (*del kejčeň* “to lend”), verbo-adjectival (*ačhel lalo* “to go mute”), verbo-adverbial (*del pes anglal* “to appear”, but also “to make itself felt, to demonstrate itself”) and verbo-verbal (*thovel te bešel* “to seat”).

<sup>5</sup> Due to a shortage of Romani texts of diverse character, it is difficult to determine the difference of their stylistic value, unlike in Slovak (see, for example, ONDREJOVIČ, S. O multiverbizačných procesoch v spisovnej slovenčine. [On Multiverbizational Processes in Standard Slovak]. In *Slovenská reč*, 1988, Vol. 53, qtd. according to KRALČÁK, Ľ. Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine. Synchronno-diachrónny pohľad. [Analytical Verbo-Nominal Expressions in Slovak], p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Evidence has been found in KOPTOVÁ, A., KOPTOVÁ, M. Slovensko-rómsky rómsko-slovenský slovník. Slovačiko-romano slovačiko lavustik. Slovačiko-romano rromano-slovačiko lavustik. [Slovak-Romani Romani-Slovak Dictionary].

## 2. Formative verb<sup>7</sup> – the base component of a verbal conjunct

The verbs which are used to form analytical verbo-nominal naming units are aptly defined by Ľ. Kralčák in his work on analytical verbo-nominal phrases in Slovak as “synsemantic lexemes (neplnovýznamové lexémy) which were formed on the basis of original full verbs and which acquire their status (their categorial character) in forming a distinct analytical type of a verbo-nominal phrase” (translation mine).<sup>8</sup> This definition can also be applied to formative verbs in Romani. The function of formative verbs can only be performed by a certain, although quite wide, range of verbs. It is evident that the more general the meaning of a verb is, the greater its ability to function as a formative verb, and vice versa.

The verb *kerel* “to do” can be considered the most general formative verb. It is also mirrored in the fact that new verbal conjuncts formed from abstract nouns of foreign (most frequently international) origin are often formed by its means (*kerel amnestija* “to grant amnesty”; *kerel amputacija* “to amputate”; *kerel amortizacija* “to amortise”; *kerel analiza* “to analyse”; *kerel aneksija* “to annex”; *kerel angažmanos* “to engage” etc.).

Besides the verb *kerel*, the role of the formative verb is most often assumed by the verbs *ačhel* “to become/be”, *del* “to give”, *lel* “to take”, *avel* “to come”. The following verbs are also relatively frequent: *anel* “to carry” (for example, *anel gindipena* “to inspire, to get inspired”, *anel nasvalipen* “to infect”, *anel nevipen* “to announce, to herald”, *anel avri pro jekh* “to cement”, *anel pre godi* “to inform, to notify”, *anel andre ladž* “to bring shame, to embarrass”), *cirdel* “to pull” (for example, *cirdel pes garudes* “to creep”, *cirdel e godi* “to think”, *cirdel e vodi pal* “to desire, to miss”), *čhinel* “to cut” (*čhinel pašal* “to look around”, *čhinel paživ* “to humiliate, to lose trust”, *čhinel jakhaha* “to blink, to covet”, *čhinel bacht* “to damage”), *čhivel* “to throw” (*čhivel baripen* “to boast/brag”, *čhivel keriben* “to enchant, to bewitch, to do magic”, *čhivel jaga* “to blaze”), *dikhel* “to see, to watch” (*dikhel opral* “to disdain”, *dikhel cholaha* “to rage”, *dikhel džungales* “to frown”), *džal* “to go” (*džal romeste/pal o rom* “to get married”, *džal lačhes* “to do good”, *džal seraha* “to avoid”), *chal* “to

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<sup>7</sup> The term *formative verb* is used in accordance with how it is used by some authors (P. Hacker, K. Ch. Bahl) in analysing verbo-nominal syntagmas in Hindi. It approximately corresponds with *light verb* used in English, *Funktionsverb* used in German, *verbe support* in French and *kategoriálne sloveso*, or sometimes also *funkčné sloveso*, used in Slovak and Czech, or the term *formálne sloveso* as used by KRALČÁK, Ľ. Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine. Synchronno-diachrónny pohľad. [Analytical Verbo-Nominal Expressions in Slovak].

<sup>8</sup> KRALČÁK, Ľ. Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine. Synchronno-diachrónny pohľad. [Analytical Verbo-Nominal Expressions in Slovak], p. 37.

eat” (*chal dar* “to fear”, *chal bida/dukh* “to worry”, *chal mariben* “to get a thrashing”), *chudel* “to get” (*chudel godi* “to become wiser”, *chudel nasvalipen* “to get infected”, *chudel dar* “to get frightened”), *ispidel* “to push” (*ispidel anglal* “to push forward”, *ispidel dureder* “to move”, *ispidel tele* “to humiliate, to oppress”), *jel* “to be” (*jel darate* “to be afraid”, *jel sunende* “to imagine”, *jel došalo* “to cause”), *likerel* “to hold” (*likerel ňisoske/pataveske* “to disdain”, *likerel o muj/e čhib* “to become time-barred”, *likerel tatipen* “to warm up”), *marel* “to beat” (*marel o šero* “to think”, *marel peske o šero* “to imagine” or “to become thoughtful”), *thovel* “to lay” (*thovel pativ* “to humiliate, to offend”, *thovel o phova/paveki* “to frown”, *thovel lav* “to order”, *thovel roviben* “to start crying”), as well as *kidel* “to collect” (*kidel godi* “to become wise”, *kidel bind'a* “to score”, *kidel god'atar* “to memorise”, *kidel upre le manušen* “to rouse”, *kidel ketanes* “to accumulate”), *mukhel* “to let” (*mukhel thuv* “to smoke”), *perel* “to fall” (*perel pro churde* “to crumble”, *perel pre godi* “to take it into one’s head”, *perel mištes* “to suit”), *phagel/phagerel* “to break” (*phagel pativ* “to offend”, *phagel solach/vera* “to break an oath” or elsewhere “to get unmarried, to get divorced”, *phagerel vodi* “to disappoint”), *phandel* “to take” (*phandel lav* “to arrange”, *phandel peske andre godi* “to resolve, to make up one’s mind”, *phandel e čhib* “to grow silent”), *phenel* “to speak” (*phenel lav* “to deliver”, *phenel lačo lav* “to console”, *phenel džungales/zorales* “to admonish”), *phirel* “to go” (*phirel band'ares* “to walk with a limp”, *phirel vras/jekhetane* “to get together”, *phirel dromenca/phirel than thanestar* “to travel”, *phirel barikano/phirel upre nakheha* “to boast, to brag”).

Some verbs are only used in several verbal conjunctions, or quite sporadically. They are most often phraseological units, figurative denotations of a certain action, where verbal conjunctions can be an expressive denotation of an action, which can also be referred to by a neutral naming unit (for example, *čandel/čhungarel jag* “to fume”, literally “to return/spit fire”, is a metaphorical representation of greater expressivity than the neutral *rušel* “to be angry”), or they can be denotations of action which do not have neutral counterparts (for example, *čhingerel peske o bala* “to tear one’s hair out”, an action that expresses great despair, does not have a one-word (neutral) equivalent of the word “to despair”. Similarly, *kov'arel peske o jilo* “to become sentimental”, literally “to soften one’s heart”).

As I have mentioned, formative verbs are the carriers of the grammatical categories of verbal conjunctions. However, the choice of a verb also determines the intention of verbal action expressed by the verbal conjunction. This way, the formative verb *kerel* can be used to form a verbal conjunction expressing progressive action (*kerel jakhendar* “to bewitch”, “to enchant”), and the formative verb *ačhel* a verbal conjunction expressing regressive action (*ačhel jakhendar* “to become bewitched”). Also the verbs *del* and *lel* are used in a

similar contrary function (*del god'i* "to instruct, to advise, to teach" vs *lel god'i* "to deliberate, to reason", *del kejčeñ* "to lend" vs *lel kejčeñ* "to borrow", *del vera* "to marry" vs *lel vera* "to get married", *del bešiben* "to accommodate" vs *lel bešiben* "to put up, to find accommodation", *del nevipen* "to announce, to herald" vs *lel nevipena* "to get acquainted, to familiarise oneself" etc.). This contrary function is, naturally, abandoned when a reflexive form of the respective (progressive) verb is used (*del pes god'i* "to consult", *del pes troma* "to dare"). Also the formative verbs *chal* "to eat" and *chudel* "to get" can serve as the opposites of the verb *del* in expressing regressive action (*chal bida* "to live on the breadline", *chal dukh* "to worry", *chal/chudel mariben* "to get a thrashing", *chudel nasval'ipen* "to get infected"). The focus of the action can also be expressed by means of other verbs. Also the formative verbs *anel* and *avel* can be found in the opposite function (*anel pro svetos/pre luma* "to give birth" vs *avel pre luma* "to be born").

A formative verb can be modified by an adverb, which also expresses *Aktionsart*, for example, the spatial orientation of action (*čhivel e jakh avri* "to peep out", *čhivel pañi telal* "to baste", *kerel chor avri* "to dig, to sink").

The more general the meaning of the formative verb is, the greater its ability to form a verbal conjunct with different parts of speech. The verbs *kerel* "to do", *ačhel* "to be/become" and *avel* "to come" can thus produce verbal conjuncts with nouns (*kerel bu'i* "to work", *kerel bibacht* "to do harm", *kerel god'aha* "to deal with"; *ačhel kašteske* "to stiffen", *ačhel čitiben* "to grow silent", *avel pre god'i* "to remember"), with adverbs (*kerel lačhes* "to please", *kerel anglal* "to prefer", *kerel mištes* "to make sth more pleasant", *ačhel palal* "to be late", *ačhel tates/tateder* "to get warmer", *avel počoral* "to sneak in"), as well as with adjectives (*kerel kirko* "to turn bitter", *kerel bareder* "to make bigger, to enlarge", *kerel feder* "to modify", *ačhel lalo* "to become mute", *ačhel goreder* "to deteriorate", *ačhel čučo* "to remain bare-handed", *avel izdrano* "to worry").

Most formative verbs, however, connect only with nouns or adverbs: for example, *cirdel o muj/o nakh* "to grin", *cirdel pes band'ares* "to hesitate", *čhinel pa'iv* "to humiliate; to lose trust", *čhinel pašal* "to look around", *čhivel/thovel keriben* "to enchant, to bewitch", *čhivel tele* "to eliminate, to destroy; to throw down"; *del pes god'i* "to consult", *del pes anglal* "to appear"; *chudel (pale) zor* "to recover", *chudel pes opre* "to pull oneself together, to come round".

Although the basic features of verbal conjuncts include fixedness in the connectivity of a particular formative verb with a particular second component in expressing a particular lexical meaning, in some verbal conjuncts different formative verbs can be used synonymously. Even here, however, only a certain range of verbs can alternate. Naturally, the most general formative verb *kerel* allows the most possibilities. In verbal conjuncts it most frequently alternates with similarly general verbs *del* (progress), *lel* (regress), *thovel*. Less often, the

formative verb *kerel* alternates with other formative verbs such as *anel*, *ispidel*, *chudel*, *mukhel*, *ačhel*, *vakerel* and *čhinel*: *kerel/del/anel muchli* “to mist”, *kerel/del pharipen* “to weight down”, *kerel/del lokores* “to turn down”, *kerel/del maškar* “to incorporate”, *kerel/del/ispidel anglal* “to prefer”, *kerel/lel jakhendar* “to bewitch”, *kerel/lel love* “to convert into cash”, *kerel/lel/chudel love* “to suffer”, *kerel/lel tele e cipa* “to peel”; *kerel/thovel pre peste kamiben* “to indebt”, *kerel/thovel bašaviben* “to set sth to music”, *kerel/čhinel bibacht* “to do harm”, *kerel/mukhel čučo* “to empty”, *kerel/ačhel pes goreder* “to deteriorate”, *kerel/vakerel pre godi* “to persuade”, *kerel chor avri/kidel e chor* “to ditch”.

An alternation of formative verbs also occurs in cases other than with the verb *kerel*: for example, *ačhel/dikhel avri* “to experience”, *anel/thovel vakeriben* “to address”, *anel/del nevipen* “to announce, to herald”, *kidel/thovel ketanes* “to accumulate”, *lel/chudel love* “to earn”, *lel tel e jakh/thovel jakh pre* “to observe”, *lel/thovel peske andre godi/andro šero* “to remember”, *lidžal/hordinel savoreserenca* “to deliver, to distribute”, *lidžal/del bare dumi* “to theorise”, *likerel/chudel/ačhavel paš peste* “to hold, to stop”, *marel/čhingerel rateha* “to mangle”, *perel peske pre godi, del pes(ke) godi* “to realise”, *poravel/del avri o jakha* “to marvel”, *phagel/čhinel/thovel tele paživ* “to offend”, *phandel/thovel lav* “to arrange”, *phirel/džal vras/jekhetane* “to get together”, *phučel/mangel godi* “to consult”, *phundravel/phuterel o muj* “to yawn”, *rodel/chudel buži* “to do business”, *sikhavel/thovel avri peskero* “to prove”, *sikhavel/thovel baripen* “to pride, to boast”, *sikhavel/del drom* “to instruct”, *thovel/čhivel keriben* “to enchant”, *thovel/del lav* “to approve”, *thovel/anel vakeriben* “to address”, *thovel/del peskero lav* “to decide”, *thovel tele paživ/čhinel paživ* “to humiliate, to dishonour”, *vakerel/phenel pre godi* “to reprimand”, *vakerel/phenel maškar peste* “to arrange”, *visarel/čařarel o jilo* “to impress, to fascinate”.

The need to add new denotations of actions to lexis results in the formation of new verbal conjunctions, which are usually based on a “traditional” range of formative verbs, as evidenced by verbal conjunctions, for example, in the above mentioned Slovak-Romani dictionary of terms.

### 3. Parts of speech in the position of the second component of a verbal conjunction

The position of the second component of a verbal conjunction can be occupied by a noun, adverb, adjective or verb. According to the word class of the second component, verbal conjunctions can be divided into verbo-nominal, verbo-adverbial, verbo-adjectival and verbo-verbal.

### 3.1. Verbo-nominal conjuncts

Verbo-nominal conjuncts are the most wide-spread and richest type of verbal conjuncts in Slovak Romani. The position of the nominal component of the verbal conjunct is most often occupied by an abstract noun, either underived or derived. Underived abstract nouns include, for example, *bacht* “good luck” (*mangel bacht sastipen* “to bless”), *bibacht* “bad luck” (*čhinel bibacht*, *kerel bibacht* “to do harm”), *ladž* “shame” (*kerel ladž* “to commit”, *kerel peske ladž* “to discredit oneself”), *god'i* “reason, mind, thought, idea” (*del god'i* “to advise”, *kidel god'i* “to become wiser”, *cirdel e god'i* “to think”), *vod'i* “soul” (*phagerel vod'i* “to disappoint”, *cirdel vod'i* “to yawn”, *lel vod'i* “to catch one’s breath”), *dukh* “pain” (*chal dukh* “to worry”, *chudel dukh* “to suffer”, *kerel dukh* “to trouble”), *pa'iv* “honour, respect, tribute” (*phagel pa'iv* “to offend”, *thovel pa'iv* “to humiliate, to offend”, *del pa'iv* “to respect, to appreciate; to entertain”), *lav* “word” (*phandel/thovel lav* “to arrange”, *phenel lav* “to recommend”, *thovel lav* “to order”), *nav* “name” (*del nav/thovel nav* “to name, to appoint” etc.).

Derived abstract nouns are dominated by deverbative abstract nouns with a typical suffix *-iben*, which denote actions (*anel/thovel vakeriben* “to address” <*vakeriben* “narration”, *del bešiben* “to accommodate” (long-term) < *bešiben* “housing”, *lel soviben* “to put up” (short-term) < *soviben* “sleeping”, *chal/chudel mariben* “to get a thrashing” < *mariben* “thrashing”, *kerel dukhaviben* “to harm” < *dukhaviben* “harm”, *thovel roviben* “to burst into tears” < *roviben* “crying”). Less frequent are deadjectival abstract nouns with a typical suffix *-ipen*, which denote qualities (*kerel bachtalipen* “to save, to redeem” < *bachtalipen* “luck, blessing” < *bachtalo* “lucky, blessed”, *kerel načaćipen* “to wrong” < *načaćipen* “falsehood, injustice, unreality” < *načaćo* “untrue, false”, *kerel/čhivel phuripen* “to hesitate” < *phuripen* “old age” < *phuro* “old”, *anel nasvalipen* “to infect” < *nasvalipen* “infection” < *nasvalo* “ill”, *del nevipen* “to announce, to herald” < *nevipen* “news” < *nevo* “new” etc.). Quite rare are also desubstantive abstract nouns with a suffix *-ipen*, which denote actions or qualities (*kerel čohaņipen* “to enchant” < *čohaņipen* “magic” < *čohaņi* “enchantress”, *kerel amalipen* “to be friends” < *amalipen* “friendship” < *amal* “friend”).<sup>9</sup>

If the nominal component of the verbal conjunct is constituted by concrete nouns, they are often denotations of body parts, particularly the head and its parts: *šero* “head” (*marel o šero* “to think”, *našavel o šero* “to go insane”), *jakh* “eye” (*cirdel o jakha* “to capture sb’s attention”, *kerel jakha* “to spy”, *lel*

<sup>9</sup> It is worthy to note that abstract nouns derived by means of the borrowed suffix *-išagos*, which are otherwise common in contemporary Slovak Romani, are very rare in verbal conjuncts. I have found only one instance: *kerel čerišagos* “to alternate”.



*jakhate* “to notice”), *muj* “mouth” (*phuterel o muj* “to yawn”, *phandel o muj* “to grow silent”, *del muj* “to call, to invite”), *nakh* “nose” (*cirdel o nakh* “to grin”, *hazdel o nakh* “to walk around with one’s nose in the air”), *čhib* “tongue” (*l’ikerel e čhib* “to forfeit”, *phandel e čhib* “to grow silent”). Many of them constitute a base of a figurative expression or phraseme. The denotations of other body parts which can be found in the position of the nominal component of a verbal conjunct include *phiko* “shoulder” and *dumo* “back” (*band’arel o phike/o dumo* “to hunch one’s shoulders”, *band’ol o phike* “to bend one’s back a little”), *jilo* “heart” (*čal’arel/lošarel/visarel o jilo* “to impress/fascinate”), *vast* “hand” (*del vast* “to shake one’s hand, to support”).

Less frequent in the position of the nominal component of a verbal conjunct are denotations of persons: *rom* “man”, *romni* “woman” (*džal romeste/pal o rom* “to get married”, *ačhel romeha/romňaha* “to get married”, *lel romňa* “to get married”, *thovel romňaha* “to marry”), *phiv’lo* “widower”, *phiv’li* “widow” (*ačhel phiv’lo/phiv’li* “to become widowed”), *murš* “man” (*ačhel murš/muršeder* “to grow into a man”), *rabos* “slave” (*kerel raboske* “to enslave”).

The function of the nominal component of a verbal conjunct is also performed by other concrete nouns, for example, *kašt* “wood” (*ačhel kašteske/sar kašt* “to stiffen”), *bar* “stone” (*ačhel bareske* “to freeze”), *paňi* “water” (*anel o paňi* “to deposit, to sediment”), *much’li* “fog” (*anel/kerel/del much’li* “to mist/fog”), *lima* “snot” (*cirdel lima* “to blow one’s nose”), *kerestos* “cross” (*čhinel kerestos* “to cross”), *jag* “fire” (*čhivel jaga* “to blaze”) etc.

The noun which performs the function of the second component of a verbal conjunct can be in various cases.<sup>10</sup> Most often it is in the accusative, which is formally identical with the nominative in the case of inanimate nouns (*del nevipen* “to announce, to herald”, *kerel čohaňipen* “to enchant”, *cirdel o jakha* “to capture sb’s attention”, etc.). It is also often in the instrumental, which has a very wide use in Romani: it can express a circumstantial function of place, time, tool, means, originator, cause, aspect, manner, degree and purpose (*ačhel romeha/romňaha* “to get married”, *džal pharibnaha* “to drag oneself”, *čhinel jakhaha* “to blink”, “to look secretly at”, *čhivel pes/džal seraha* “to avoid”, *dikhel chol’aha* “to frown”, *kerel god’aha* “to deal with”, *phirel dromenca* “to travel”, *šunel jileha* “to empathise” and many others). It is quite rare that the noun in the position of the second component of a verbal conjunct is in the ablative form (*ačhel jakhendar* “to be bewitched”, *kerel/lel jakhendar* “to bewitch”, *cirdel čoreNDAR* “to practise usury”, *kidel god’atar* “to memorise”). In some cases the noun is in the dative: *ačhel kašteske* “to stiffen”, *ačhel bareske* “to freeze”, *kerel raboske* “to enslave”, *l’ikerel ňisoske/pataveske* “to disdain”,

<sup>10</sup> It can be said that this applies to all except for the *-ker-* form, traditionally referred to as the genitive, which confirms its exceptional position in Romani.

*thovel pataveske/ňisoske* “to discredit, to compromise, to humiliate, to dishonour”.<sup>11</sup> The noun in a verbal conjunct can also be in the nominative (*ačhel phiv’lo/phiv’li* “to become widowed” – to become a widower/widow) and in the locative (*džal romeste* “to get married”, *džal sune* “to dream” (while sleeping), *jel sunende* “to imagine”, *hurňa’ol kerekate* “to circle”, *lel/ačhel darate* “to be afraid”, *lel jakhate* “to notice”).

In all these cases the verbal conjunct differs from a loose connection of a full verb and an object or an adverbial in that a transformation of a full verb into a formative verb also transposes the nominal component of the verbal conjunct in such a manner that it ceases to perform the function of an object or adverbial and, in terms of meaning, it merges with the verb.<sup>12</sup> The noun in a verbal conjunct which functions as one whole loses its function of a sentence constituent and only becomes the carrier of the factual meaning of this conjunct.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.1.1. The connection of the nominal component of a verbal conjunct with a formative verb

The nominal component connects with the formative verb in two ways:

- a) directly (there is sometimes an article in front of the noun)
- b) a preposition, adverb or comparative conjunction *sar* “like” is inserted between the verb and the noun.

In the first type of the nominal verbal conjunct, formative verbs directly connect with nouns in a particular case. As has been seen, they are often abstract nouns or, in the case of concrete nouns, denotations of body parts, persons and things.

Equally numerous is the second type of verbal conjuncts, in which nouns connect with formative verbs by means of a preposition, adverb or comparative conjunction *sar* “like”.

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<sup>11</sup> When the noun is in the dative, in some cases an identical meaning can be conveyed by a parallel description – simile: *ačhel kašteske/ačhel sar kašt* “to stiffen” (literally, “to be like wood”), *ačhel bareske/ačhel sar bar* “to freeze” (literally, “to be like stone”).

<sup>12</sup> The lexical merger of the accusative with verbs has been dealt with by ORAVEC, J. *Vázba sloviess v slovenčine*. [Verb Valency in Slovak], pp. 75–76, qtd. according to KRALČÁK, E. *Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine*. *Synchrónno-diachrónny pohľad*. [Analytical Verbo-Nominal Expressions in Slovak], p. 19.

<sup>13</sup> KRALČÁK, E. *Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine*. *Synchrónno-diachrónny pohľad*. [Analytical Verbo-Nominal Expressions in Slovak], p. 34, in this context refers to the work of NIŽNÍKOVÁ, J., SOKOLOVÁ, M. et al. *Valenčný slovník slovenských sloviess*. [Slovak Verbs Valency Dictionary], p. 9, who do not speak of syntactic objects in such cases but predicative names, which constitute a naming unit with a grammatical functor.

If formative verbs take nouns in a prepositional case, most often it is the preposition *pre* “on, to, in”, less often *paš* “at; to; for”, *andal* “from”, *andre* “in”, *tel* “under”, *pal* “about; after; behind”, *bi* “without”. Like in the case of the first type of verbal conjuncts, the nominal component of verbal conjuncts can be either an abstract or concrete noun. The abstract noun *god'i* is common, and so are denominations of body parts. Quite often they are figurative expressions: for example, *avel pre god'i* “to remember”, literally “to come to mind”; *jel paš e god'i* “to be in one’s right mind”; *lel pre god'i*, *phandel peske andre god'i* “to resolve”, literally “to take it into one’s mind”; “to bind into one’s mind”, *vakerel/phenel pre god'i* “to admonish, to reprimand”, “to warn”, literally “to speak into sb’s mind”; *čhivel andro/pro jakha* “to reproach”, literally “to throw into sb’s eyes”; *ačhel pro šero/pre men* “to be saddled with”, literally “to be on sb’s head/neck”, *lel peske andro šero* “to meditate”, literally “to take it into one’s mind”; *del andro vast* “to bribe”, literally “to give into one’s hand”; *phenel andro khan* “to whisper”, literally “to say into sb’s ear”, etc.

Verbal conjuncts can become a part of a wider phraseological unit, for example, *lel god'i andro šero* “to use one’s wits” (literally “to take reason into one’s head, or think hard”).

Verbal conjuncts with prepositional nouns include *lel pre jakh* “to notice”, *lel tel e jakh* “to observe”, *perel andre jakh* “to notice, to spot”, *lel tel peskero vast* “to subjugate”, *ispidel tel o pindre* “to humiliate”, *anel andre ladž* “to bring shame on, to embarrass”, *jel pre chasna* “to benefit”, *avel andro berša* “to grow old”, “to grow up”, *perel andre dar* “to get frightened”, *phenel pre dukh* “to offend”, and many others.

In many cases formative verbs are modified by means of adverbs: for example, *del avri o jakha* “to marvel”, *čhivel e god'i avrether* “to be unfocused”, *l'ikerel god'i jekhetane* “to focus”, *cirdel avri/chal avri/ kidel avri o jilo* “to misuse/abuse”, *del pale o muj* “to express contempt”, *phagel/čhinel/thovel tele pa'iv* “to offend”.

Although verbs in verbal conjuncts are to a great extent desemantised, the meaning of prepositions by means of which verbs connect with nouns, or adverbs which modify them, is also reflected in the meaning of the verbal conjuncts: for example, *čhivel e jakh avri* “to peep out”; *thovel jakh pre* “to observe”, *thovel jakha pal* “to follow, to pursue, to spy”.

Sometimes formative verbs connect with nouns by means of the comparative conjunction *sar* “like”: for example, *del vast sar phraleske* “to reconcile, to make up”, literally “to shake sb’s hand like a brother’s”; *ačhel sar bar* “to stiffen”, literally “to be like stone”.

### 3.1.2. *The factual meaning of a verbo-nominal conjunct*

The meaning of a verbal conjunct is not composed of the meanings of its components. A verbal conjunct is a lexicalised or phraseologised unit which functions as a whole. As has been mentioned several times, the factual meaning of a verbo-nominal conjunct is mostly conveyed by its nominal component. However, this function of the nominal component is not in all cases equally transparent. In the case of some verbal conjuncts, their factual meaning can be unambiguously derived from the lexical meaning of the nominal component, which can be either an abstract or concrete noun: for example, *del kotera* “to patch” <*kotera* “patches”, *kerel kal'ika* “to cripple” <*kal'ika* “cripple”, *čhinel kerestos* “to cross” < *kerestos* “cross”, *čhivel/thovel baripen* “to boast/brag” <*baripen* “pride”, *čhivel doš* “to blame” <*doš* “blame”, *del angal'i* “to embrace” <*angal'i* “embrace”, *del lav* “to give one’s word, to promise” <*lav* “word”, *chal dar* “to fear” <*dar* “fear”, *chudel nasval'ipen* “to get infected” <*nasval'ipen* “infection”, *chudel zor* “to strengthen” <*zor* “strength”, *lel romňa* “to get married” <*romňa* “woman”, *lel bešiben* “to find accommodation” (long-term) <*bešiben* “accommodation”, *našavel zor* “to lose strength” <*zor* “strength”, *phagel solach/vera* “to break one’s oath” <*solach/vera* “oath”, *thovel džung* “to besmirch” <*džung* “dirt, smirch”.

In other cases, nouns constitute the semantic base of verbal conjuncts, but the factual meaning of the verbal conjuncts cannot be directly inferred from the nouns. The factual meaning of verbal conjuncts is related to the established metaphorical meaning, which is, in language, attributed to the whole phrase, and is also partly composed of the meaning of formative verbs (*del god'i* “to instruct, to advise, to teach”, literally “to give brains”; *lel god'i* “to think, to consider”, literally “to take brains”; *kidel god'i* “to become wiser”, literally “to pick up brains”; *našavel god'i* “to act rashly”; “to go mad”, literally “to lose brains”; *kerel god'aha* “to deal with”, literally “to work with brains”; *čhivel e jakh* “to look into”, literally “to cast an eye”; *kerel šereha* “to nod”, literally “to work with one’s head”).

In some verbo-nominal conjuncts, their factual meaning is related to their nominal component (an object denominated by the noun participates in the action denoted by the verbal conjunct), yet it is not directly inferable from its lexical meaning: for example, *kerel jakha* “to spy”, literally “to make eyes”; *del muj* “to invite”, literally “to give sb a mouth”; *cirdel o muj/o nakh* “to grin”, literally “to pull one’s mouth/nose”.

In the part dealing with formative verbs it has been mentioned that in some cases certain formative verbs can alternate in connection with the same noun while the same meaning is preserved. Similarly, in some cases there are synonymous verbal conjuncts formed from the same formative verb connecting with a different nominal component: *ačhel bijo dada*, *ačhel pro čoripen* “to be

left alone”, *ačhel pro šero/ačhel pre men* “to be saddled with”, or “to have to take care of”, *kerel balamuta/kerel bengipen* “to frolic, to romp”, *kerel šižitno/kerel rat* “to darken”, *l'ikerel zor pre/l'ikerel tel o vast/l'ikerel tel peskeri zor* “to rule”, *l'ikerel andre god'i/l'ikerel andro šero* “to remember”, *našavel o šero/našavel e god'i* “to go insane”, *thovel peskero vast/thovel peskeri but'i/thovel peskero lav* “to participate, to be involved”, *vakerel andro svetos/vakerel diliņipen* “to talk nonsense”. Quite often *god'i* and *šero* alternate in a synonymous meaning: *lel peske andro šero/god'ate/pre god'i* “to resolve”, *lel/thovel peske andre god'i/andro šero* “to remember”, *l'ikerel andre god'i/andro šero* “to remember”.

Sometimes it can depend on the context if a particular construction formed from a verb and a noun can be interpreted as a loose connection of a full verb and an object or as a verbal conjunct: *phandel o muj* can be interpreted as “to shut one’s mouth” or metaphorically as “to grow silent”; *phuterel muj* can be understood as “to open one’s mouth”, but also as “to yawn”, *sikhavel drom* can mean “to show the way” or, as a verbal conjunct, “to instruct”.

### 3.2. Verbo-adverbial conjuncts

Verbal conjuncts in which formative verbs connect with adverbs are also relatively common. Also in their case, like in the case of verbo-nominal conjuncts, they are set phrases which are formed on the basis of “abstracting from a particular meaning of a whole phrase, which involves a semantic shift when the adverb acquires a more abstract meaning by losing the support of the primary (“expected”) context of the action; the original full verb, at the same time, becomes formal” (translation mine).<sup>14</sup> Verbal conjuncts, as usual, represent lexical and grammatical entities in which verbs carry the grammatical and lexico-grammatical categories while adverbs convey the factual meaning. According to the character of the adverbial component, verbo-adverbial conjuncts can be divided into two types.

In the first type of verbo-adverbial conjuncts, adverbial components are constituted by circumstantial adverbs denoting a location in relation to another space (where), or heading towards a certain space (where), or from a certain space (where from): *andre* “inside; into”, *anglal* “ahead of; ahead”, *avri* “outside; out of”, *opre* “above; up”, *opral* “above, up; from above”, *pale* “backward; back, but also again”, *palal* “in the back; backwards; from the

<sup>14</sup> This apt definition is used by KRALČÁK, Ľ. Analytické verbo-nominálne spojenia v slovenčine. Synchronno-diachrónny pohľad. [Analytical Verbo-Nominal Expressions in Slovak], p. 60.

back”, *pašal* “around, past”, *tele* “down”. The adverb *anglal* can also have the temporal meaning “prior to”.

Rarer is the second type in which the position of the adverbial component is occupied by adverbs of manner: for example, *počoral* “in secret”, *garudes* “in secret, secretly, undercover”, *jekhetane* “together”, *lokes* “gently, lightly”, *lačhes* “well, correctly”, *phujes* “badly”, *džungales* “ugly, nastily”.

In a subtype of the second type of verbo-adverbial conjuncts, the adverbial component is formed by deadjectival adverbs in the comparative form: *feder* “better”, *dureder* “further” etc.

### 3.2.1. Verbo-adverbial conjuncts of the first type

Not all combinations of verbs and the mentioned adverbs can be considered verbal conjuncts. Verbal conjuncts include only those which approach the status of a word by their meaning or grammatical relations with the other words in a sentence and can function as a single part of a sentence.

There are two basic subtypes of verbo-adverbial conjuncts of the first type. Verbal conjuncts which are otherwise formally identical differ from each other by a degree of abstraction from the original meaning of both components, which is reflected in their factual meaning.

The first subtype is characterised by a partial desemantisation of the formative verb and an obvious reflection of the semantical meaning of the adverb, i.e., the spatial (temporal) relation it expresses, in the lexical meaning of the verbal conjunct: *ispidel pes anglal* “to push”, but also “to elbow one’s way” (literally “to push forward”), *džal anglal* “to make progress”, elsewhere “to push” (literally “to go ahead”), *dikhel opral* “to disdain” (literally, “to look down on”), *del pale* “to pay back, revenge; to repay, reward” (literally “to give back”), *ačhel opre* “to stick out” (literally “to be above”), (*chol’aha*) *phenel pale* “to retort” (literally “to talk back (angrily)”), *ačhel palal* “to lag behind” (literally “to be in the back”), *ispidel tele* “to humiliate, to subjugate” (literally “to push down”).

Temporal meaning: *dikhel anglal* “to predict” (literally “to see in advance”), *šunel anglal* “to anticipate” (literally “to sense in advance”), *po’inel anglal* “to subscribe” (literally “to pay in advance”) etc.

Relatively rich is the group of verbal conjuncts of the second subtype in which the original lexical meaning of both components is completely lost. The result is a set phrase whose factual meaning is unpredictable even if one is familiar with the original lexical meanings of its components: *murdarel andre* “to turn out” (literally “to kill in”); *thovel pes andre* “to take chances”, elsewhere “to intervene” (literally “to place oneself inside”); *ačhel/dikhel avri* “to experience” (literally “to be/see outside”); *del pes avri* “1. to give oneself away, 2. to confess” (literally “to give oneself out”); *chudel avri* “to find out”

(literally “to get out”); *chudel pes opre* “to pull oneself together” (literally “to get up”), *kerel opre* “offer” (literally “to do up”) and others.

Sometimes verbo-adverbial conjunctions exist as figurative references to an action besides neutral naming units. For example, *pekel andre* “to trick, to outfox” (literally “to bake inside”) is an expressive counterpart to the neutral *kerel chol'i, chol'arel* “to make angry, to upset”, or a substandard counterpart to the neutral *chochavel tele* “to deceive”.

### 3.2.2. Verbo-adverbial conjunctions of the second type

The position of the adverbial component in the verbal conjunction of this type can be occupied by adverbs of manner and deadjectival adverbs in the comparative form: *avel počoral* “to sneak in” (literally “to come in secret”), *cirdel pes garudes* “to creep up” (literally “to drag oneself secretly, undercover”), *dikhel phujes* “to overlook” (literally “to look badly”), *dikhel banges* “to frown”; “to glower” (literally “to look askew”), *džal lačhes* “to do good” (literally “to go well”), *chal bokhales* “to gulp down” (literally “to eat hungrily”), *kerel mištes* “to make sth pleasant/enjoyable” (literally “to do well”), *kerel lačhes* “to please” (literally “to do well”), *perel mištes* “to suit” (literally “to fall well”), *phenel džungales/zorales* “to reprimand” (literally “to tell harshly/strictly”), *del feder* “to improve sb’s situation” (literally “to give better”), *kerel feder* “to modify”; “to perfect” (literally “to make better”) etc.

### 3.3. Verbo-adjectival conjunctions

In verbo-adjectival conjunctions the position of formative verbs is occupied almost exclusively by the verbs *kerel* “to do”, *ačhel* “to be, to become”, less often *avel* “to come”, exceptionally other verbs such as *džal* “to go”, *jel* “to be”, *phirel* “to walk”.

A verbo-adjectival conjunction whose base is constituted by the formative verbs *kerel* and *ačhel* usually expresses a change of state; *kerel* indicates progressive action while *ačhel* regressive action (*kerel baro/bareder* “to exaggerate”, literally “to make big/bigger”; *kerel zoraleder*, “to reinforce”, literally “to make stronger”; *kerel šukareder* “to liven up”, literally “to make more beautiful”; *kerel avutno* “to plan”, literally “to make sth original”; *ačhel lalo* “to go mute”, literally “to become mute”; *ačhel čineder/čepeder/frimeder* “to diminish”, literally “to become smaller”; *ačhel (sar) mulo/mul'ardo* “to freeze”, literally “to become/be (like) dead/sickly”; *avel izdrano* “to worry”, literally “to be shaky”; *jel chochado* “to pretend”, literally “to be false”; *phirel barikano* “to put on airs”, literally “to walk around puffed up”).

### 3.4. *Verbo-verbal conjuncts*

The last group of verbal conjuncts is constituted by verbo-verbal conjuncts. The second verb which carries the factual meaning of the verbal conjunct connects with the formative verb by means of the particle *te* (i. e., in the infinitive form): *del te šunel* “to show, to manifest”, literally “to give sb feel”; *del te džanel* “to announce”, literally “to give sb know”; *džal te dikhel* “to visit”, literally “to go to see”; *thovel te bešel* “to seat”, literally “to put to seat”.

Verbo-verbal conjuncts can serve to express inchoativeness; the formative verb completely loses its original lexical meaning: *chudel te gilavel* “to warm up one’s voice”, literally “to get to sing”; *del/lel te rovel* “to make cry, to burst into tears”, literally “to give/to take to cry”; *chudel te čalavel* “to put in motion”, literally “to get to move”; *thovel pes te rovel* “to burst into tears”, literally “to lay oneself to cry”.

### Conclusion

In Slovak Romani there are many verbal conjuncts of different character. In terms of diversity and richness, there is a prevalence of verbo-nominal and verbo-adverbial conjuncts, which are supplemented by verbo-adjectival and verbo-verbal conjuncts. Many verbal conjuncts are the only way to form denominations of actions; others coexist with synonymous one-word naming units. Many are rooted in Romani lexis, others were formed as a result of the need to find a counterpart to a Slovak naming unit when dictionaries were being compiled, and only time will show if and to what extent they will catch on among language users. In any case, verbal conjuncts attest to the richness of the Romani language and, in many cases, also to its figurativeness.

All mentioned types of verbal conjuncts are characterised by the following properties:

- 1) They are formally stable: they consist of two components arranged in an obligatory order.
- 2) Each of the components is identifiable (as a verb, noun, adverb or adjective), but in verbal conjuncts neither of the components function as a separate lexical or grammatical unit.
- 3) The verb is no longer a full verb, but it is to a great extent or completely desemantised and acquires a formative function, which means that it only becomes a carrier of grammatical and lexico-grammatical categories of a new entity.



- 4) Also, the second component of the verbal conjunct is transformed: it loses its word class belonging and grammatical function and only becomes the carrier of the factual meaning of the verbal conjunct.
- 5) The verbal conjunct then, as a whole, has both a lexical and grammatical meaning.

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