

Light verb constructions in Scottish Gaelic

1 Introduction

The study of complex predicates (Butt, 1995; Alsina et al., 2001; Amberber et al., 2010; among others) and multi-verb constructions (Aikhenvald and Muysken, 2011; among others) has attracted the interest of scholars worldwide. Both descriptive and theoretical approaches to their exploration and analysis in many languages appear to agree on a number of shared properties. An example is their monoclausal structure, which is reflected in the fact that the intonational properties of the construction are the same as those of a monoverbal construction. Likewise, they have a single tense, aspect, modality, mood, evidentiality and polarity value, but their argument structure is essence quite complex as it consists of two heads that are capable of contributing semantically to the event, and there is also a single complex predicate and a single subject.

Despite the widespread accordance with the properties attributed to constructions involving complex predicates, their cross-linguistic analysis has traditionally been rather tricky, mainly due to the difficulty in establishing a clear-cut criteria that enable the identification of different types of complex predicates. The lack of clear classification criteria comes from the fact that some characteristics seem to be too difficult to apply, for example whether or not a verb contributes to the semantic content of the construction. Others may refer to morphosyntactic properties that are language-specific, for example, whether it is possible to differentiate between auxiliary and lexical verbs in English in terms of inverting their order with respect to the subject in interrogative sentences. Thus, although most studies on multi-verb constructions have drawn on a tripartite classification consisting of the types commonly referred to as serial verb constructions (SVC), the light verb construction (LVC) and the auxiliary verb construction (AVC), the specific study of these three classes of complex predicates in different languages has shown great heterogeneity of properties in each construction. This makes it hard to attain a precise definition and an accurate demarcation of each type. Hence, the interest in setting up distinguishing properties and finding a clear definition for the three main complex predicate types remain relevant today. In view of this situation and that the focus of this paper is on the study

and analysis of LVCs in Scottish Gaelic (Goidelic Celtic), the organization of this paper is as follows. Section 2 attempts to distinguish LVCs from other types of complex predicates, such as auxiliary verb constructions (AVC) and serial verb constructions (SVC), in Scottish Gaelic by examining the semantic and morphosyntactic properties of their verbs. Section 3 shows a cross-linguistics comparison of the characteristics of Scottish Gaelic LVCs with those that have traditionally been proposed in other languages in order to check which of the features of Scottish Gaelic LVCs are distinctive, and which ones are recurrent. Finally, the paper aims to provide a functional characterization of LVCs within the Role and Reference Grammar framework (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997; Van Valin, 2005).

2 The identification of light verb constructions in Scottish Gaelic

As noted by Butt (2010, 49), an identification of the different types of construction covered by the concept of ‘complex predication’ is not an easy task. Firstly, an SVC (Aikhenvald and Dixon, 2006; Haspelmath, 2016) is generally considered to include a sequence of lexical verbs that are combined to behave like a single predicate, in such a way that each verb describes a different facet of what should be conceptualized as a single event. Neither do they contain any marker of coordination or subordination, they cannot be negated or questioned separately from the whole construction, and are under a single intonation contour. Other studies also allude to the possibility that serial verbs can occur on their own as the main verb of a clause in other contexts, span the entire verbal paradigm, have shared values for tense, aspect and modality, do not have separate temporal or locative modifiers, share at least one argument (generally corresponding to the subject, although object sharing can sometimes also occur), and may not be strictly adjacent (Baker, 1988; Stewart, 1963; Aikhenvald, 2006, 2018; Haspelmath, 2016).

These prototypical properties would indicate that there are no examples of SVCs in Scottish Gaelic. The closest equivalents to an SVC in this language could be subject and object control, periphrastic causative, purposive constructions, and constructions including posture verbs and direct perception, as their two verbs contribute semantic content to the construction. However, only one of the two verbs is inflected and the other must occur in the form of a non-finite hybrid of noun

and verb commonly referred to as a verbal noun in Celtic linguistics,¹ which could then be considered to be syntactically dependent on the other verb. Also, there is an intervening particle between the two predicates and they are generally pronounced with more than one intonation contour, which appears to suggest that they encompass two syntactically separate domains of predication.

Secondly, fewer difficulties are found when distinguishing an SVC from an AVC if one adopts the most common properties proposed for the AVC (Anderson, 2006, 2011). In this construction, the lexical component generally occurs in a non-finite and, consequently, a syntactically dependent form, and the functional component, which is generally referred to as the auxiliary verb, encodes the core inflectional verbal features or categories such as aspect, tense, modality, mood, evidentiality, causation, and voice. Also, except in cases where the full verb has been elided but is easily recoverable from context, the auxiliary verb cannot occur alone and it is not restricted in its combinatorial possibilities. Additionally, it can be combined with every lexical verb, even with its homonymous full verb, it is complemented by a non-finite full verb, and generally spans the entire verbal paradigm, although, as in the case of modal auxiliary verbs, it can also display a defective paradigm, since it is restricted to just one tense or aspectual form (Heine, 1993; Kuteva, 2001; Anderson, 2006, 2011; Krug, 2012). Finally, the auxiliary verb is considered not to be able to add or reduce arguments and determines case and theta-role assignment. The set of verbs that have most commonly become grammaticalized as auxiliaries in Scottish Gaelic include the following: *bi* ‘be’, *is* ‘be’, *faigh* ‘get’, *gabh* ‘take’, *rach* ‘go’, *thig* ‘come’, and *theob* ‘do almost’.

With respect to the two copular verbs, this language uses the substantive *bi* ‘be’ to express a number of aspectual distinctions, such as progressive aspect, perfect aspect, prospective aspect, tense, indirect causation, and passive, and the assertive or copula *is* ‘be’ to express other different types of aspect, such as habitual aspect, and mood, for example to express a counterfactual situation or wish. Also, this language can also express the passive voice or impersonal sentences through other different periphrastic ways involving verbs like *faigh* ‘get’, *gabh* ‘take’, *rach* ‘go’, and *thig* ‘come’. Additionally, Scottish Gaelic uses the defective verb *theab* ‘almost, nearly’, which is severely restricted formally speaking as it has only one form, to express the avertive aspect. Besides these primary auxiliary verbs, Scottish Gaelic also has a couple of modal auxiliary verbs, *faod* ‘can’ and *feum* ‘must’, which serve to convey different types of deontic, dynamic, and epistemic modality. Thus, on the one hand,

¹ This element is a construction-specific non-finite form – commonly referred to as a ‘verbal noun’ in the traditional terminology used in Celtic linguistics (MacAuley, 1992, 170–190; Gillies, 1993, 282–285; Adger, 2010, 305–336; Cox, 2017; Byrne, 2018, 117–130; and Lamb, In press, 398–439) – that, as suggested by its name, combines both verbal and nominal properties.

faod ‘can’ can express permission, ability, and probability, and on the other hand, *feum* ‘must’ can express strong obligation, necessity, and certainty. Finally, Scottish Gaelic also makes use of the substantive *bi* ‘be’ and the assertive or copula *is* ‘be’ plus a number of nouns, adjectives and prepositions to convey a number of modal distinctions. Thus, the main differences between an LVC and an AVC are that, unlike auxiliary verbs, light verbs are considered to retain some semantic content, may be accompanied by other elements apart from verbs, such as nouns, adjectives, prepositions or even adverbs, are combinatorially restricted, and then are capable of adding or reducing arguments and determining case and theta-role assignment.

The line of demarcation between LVCs and the other two complex predicate types is especially hard to draw, as LVCs appear to lie between SVCs and AVCs in the sense that it is difficult to decide to what extent one of its components, namely the light verb, can contribute lexical semantic content – as serial verbs do – or grammatical information – which happens with auxiliary verbs – to the construction, or even what kind of information it is able to provide. This complicates the definition of what should count as an LVC, hence the term LVC has sometimes been used to refer to different types of complex predicate cross-linguistically. In view of this, a neutral stance on the definition of LVCs could be one that considers the light verb to be an inflectable semi-lexical verbal element that is combined restrictively with one or more full lexical heads which may belong to a heterogeneous set of categories (e.g. noun, adjective, an uninflectable verb, preposition, etc.) to jointly predicate a single event (Alsina et al., 2001; Butt and Geuder, 2001; Butt, 2010; Butt and Lahiri, 2002; Heine, 2006; Amberber et al., 2010; Fleischhauer et al., 2019; Fleischhauer and Gamerschlag, 2019; Fleischhauer, 2021).

The set of verbs that are normally used as light verbs in Scottish Gaelic is as follows: *gabh* ‘take’, *thoir* ‘give’, *dèan* ‘do/ make’, *cuir* ‘put’, *faigh* ‘get’, *thig* ‘come’, *rach* ‘go’, *leig* ‘let’, *tarraing* ‘draw’, *buail* ‘hit’, and *cùm* ‘keep’. Light verbs in this language have the same form and inflect exactly like their main verb counterparts and span the entire verbal paradigm, with most of them also functioning as auxiliary verbs. They can be combined with a number of categories – especially nominal (e.g. *faigh fios* ‘find out’ (lit. get knowledge), *tarraing dealbh do* ‘draw a picture of’ (lit. draw picture to), *leig osna* ‘sigh’ (lit. let sigh), etc.), but also verbal (e.g. *thoir gealladh do* ‘make a promise to’ (lit. give promising to), *faigh àrdachadh* ‘get a promotion’ (lit. get raising), *thig co-dhùnadh* ‘take a decision’ (lit. come concluding), etc.), adjectival (e.g. *dèan deas* ‘get ready/ prepare’ (lit. do ready), *cuir suarach* ‘despise’ (lit. put worthless), *thig nas fhèarr* ‘get better/ improve’ (lit. come better), etc.), prepositional (e.g. *gabh os làimh* ‘take charge of’ (lit. take in hand), *cuir fo gheasaibh* ‘put a spell on’ (lit. put under spell), *rach air chèilidh* ‘visit’ (lit. go on visit), etc.), or even adverbial (e.g. *thoir fa-near* ‘take into account’ (lit. give under observation), *cuir suas* ‘set up/

establish' (lit. put up), etc.) – to form a large number of examples of LVCs in Scottish Gaelic.

The verb that is more productive in this construction is *dèan* 'do/ make', as it can be combined with a higher number of lexical verbs in order to emphasize the event taking place and even to convey the idea of volition:²

- (1) *Dèan cadal gu sàmhach, mo leanabh gràdhach!*
do.make.IMP sleep.VN ADV quiet 1SG.POSS baby dear
'Sleep quietly, my dear baby!'

Given that auxiliary verbs are generally accompanied by a lexical verb, the type of LVC that is more problematic when it comes to differentiating it from an AVC is, obviously, a construction consisting of a light verb and a lexical verb in the form of a verbal noun (e.g. *thoir luigheachd do* 'forgive' (lit. give reward to), *faigh stuigeadh* 'get urged on' (lit. get inciting), *thig co-dhùnadh* 'take a decision' (lit. come concluding), etc.).³ While verbal nouns in Insular Celtic languages have always been intriguing in that they tend to display the characteristics of both nouns and verbs, at least specifically for this construction, the verbal noun appears to show some morphosyntactic properties that make it more similar to a noun, such as its capacity to accept adjectival modification (2) and possessive pronouns (3):⁴

- (2) *Rinn i seinn àlainn an-dè.*
do.PST 3SG.F sing.VN beautiful yesterday
'She sang beautifully yesterday.' (lit. She did a beautiful singing yesterday.)

2 The corresponding sentence, without the special emphasis on the action denoted by the more lexical verb and on the property of volition, is as follows:

- (i) *Cadal gu sàmhach mo leanabh gràdhach!*
sleep.IMP ADV quiet 1SG.POSS baby dear
'Sleep quietly, my dear baby!'

3 Despite this, Scottish Gaelic appears to show a higher number of deverbal nouns than verbal nouns as the second element of the LVC, which could possibly be due to the close similarity between the two forms – that is the verbal noun and the noun – and the fact that this element appears to have more nominal than verbal properties in this construction.

4 The reason why this construction should be considered as an example of an LVC rather than an AVC is related to its productivity, as the verbal noun accompanying the light verb *dèan* is not unrestricted. For example it is combined with the noun *obair* 'work' rather than with the verbal noun *oibreachadh* to express 'work'. Anyway, now it is more common to express these meanings with a single lexical verb, as in *Sheinn i gu h-àlainn an-dè* 'She sang beautifully yesterday.' and *Mheall thu sinn* 'You cheated us.'

- (3) *Rinn thu ar mealladh.*
 do.PST 2SG 1PL.POSS cheat.VN
 ‘You cheated us.’ (lit. You did our cheating.)

While it is difficult to draw a definitive conclusion from this evidence, it seems plausible to assume that verbal nouns in this construction are more nominal than verbal, given that they occur in syntactic contexts associated with nouns and govern genitive objects.⁵ This would therefore confirm that this construction including a light verb accompanied by a verbal noun is clearly an instance of an LVC, not of an AVC. However, this construction is not unproblematic since, while more than 60 years have passed since Jespersen (1942, 117) coined the term ‘light verb’ and it is generally assumed that the less verbal component in this construction functions as its main predicate, no agreement has yet been reached as to whether the light or support verb can contribute semantically to the complex predicate, what type of content it conveys, and whether the nominal element functions as a complement or not. These issues are therefore analyzed in the remainder of this section.

2.1 Meaning of the light verb

What differentiates a light verb from a full lexical verb or an auxiliary verb, respectively, is that it does not seem to have the same semantic content as its homologous lexical verb – the non-light or ‘heavy’ verb –, and that it is not completely devoid of meaning and expresses information that it is not purely grammatical like aspect, tense, mood, or modality, as is the case with an auxiliary verb. Although this issue

⁵ While the context in which the verbal noun appears in an LVC is clearly nominal, the assumption that verbal nouns are simply nominals is not so obvious. Verbal nouns also occur in verbal contexts, in which they seem to behave like verbs (Cram, 1981; Ramchand, 1993; Adger, 1996, 2010). Thus, for example, verbal nouns appear in constructions expressing aspectual and modal distinctions accompanying an auxiliary verb and a modal verb. Also, an object precedes the verbal noun in constructions expressing the perfect aspect, the prospective aspect, the ingressive aspect, and the egressive aspect, or containing a modal expression denoting willingness, wish, and expectation, which seems to have no grammatical analogue in nominal structures since it is not possible for an argument of a simple noun, or its possessor, to occur in pre-nominal position. Besides, the object of a verbal noun can be fronted in a cleft construction, which is not possible for genitive objects in complex nominal groups. Finally, in a construction expressing progressive aspect, the verbal noun is preceded by the grammaticalized form of a preposition that has now become an aspectual particle. In view of this, one might say that the verbal noun, albeit a noun in origin, appears to have gradually developed two distinct functions owing to a tendency for verbalisation and, consequently, now seem to behave like a noun or like a verb in different syntactic environments.

is difficult to prove, this section attempts to shed light on it in order to confirm this assumption.

Following studies like Kearns (2002), an argument for the assumption that the light verb contributes little or no meaning to the complex predicate tends to be reflected in the fact that a fair number of LVCs in Scottish Gaelic are semantically equivalent to a simple lexical verb, which is, in turn, either identical in form to the eventive noun (e.g. *dèan adhradh do* ‘worship’ (lit. do worshipping to) = *adhradh* ‘worship’; *gabh smoc* ‘have a smoke’ (lit. take smoke) = *smoc* ‘smoke’; *leig sgread às* ‘let out a scream’ (lit. let scream out) = *sgread* ‘scream’; etc.), or lexically related to the nominal element (e.g. *cuir iarrtas* ‘make a request’ (lit. put request) = *iarr* ‘request’; *thig co-dhùinadh* ‘take a decision’ (lit. come concluding) = *co-dhùin* ‘decide’; *thoir comhairle do* ‘give advice to’ (lit. give advice to) = *comhairlich* ‘advise’; etc.) and can, consequently, be replaced by a simple verb without altering the meaning. However, there are also many other LVCs in this language whose meaning can only be expressed through unrelated simple verbs (e.g. *cuir fios gu* ‘inform’ (lit. put knowledge for) = *innis* ‘tell/ inform’; *dèan ùrnaigh ri* ‘pray’ (lit. do prayer to) = *guidh* ‘pray’; *faigh cron do* ‘put a blame on’ (lit. get fault to) = *coirich* ‘blame’; *gabh fois* ‘take a rest’ (lit. take relaxation) = *tàmhaich* ‘rest’; *rach air chèilidh* ‘visit’ (lit. go on visit) = *tadhail* ‘visit’; *thoir sgoil do* ‘educate’ (lit. give school to) = *oileanaich* ‘educate’; etc.).

Another reason for claiming that light verbs appear to have lost some of their denotational meaning in this construction is that some of them can be combined with the same lexical element without any difference in meaning or, more probably, with a subtle difference in meaning (e.g. *cùm taic do* (lit. keep support to)/ *thoir taic do* (lit. give support to) ‘give support to’; *dèan dealbh de* (lit. do picture of)/ *tarraing dealbh de* (lit. draw picture of) ‘take a picture of’; *dèan greim air* (lit. do grasp on)/ *gabh greim air* (lit. take grasp on)/ *thoir greim air* (lit. give grasp on) ‘take hold of’; *dèan ionnsaigh air* (lit. do attack on)/ *thoir ionnsaigh air* (lit. give attack on) ‘attack’; *dèan norrag* (lit. do nap)/ *gabh norrag* (lit. take nap) ‘take a nap’; *faigh comhairle* (lit. get advice)/ *gabh comhairle* (lit. take advice) ‘take advice’; *gabh d’anail* (lit. take your breath)/ *leig d’anail* (lit. let your breath)/ *tarraing anail* (lit. draw breath) ‘take a break’; etc.). However, in many other examples of LVCs the replacement of a specific light verb by another light verb leads to a change in meaning (e.g. *faigh cead* ‘get permission’ vs. *thoir cead do* ‘give permission’; *faigh teic* ‘receive support’ (lit. get support) vs. *thoir teic do* ‘give support to’; *gabh comhairle* ‘take advice’ vs. *thoir comhairle do* ‘give advice to’; *faigh meas* ‘get respect’ vs. *thoir meas do* ‘respect’; etc.), which proves that the light verb is not entirely devoid of semantic content – a difference in terms of causation between the two LVCs is evident – since, if the light verb in each pair did not contribute to the meaning of the LVC, the two complex predicates should have the same interpretation.

The argument structure of the whole construction is also generally considered to be determined by the nominal element rather than the light verb. This can be seen in examples like *thoir ceum* ‘take a step’ (lit. give step), *thoir gèill* ‘surrender’ (lit. give submission), *thoir sgread* ‘scream’ (lit. give scream), *thoir mionnan* ‘swear’ (lit. give oaths), and *thoir stiùir* ‘give a lead’, since, although the light verb *thoir* ‘give’ is a three-argument verb, it takes a single NP object, which is related to the fact that the accompanying nouns are eventive predicates that lack a logical object. However, these are exceptional cases, and the influence that the nominal predicate has on the argument structure of the construction does not necessarily mean that the light verb does not have a semantic role to play, and it could be possible for a second NP to be added in these constructions (e.g. *thoir ceum a dh’ionnsaigh cuideigin* ‘take a step towards someone’ (lit. give step towards someone), *thoir gèill do chuideigin* ‘surrender before someone’ (lit. give submission to someone), *thoir sgread do chuideigin* ‘give a scream to someone’ (lit. give scream to someone), *thoir mionnan air cuideigin* ‘swear to someone’ (lit. give oaths to someone), *thoir stiùir do chuideigin* ‘give a lead to someone’ (lit. give lead to someone), etc.), so it could be understood as having been left implied in the examples above.

Further evidence for the semantic contribution of the light verb can be observed in examples like *gabh sràid* ‘take a walk’, since, although the action denoted by the eventive noun *sràid* ‘walk’ is realized by both people and animals, it would sound odd if we were to say that an animal could carry out the action expressed by the whole complex predicate. This difference presumably reflects the influence of the argument structure of the light verb *gabh* ‘take’ on the interpretation of the complex predicate.

Additionally, there are also light verbs that occur with different but semantically related lexical elements to express similar concepts (e.g. *faigh fàth de* (lit. get view of)/ *faigh plathadh de* (lit. get glance of) ‘catch a glimpse of’, *thoir sùil air* give look on/ *thoir balladh air* give glimpse on ‘take a look at’, *gabh dèidh de* (lit. take fondness of)/ *gabh nòisean de* (lit. take fancy of)/ *gabh tlachd ann* (lit. take delight in) ‘take a liking to’, *thoir (an) aire air* (lit. give (the) attention on)/ *tarraing aire air* (lit. draw attention on)/ *thoir feart air* (lit. give notice on)/ *thoir toghaidh do* (lit. give care to) ‘pay attention to’, *dèan togail ri* (lit. do lifting on)/ *dèan fuighair ri* (lit. do hope to) ‘look forward to’, *dèan iochd ri* (lit. do compassion to)/ *dèan trocair air* (lit. do mercy on) ‘take pity on’, *thoir meas do* (lit. give regard to)/ *thoir spéis do* (lit. give affection to)/ *thoir urram do* (lit. give respect to) ‘respect’, etc.), which suggests that the meaning of the nominal element should somehow fit into the properties of the light verb in order to jointly determine the argument structure of the complex predicate.

Finally, following Nunberg et al. (1994, 499–503), further evidence for the assumed compositionality of the meaning expressed by LVCs can be provided by the existence of systematic interpretational patterns involving the semantic contribu-

tion of the light verb and the nominal element, which are illustrated by families of LVCs such as the following: 1) grant something to someone (e.g. *thoir cead do* (lit. give permission to) ‘permit’, *thoir comhairle do* (lit. give advice to) ‘advise’, *thoir luigheachd do* (lit. give reward to) ‘reward’, *thoir mathanas do* (lit. give forgiveness to) ‘forgive’, *thoir meas/ spèis/ urram do* (lit. give regard/ affection/ respect to) ‘pay respect to’, *thoir misneachadh do* (lit. give encouragement to) ‘encourage’, *thoir sgoil do* (lit. give school to) ‘educate’, etc.); 2) perform a physical or mental activity (e.g. *dèan aithreachas* (lit. do penitence) ‘repent’, *dèan breug* (lit. do lie) ‘tell a lie’, *dèan cadal* (lit. do sleep) ‘sleep’, *dèan casad* (lit. do cough) ‘cough’, *dèan còmhnaidh* (lit. do dwelling) ‘dwell’, *dèan obair* (lit. do work) ‘work’, *dèan òran* (lit. do song) ‘compose a song’, etc.); 3) be passively involved in an event (e.g. *faigh àrach* (lit. get raising) ‘be brought up’, *faigh àrdachadh* (lit. get raising) ‘get a promotion’, *faigh cead* ‘get permission’, *faigh comhairle* ‘get advice’, *faigh prìomhachas* (lit. get priority) ‘receive priority’, *faigh teic* (lit. get support) ‘receive support’, *faigh ranuns/ raphuins* ‘get a telling-off’, etc); 4) be in the process of undergoing a change of state expressed by the NP (e.g. *rach air chall* (lit. go on losing) ‘get lost’, *rach am feabhas* (lit. go the goodness) ‘get better/ improve’, *rach am fianais* (lit. go the evidence) ‘appear/ come into view’, *rach am follais* (lit. go the clearness) ‘come to light’, *rach am mearachd* (lit. go the error) ‘become mistaken’, *rach às do bheachd* (lit. go out of your judgment) ‘go crazy’, etc.).

As a conclusion, what precisely the light verb contributes to the joint predication, and therefore exactly which parts of the predication are supposed to have been lost, is difficult to determine. Apart from a special emphasis on the action denoted by the more lexical element and on volition – as illustrated in the LVCs including *dèan* ‘do/ make’ plus a verbal noun in (1) – a tendency to highlight the specificity, telicity, and duration of the event can also be observed in the LVC in comparison with sentences including the corresponding main verb. Thus, on the one hand, while the use of a simple verb like *pòg* ‘kiss’ would refer to a generic action, we can make this information more specific by using an LVC (e.g. *Thug mi pòg bheag dhi* ‘I gave a little kiss to her’ (lit. gave I kiss little to her), *Thug mi pòg thana dhi* ‘I gave a tender kiss to her’ (lit. gave I kiss tender to her), etc.), and, on the other hand, although using a simple verb like *sgrèad* ‘scream’ can be potentially unbounded (e.g. *Sgrèad i airson còig mionaidean* ‘She screamed for five minutes’ (lit. screamed I for five minutes)), the use of an LVC can express a bounded and probably shorter event more explicitly (e.g. *Leig i sgrèad às an-dràsta* ‘She let out a scream right now’ (lit. let she scream out right now)).

Finally, apart from providing different semantic considerations, another motivation for the creation of LVCs in a language could be to fill a gap in its lexical inventory. Thus, in Scottish Gaelic many LVCs express meanings for which the language lacks a simple verb (e.g. *cuir ann an cunnart* ‘put at risk’ (lit. put in the risk), *dèan breag*

‘tell a lie’ (lit. do lie), *dèan fabhar ri* ‘do a favour to’, *dèan norrag* ‘take a nap’ (lit. do nap), *dèan stad* ‘take a break’ (lit. do stop), *faigh àrdachadh* ‘get a promotion’ (lit. get raising), *faigh priomhachas* ‘receive priority’ (lit. get priority), *gabh amar* ‘take a bath’, *gabh cùram* ‘care for’ (lit. take care), *gabh stròc* ‘suffer a stroke’ (lit. take stroke), *leig dub le* ‘give a break to’ (lit. let dip/ nibble with), *leig mùin* ‘urinate’ (lit. let urination), *rach às do bheachd* ‘go crazy’ (lit. go out your judgment), *thig am feabhas* ‘get better/ improve’ (lit. come the goodness), *thoir meas do* ‘respect’ (lit. give regard to), *thoir taing do* ‘thank’ (lit. give gratitude to), etc.), which means that LVCs may serve to compensate for the lack of some full verbs and fill a lexical gap.

2.2 Syntactic status of the nominal element

Another aspect of LVCs that has been widely discussed concerns the syntactic relationship between the light verb and the nominal component. The remainder of this section will therefore include an analysis of LVCs in Scottish Gaelic consisting in the application of a series of morphosyntactic tests to a number of instances of LVCs in an attempt to gauge whether the noun accompanying the light verb can be considered a complement of the light verb or not. As studies on LVCs such as Kearns (2002) and Bruening (2015) show, the syntactic relationship between the light verb and the nominal component of the LVC can be analyzed through a series of morphosyntactic tests that examine the referentiality and objecthood of the nominal element.

One of these tests involves passivization, since it is generally assumed that objects are passivized with respect to their corresponding verb. Examples (4) show that some LVCs allow for their nominal element to be passivized, while others appear to resist it:

- (4) a. *Chaidh sùil a thoirt air an leabhar.*
 go.PST look PART give.VN on the book
 ‘A look was taken at the book.’
 b. **Chaidh pàirt a gabhail anns á choinneamh.*
 go.PST part PART take.VN in the meeting
 ‘*Part was taken in the meeting.’

Another property that is considered to be more typical of objects than adjuncts is their greater tendency to accept relativization. However, as (5) shows, it is possible to find LVCs where the combination of the light verb and the nominal element can form a relative clause and others whose nominal element cannot be relativized:

- (5) a. *Bha feum air a' chead a fhuair mi.*
 be.PST need on the permission REL get.PST 1SG
 'The permission that I got was necessary.'
- b. **Bha an teine a chuir iad air an taigh uabhannach.*
 be.PST the fire REL put.PST 3PL on the house terrible
 '*The fire they set to the house was terrible.'

LVCs also differ in terms of question formation, which raises the possibility for the deverbal noun to be part of a 'wh'-phrase, as is illustrated by examples (6):

- (6) a. *Dè am prìomhachas a fhuair thu?*
 what the priority REL get.PST.DEP 2SG
 'What priority did you get?'
- b. **Dè an t-anail a tharraing thu an-dè?*
 what the breath REL draw.PST.DEP 2SG yesterday
 '*What breath did you draw yesterday?'

Objects are very commonly pronominalized, so this should in principle not be a property of deverbal nouns in LVCs if they are not the actual objects of the light verb. However, as the following example illustrates, the eventive noun in some but not in all LVCs can be replaced with a pronoun:

- (7) a. *A: An do rinn thu mearachd san eacarsaich?*
 INT.AFF PFV do.PST.DEP 2SG mistake in.the exercise
 'Did you make a mistake in the exercise?'
B: Cha do rinn. Rinn mi i anns an deuchainn.
 NEG PFV do.PST.DEP do.PST 1SG 3SG.F in.the the exam
 'No, I didn't. I made it in the exam.'
- b. *A: An do ghabh thu cùram de do shean-phàrantan?*
 INT.AFF PFV take.PST.DEP.PFV 2SG care of 2SG.POSS grandparent.PL
 'Did you take care of your grandparents?'
*B: *Chan do ghabh. Ghabh mi e de m' uncail agus*
 NEG PFV take.PST.DEP take.PST 1SG 3SG.M of 1SG.POSS uncle and
piuthar-athar.
 aunt
 'No, I didn't. *I took it of my uncle and aunt.'

A deverbal noun in an LVC is generally considered to be non-referential (and generally) indefinite, invariable in number, and even unable to accept adjectival modification. Again, as the following examples illustrate, it is possible to find LVCs behaving differently with respect to these criteria:

- (8) a. *Thug mi (an) aire don phàipear-naidheachd.*
 give.PST 1SG the attention to.the newspaper
 'I paid attention to the newspaper.'
- b. **Ghabh mi an nòisean dhith.*
 take.PST 1SG the fondness of.3SG.F
 'I took a liking to her.' (lit. 'I took the liking to her.')
- (9) a. *Thug e mòran phògan dhi.*
 give.PST 3SG.M many kiss.PL to.3SG.F
 'He gave a lot of kisses to her.'
- b. **Ghabh iad ùidhean anns an leabhar.*
 take.PST 3PL interest.PL in the book
 '*They took interests in the book.'
- (10) a. *Fhuair mi deagh chomhairle bhuaithe.*
 get.PST 1SG good advice from.3SG.M
 'I got good advice from him.'
- b. **Chuir mi an aithne luath a chèile iad.*
 put.PST 1SG the acquaintance quick to other 3PL
 'I introduced them to each other quickly.' (lit. 'I put the quick introduction to each other.')

It is also generally assumed that objects, like subjects and unlike adjuncts, are always obligatory (unless we are dealing with certain contexts in which they can be easily retrieved) and cannot therefore be omitted or, at least, may not accept omission as freely as adjuncts, which are both semantically and syntactically optional which does not always occur in all LVCs:

- (11) a. **Thug mi duais do Pheadair ach cha tug do dh'Iain.*
 give.PST 1SG reward to Peter.DAT but NEG give.PST to John.DAT
 'I gave a reward to Peter but I didn't give to John.'
- b. *Cha tàinig e nas fhèarr an-dè ach thig e*
 NEG come.PST 3SG.M COMP better yesterday but come.FUT 3SG.M
a-màireach.
 tomorrow
 'He didn't get better yesterday but he will get tomorrow.'

Finally, while this is not a distinctive property of objects and may merely serve to highlight a closer relationship with the verb, which does distinguish objects from adjuncts, the eventive noun in an LVC also seems to be restricted regarding its use elsewhere other than in this construction. This is the situation that is commonly observed in some LVCs, such as *gaolagan* 'hug, cuddle, lovey' in *thoir gaolagan do* 'give a hug to' or *seimhig* 'laughing stock' in *dèan seimhig de* 'make a fool of', for

example, as the nouns *gaolagan* and *seimhig* are not commonly used in constructions other than these LVCs.

These tests show that the relation between the verb and the noun is not clearly one between predicate and complement – which occurs in free verb-noun combinations where the elements can continue to be combined freely with each other and with others in expressions showing no semantic idiomatity – , as the noun does not always have the typical properties of an object. This evidence might plausibly show that LVCs, or light verbs more specifically, cannot be understood as a homogenous class. We might therefore suppose that there are in fact two – as suggested by Kearns (2002) – or even more types of LVC, as demonstrated by the lack of homogeneity in this construction. This is reflected in the fact that the light verb shows a higher degree of desemanticization in some cases than in others, and the deverbal noun seems to function as an object of a verb in some examples but not in others. This should be connected to a greater or lesser extent with grammaticalization, especially if it is assumed that there are light verbs between main verbs and auxiliary verbs in the grammaticalization cline (Hopper and Traugott, 1993, 4–7; Roberts and Roussou, 2003, 200–205). This view should not be incompatible with Butt's⁶ (2003; 2010) who considers main verbs and light verbs – verbs with generic semantic specifications and flexible lexical entries that allow them to modulate the main event semantics – as two alternatives that can be used in two different contexts. This is because different LVCs containing the same light verb have different syntactic and semantic properties, which stresses the importance of interpreting the semantic contribution of both the light verb and deverbal noun jointly, so that, depending on the specific LVC in which it occurs, the same light verb may be found at different points – and showing different degrees of the inevitable process of semantic bleaching – within that intermediate stage on the scale. This would also account for the fact that a light verb is not formally divergent.

Consequently, while some LVCs may be similar to lexicalized units, which behave like lexical verbs, as their elements appear to lack autonomy and form an indissoluble unit showing certain restrictions and with a degree of semantic idiomatity,⁷ others may be seen as free combinations of a verb and a less verbal element that show no semantic idiomatity. In addition to this, given the heterogeneity of properties that LVCs show, it would seem logical that between these two options there exists a group of expressions whose constituents show different degrees of cohesion since the verb may be more or less desemanticized and its collocational partner – generally a

⁶ It must be taken into account, however, that Butt and Lahiri (1998) argue that light verbs have been attested to for thousands of years, which appears to call into question the assumption that light verbs have arisen from gradual semantic bleaching.

⁷ As it occurs in idiomatic expressions like *caill an deò* 'die' (lit. lose the air).

deverbal noun having an inherent eventive value – appears to keep all or most of its denotational meaning.

3 Analysis of Scottish Gaelic LVCs within RRG

In view of this evidence, it seems clear that, seen from a global perspective, a light verb neither retains all its predication content, nor is it semantically empty, and that the nominal element provides most but not all the semantic content of the construction. It would therefore follow that the light verb is generally part of a joint predication within a complex predicate and does contribute to it, as both the light verb and the more lexical element jointly determine argument structure. The real issue is, however, to determine accurately how much each of these two elements contribute and how the lexical composition takes place and should be represented. The first part of this section thus offers an analysis of the semantic composition of LVCs in Scottish Gaelic, by examining the relationship between the argument structures of the light verb and of the accompanying nominal element, which is characteristically an eventive noun, within the theory of lexical and semantic representation proposed by the RRG framework, which is based on the concepts of Aktionsart and logical structure (Foley and Van Valin, 1984, 28–74, Van Valin, 2005, 31–50).

3.1 The composition of LVCs

The current RRG typology of Aktionsart distinguishes between the following classes: states, activities, achievements, accomplishments, semelfactives, active accomplishments, and the causative versions of all Aktionsart classes (Van Valin, 2005, 32–39). All of these Aktionsart classes are defined in terms of the features of [+/- static], [+/-dynamic], [+/- punctual], and [+/- telic] and are associated with different logical structures, which can be seen in Table 1.

These logical structures are a representation that originates in the lexical configuration of the predicate of a sentence and are expanded by means of the semantic macroroles and syntactic functions; hence they constitute the main descriptive device of the linking between semantics and syntax. Bearing this in mind, a proposal will be made below to try to describe the way in which the light verb and its collocational partner combine to form a light verb construction. In this sense, the proposal stems from the assumption that both elements specify the manner and aktionsart of the event and provide information about the event itself and that, consequently, the

Tab. 1: Aktionsart types and logical structures in RRG (Van Valin, 2005, 45).

Aktionsart type	Logical structure
State	predicate'(x) or (x, y)
Activity	do'(x, [predicate'(x) or (x, y)])
Achievement	INGR predicate'(x) or (x, y)
	INGR do'(x, [predicate'(x) or (x, y)])
Accomplishment	BECOME predicate'(x) or (x, y)
	BECOME do'(x, [predicate'(x) or (x, y)])
Semelfactive	SEML predicate'(x) or (x, y)
	SEML do'(x, [predicate'(x) or (x, y)])
Active accomplishment	do'(x, [predicate ₁ '(x, (y))]) & BECOME predicate ₂ '(z, x) or (y)
Causative	α CAUSE β , where α and β are LSs of any type

meaning of LVCs can be derived from the meaning of their parts. With respect to the relationship between the light verb and the less verbal element, as the eventive noun is not a verb, it appears to require a verbal frame to be able to realized as the sentence predicate, and this is provided by the light verb according to both its syntactic properties and the semantic requirements of its argument structure, as can be illustrated by examining the syntactic and semantic and syntactic specifications of the events in which the different light verbs occur.

Thus, for example, the predicate *gabh* 'take' denotes an agentive action whereby a participant gets hold of an inanimate entity, and as such requires two arguments, namely an animate agent or recipient and an inanimate theme.⁸ Thus, in many LVCs containing this light verb, the nominal element, which denotes an event involving a single argument, appears to function as the logical object of *gabh* 'take' (e.g. *gabh an caothach* 'go mad' (lit. take a madness), *gabh cuairt/ sràid* 'take a walk', *gabh fearg* 'get angry' (lit. take anger), *gabh fras(air)* 'take a shower', *gabh iongantas* 'be surprised' (lit. take surprise), *gabh òraid* 'deliver a speech' (lit. take speech), *gabh òran* 'sing a song' (lit. take song), *gabh smoc* 'have a smoke' (lit. take smoke), *gabh stròc* 'suffer a stroke' (lit. take stroke), *gabh turas* 'take a trip', etc.):

⁸ This analysis uses the following terminology to identify thematic or semantic roles: 1. 'agent', which refers to an animate, volitional and causative participant that controls the action expressed by the predicate; 2. 'patient', which refers to an entity being affected by the action denoted by the predicate; 3. 'theme', which refers to an entity undergoing a change of location or being exchanged in a transference; 4. 'goal', which refers to the final destination in a movement; 5. 'recipient', which refers to an animate participant that receives the entity being transferred in the action; 6. 'experiencer', which refers to an animate participant that apprehends a mental or sensory phenomenon; and 7. 'referent', which refers to an entity that is directly involved in the event caused by another entity.

- (12) a. *Ghabh sinn cuairt.*
 take.PST 1PL walk
 'We took a walk.'
 b. take: [do'(1PL,)] CAUSE [BECOME have'(1PL, *cuairt*)]
↑
walk: do'(1PL, [walk'(1PL)])

In those cases where the eventive noun requires two arguments, one of them is either realised as a prepositional object functioning as an adjunct in the LVC (13) (e.g. *ghabh beachd air* 'examine' (lit. take an opinion of), *ghabh brath air* 'take advantage of', *ghabh cùram ri* 'take care of', *ghabh dèidh de* 'take a liking to', *ghabh pàirt ann* 'take part in', *ghabh gaol air* 'fall in love with' (lit. take love on), *ghabh greim air* 'take hold of' (lit. take grasp on), *ghabh sùim ann* 'show consideration for' (lit. take attention in), etc.) or left implied (14) (e.g. *ghabh eagal* 'take fright', *ghabh stiùir* 'take control' (lit. take lead), etc.):

- (13) a. *Ghabh iad beachd air càr.*
 take.PST 3PL opinion on car
 'They examined the car.'
 b. take: [do'(3PL,)] CAUSE [BECOME have'(3PL, *beachd*)]
↗
examine: do'(3PL, [see'(3PL, car)])
- (14) a. *Ghabh mi eagal san àite-obrach.*
 take.PST 1SG frighten in_the place-work
 'I took fright at work.'
 b. take: [do'(1SG,)] CAUSE [BECOME have'(1SG, *meas*)]
↗
respect: respect'(<someone>, 1SG)

The predicate *thoir* 'give' denotes an agentive action that involves transferring the possession of something concrete to someone, which means that it requires three participants: an animate agent, a (generally) non-animate theme, and an animate recipient. This configuration is illustrated by most of the LVCs containing this light verb and, unlike the previous light verb, the second argument of the nominal predicate, which is an argument of the light verb, occurs as an object of the preposition *do* 'to' (e.g. *thoir breith do* 'give birth to', *thoir cead do* 'give permission to', *thoir comhairle do* 'give advice to', *thoir gealladh do* 'make a promise to' (lit. give promising to), *thoir duais do* 'reward' (lit. give reward to), *thoir mathanas do* 'forgive' (lit. give forgiveness to), *thoir meas/ spèis/ urram do* 'pay respect to', *thoir misneachadh do* 'encourage' (lit. give encouragement to), *thoir òrdugh do* 'give an order to', *thoir plìutag do* 'give

a slap to', *thoir sgoil do* 'educate' (lit. give school to), *thoir taing do* 'give thanks to', *thoir taic do* 'give support to', *thoir toghaidh do* 'pay attention to', etc.), which always introduces the recipient argument (or the indirect object) in Scottish Gaelic. We must therefore assume that it is an (oblique core) argument, rather than an adjunct, to the light verb:

- (15) a. *Thug iad gaolagan dhuinn.*
 give.PST 3PL cuddle to_1PL
 'They gave a hug to us.'
- b. give: [do'(3PL,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME have'(1PL,*gaolagan*)]
- ↗
 hug: do'(3PL,[hug'(3PL, 1PL)])

However, it is of note that there are also some examples of LVCs where the verb *thoir* 'give' appears to have lost more of its semantic content, as the second argument of the eventive noun is preceded by a different preposition (e.g. *thoir bideadh/ glàmadh air* 'take a bite from' (lit. give biting/ devouring on), *thoir damh-shùil air* 'throw a glance at' (lit. give ox-eye on), *thoir fearnt air* 'pay attention to' (lit. give attention on), *thoir sgol air* 'give a telling-off to' (lit. give a splinter on), *thoir ranuns air* 'give a telling-off to' (lit. give telling-off on), *thoir sùil air* 'take a look at' (lit. give look on), etc.), which may be an indication that it functions as an adjunct in this construction. This could be related to a semantic property of the nominal element, which would prevent the entity from being (at least physically) transferred and, consequently, a different preposition is needed to refer to the recipient-like argument. More difficult to explain is why some examples of LVCs with this same light verb include an eventive noun having a single argument (e.g. *thoir ceum* 'take a step' (lit. give step), *thoir leum* 'jump' (lit. give jump), *thoir mionnan* 'swear' (lit. give oaths), *thoir oidhirp* 'make an attempt' (lit. give attempt), *thoir seachad òraid* 'deliver a speech' (lit. give past speech), etc.), unless we assume, as discussed above, that the eventive noun has no logical object – the first two examples – or that the missing argument has been left implied – the last three examples – , although in this first case we should explain why the noun uses this light verb rather than one that corresponds to a two-argument verb.

The predicate *dèan* 'do/ make' generally expresses an agentive action where an inanimate entity, which can be either concrete or abstract, is brought into existence, so it requires two arguments, that is, an animate agent and an inanimate patient-like argument. This explains why the corresponding light verb can be combined with such a large number of verbal and deverbal nouns functioning syntactically as its argument (e.g. *dèan aithreachas* 'repent' (lit. do penitence), *dèan bigeireachd air* 'tease' (lit. do teasing on), *dèan braim* 'fart' (lit. do fart), *dèan breug* 'tell a lie' (lit. do lie), *dèan cabhag* 'hurry' (lit. do hurry), *dèan cac* 'defecate' (lit. do excrement),

dèan cadal ‘sleep’ (lit. do sleep), *dèan casad* ‘cough’ (lit. do cough), *dèan còmhnaidh* ‘dwell’ (lit. do dwelling), *dèan foighidinn* ‘have patience’ (lit. do patience), *dèan mùin* ‘urinate’ (lit. do urination), *dèan obair* ‘work’ (lit. do work), *dèan oidhirp* ‘make an attempt’, *dèan òran* ‘compose a song’ (lit. do song), *dèan stad* ‘take a break’ (lit. do stop), *dèan suidhe* ‘sit’ (lit. do sit), etc.):

- (16) a. *Dèan cadal a-nis!*
do.2SG.IMP sleep now
‘Sleep now!’
b. do: [do’(2SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME exist’ (*cadal*)]
↑
sleep: do’(2SG,[sleep’(2SG)])

In cases where the eventive noun has a logical object, this is realized as an adjunct in the LVC introduced by a preposition other than *do* ‘to’ (e.g. *dèan cobhair air* ‘help’ (lit. do help on), *dèan dealbh de* ‘take a picture of’ (lit. do picture of), *dèan fabhar ri* ‘do a favour to’, *dèan feum de* ‘make use of’, *dèan gàire ri* ‘laugh at’ (lit. do laugh to), *dèan magadh air* ‘mock’ (lit. do mocking on), *dèan seimhig de* ‘make a fool of’, *dèan slíomaireachd ri* ‘flatter’ (lit. do flattery on), *dèan snodha-gàire ri* ‘smile at’ (lit. do smile to), *dèan taoim air* ‘make fun of’ (lit. do bilgewater on), *dèan tròcair air* ‘have mercy upon’ (lit. do mercy on), *dèan ùrnaigh ri* ‘pray to’ (lit. do prayer on), etc.), the only exception being *dèan adhradh do* ‘worship’ (lit. do worship to) :

- (17) a. *Rinn iad feum de na h-iuchraichean.*
do.PST 3PL use of the key.PL.DAT
‘They made use of the keys.’
b. do: [do’(3SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME exist’ (*feum*)]
↑
use: do’(3PL,[use’(3PL,keys)])

The predicate *cuir* ‘put’ generally expresses an agentive action in which a participant moves an inanimate entity and places it in a certain place, so it requires three arguments: an animate agent, an inanimate theme, and a goal. In LVCs including this light verb the goal corresponds to one of the two logical objects of the eventive noun – the other is left implied –, which may be an animate or inanimate theme and may be introduced by different prepositions (e.g. *cuir ceist air* ‘ask a question to’ (lit. put question on), *cuir coire air* ‘put the blame on’, *cuir earbsa ann* ‘put faith on’, *cuir fàilte air* ‘greet’ (lit. put welcome on), *cuir fios gu* ‘contact/ inform’ (lit. put knowledge to), *cuir iarrras air* ‘make a request for’ (lit. put request on), *cuir sradag ri* ‘set fire to’ (lit. put spark to), *cuir ùidh ann* ‘take an interest’ (lit. put interest in), *cuir uidhireachd air* ‘pay attention to’, etc.):

- (18) a. *Chuir mi ceist oirre.*
 put.PST 1SG question on_3SG.F
 'I asked a question to her.'
- b. put: [do'(1SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME be-LOC'(3SG.F,*ceist*)]
- ↗
 ask: [do'(1SG,[say'(1SG,*ceist*)))] CAUSE
 [do'(3SG.F,[say'(3SG.F,<something>)))]
 CAUSE [BECOME aware.of'(1sg,
 <something>)]

A different version of this LVC occurs when the light verb is combined with a prepositional, rather than a nominal, element, which corresponds to the goal argument of the light verb (e.g. *cuir air aghaidh* 'give birth to' (lit. put on face), *cuir air cùil* 'forget' (lit. put on corner), *cuir air chuimhne* 'remind' (lit. put on memory), *cuir a dholaidh* 'abuse' (lit. put one's harm), *cuir air ghluasad* 'set in motion', *cuir an àite* 'replace' (lit. put the place), *cuir ann an cunnart* 'put at risk', *cuir ann an òrdan* 'put in order', *cuir às a ghabhail* 'disappoint' (lit. put out of ordeal), *cuir fo gheasaibh* 'put a spell on' (lit. put under charm), *cuir fo smachd* 'bring under control' (lit. put under control), *cuir gu dùbhlán* 'challenge' (lit. put to challenge), *cuir na theine* 'set on fire' (lit. put in the fire), *cuir san àireamh* 'take into account' (lit. put in the count), etc.).

- (19) a. *Chuir mi an duilgheadas fo smachd.*
 put.PST 1SG the problem under control
 'I put the problem under control.'
- b. put: [do'(1SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME be-LOC'(*smachd*, *duilgheadas*)]
- ↗
 control: do'(1SG,[control'(1SG, *duilgheadas*))]

This prepositional element normally requires the presence of an additional nominal element and it is this element that functions as the theme argument of the light verb (19).

The predicate *faigh* 'get' commonly expresses both agentive and non-agentive actions that involve an animate entity coming into the possession of something with apparent difficulty, so it generally requires two arguments, an animate agent or recipient and an inanimate theme or referent. Thus, in many examples of this LVC, this light verb is combined with an eventive noun functioning as the theme or referent argument of the light verb (e.g. *faigh an t-sitig* 'be kicked out' (lit. get the dunghill), *faigh àrach* 'be brought up' (lit. get raising), *faigh àrdachadh* 'get a promotion', *faigh brath* 'receive notice' (lit. get information), *faigh cead* 'get permission' (lit. get permission), *faigh chùrsadh* 'get reprimanded' (lit. get cursing), *faigh comhairle* 'get advice', *faigh donnag* 'receive a blow' (lit. get blow), *faigh prìomhachas* 'receive

priority', *faigh ranuns/ raphuins* 'get a telling-off', *faigh stuigeadh* 'get urged on' (lit. get inciting), *faigh teic* 'receive support', *faigh togail* 'feel elated' (lit. get lifting), etc.). While it seems obvious that the eventive noun in these LVCs requires two arguments, one of them, namely the agent, is not generally explicitly mentioned. As regards the other argument, namely the referent, it can generally be identified with the agent argument of the light verb:

- (20) a. *Gheibh mi taic (bho mo charaidean).*
 get.FUT 1SG support from 1SG.POSS friend.PL.DAT
 'I will get support from my friends.'

- b. get: [do'(1SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME have' (1SG,taic)]

↗
 support: do'(<my friends>,[support'(<my friends>,1SG)])

In cases where the light verb is combined with an eventive noun with an explicit object, this is realized as a prepositional object and functions as an adjunct to the light verb (e.g. *faigh aiteal de* 'catch a glimpse of' (lit. get glimpse of), *faigh buaidh air* 'have an effect on' (lit. get effect on), *faigh cinnt air* 'check' (lit. get certainty on), *faigh cuidhteas de* 'get rid of' (lit. get quittance of), *faigh plathadh de* 'catch a glimpse of' (lit. get glance of), etc.). As can be observed in (21), now it is the agent, rather than the referent of the eventive noun, that is coreferential with the agent of the light verb:

- (21) a. *Fhuair sinn aiteal den nighean.*
 get.PST 1PL glimpse of_the girl
 'We caught a glimpse of the girl.'

- b. get: [do'(1PL,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME have'(1PL,aiteal)]

↗
 glimpse: do'(1PL,[see'(1PL,nighean)])

An interesting example is *faigh cron do* 'damage' (lit. get harm to), which appears to add a third argument, since the logical object of the eventive noun is preceded by the preposition *do* 'to'. This could be explained by arguing that there is an even more complex event in which the light verb *faigh* 'get' normally denotes an action that involves achieving something difficult to attain and, once it has been achieved, it is transferred to someone.

The predicate *thig* 'come' normally expresses an agentive action whereby a participant firstly leaves a place and then reaches a new destination, but it requires only two arguments, namely an animate agent and a goal, as the source is generally only implied. The LVC including this light verb appears to respect this configuration since the light verb is combined with a prepositional element, which functions as

- b. come: BECOME be.alive'(3SG.M)

↑

be.alive: be'(3SG.M,[alive'(3SG.M)])

The predicate *rach* 'go' can express the same meanings as *thig* 'come', namely an agentive action involving a change of location (e.g. *rach a chadal* 'go to sleep', *rach air adhart* 'proceed/ go forward' (lit. go on advance), *rach air chèilidh air* 'pay a visit to' (lit. go on visit on), *rach air falbh* 'go away' (lit. go on leaving), *rach ann an dàil le* 'get in touch with' (lit. go in a meeting with), *rach cuide ri* 'go along with', etc.) and a process – an accomplishment – leading to obtaining a new state or condition or experiencing an event through the senses (e.g. *rach air chall* 'get lost' (lit. go on losing), *rach am feabhas* 'get better/ improve' (lit. go the goodness), *rach am fianais* 'appear/ come into view' (lit. go the evidence), *rach am follais* 'come to light' (lit. go the clearness), *rach am mearachd* 'become mistaken' (lit. go the error), *rach às do bheachd* 'go crazy' (lit. go out of your judgment)), which shows the presence of two arguments (an animate agent and a goal) or a single argument (a patient or experiencer), respectively.

In the first sense, *rach* is always combined with a prepositional element, which, although it does not denote a location, may serve as a goal (25).

- (25) a. *Chaidh mi air falbh.*

go.PST 1SG on leave.VNT

'I went away.'

- b. go: do'(1SG,[go'(1SG)]) & INGR be-LOC'(*falbh*,1SG)

↑

leave: do'(1SG,[leave'(1SG)])

In the second sense, the light verb is followed by a nominal, adjectival, or prepositional element indicating the process that the only argument of the construction undergoes (26).

- (26) a. *Theid e am feabhas gu luath.*

go.FUT 3SG.M the goodness ADV fast

'He will get better quickly.'

- b. go: BECOME be.better'(3SG.M)

↑

be.better: be'(3SG.M, [better'(3SG.M)])

The predicate *leig* 'let' denotes an agentive action in which a participant grants permission to carry out another action, so it requires two participants, an animate agent and an inanimate theme. It is of note that this light verb is generally combined

- b. draw: [do'(1PL,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME be.away.from'(<somewhere>, *srann*)]

↗
snore: do'(1PL, snore'(1PL))

In cases where the eventive noun has an object, this is always introduced by a preposition other than *do* and therefore functions as an adjunct to the light verb (e.g. *tarraing aire air* 'pay attention to' (lit. draw attention on), *tarraing dealbh de* 'draw a picture of' (lit. draw picture of), *tarraing stràbh à* 'tease/ poke' (lit. draw strack from), etc.):

- (30) a. *Tarraingidh i dealbh den t-sealladh-tìre.*

draw.FUT 3SG.F picture of_the landscape
'She will take a picture of the landscape.'

- b. draw: [do'(3SG.F,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME be.away.from'(<somewh.>, *dealbh*)]

↗
photograph: do'(3SG.F,[photograph'(3SG.F,*sealladh-tìre*))

The predicate *buail* 'hit' expresses an agentive action whereby a participant, generally animate, gives a blow to another participant, either with the hand or with an instrument, so it requires two arguments – an agent and a patient.

- (31) a. *Bhuail mi am pathadh madainn an-diugh.*

hit.PST 1SG the thirst morning today
'I became thirsty this morning.'

- b. hit: [do'(1SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME affected'(*pathadh*)]

↗
be.thirsty: be'(1SG,[thirsty'(1SG)])

ustrated in all the examples of LVCs that include this light verb where it is accompanied by a nominal element with no logical object (e.g. *buail am pathadh* 'become thirsty' (lit. hit the thirst; (31)), *buail basan* 'clap hands' (lit. hit palms), etc.), which corresponds to the patient argument of the light verb.

By contrast, in those cases where the eventive noun has a logical object, this is realized as a prepositional object and functions as an adjunct in the LVC (e.g. *buail breab air* 'give a kick to' (lit. hit kick on), *buail bròg air* 'hit with a shoe' (lit. hit shoe on), *buail dòrainn air* 'torment' (lit. hit torment on), etc.). The problem with this analysis is that of understanding why the eventive noun does not use a different light verb, more specifically a light verb requiring three arguments so that the logical object of the eventive noun may be realized as an argument of the light verb. This could be accounted for by arguing that, in this sense, the light verb *buail* 'hit' can also express an agentive action that entails hitting an entity from a source, which is not

commonly stated explicitly, and, as a consequence of the impact, the entity changes its location. This being the case, it would require three arguments, an animate agent, an inanimate theme, and a goal, which would be realized by the object of the eventive noun:

- (32) a. *Bhuail thu breab orm an-dè.*
 hit.PST 2SG kick on_1SG yesterday
 ‘You gave a kick to me yesterday.’
 b. hit: [do’(2SG,∅)] CAUSE [BECOME be-LOC’(1SG,*breab*)]
↗
kick: do’(2SG,[kick’(2SG,1SG)])

Finally, the predicate *cùm* ‘keep’ is commonly used to express either an event in which a participant continues to possess something, so it requires two participants, that is, an animate theme and an inanimate referent, or continues to have an entity in a specified location, position, or condition, so it requires three participants, namely an animate agent, an inanimate theme and a goal. Consequently, LVCs containing the light verb *cùm* can appear in two different guises. In the first case (33), similarly as with the light verb *cuir* ‘put’, the light verb is followed by an eventive noun, which would be its referent argument, and the eventive noun includes a logical object that is realized as an adjunct indicating the goal of the action of the event denoted by the noun (e.g. *cùm taic ri* ‘lend support to’ (lit. keep support to), *cùm cridhe ri* ‘cheer up’ (lit. keep heart to), etc.). In the second case (34), the light verb is combined with a prepositional predicate – which corresponds to its goal – and the logical object of the prepositional predicate is realized as the argument of light verb (e.g. *cùm air chuimhne* ‘remember/ keep in mind’ (lit. keep on memory), *cùm air mheomhair* ‘memorise’ (lit. keep on memory), *cùm fo breithneachadh* ‘keep under review’ (lit. keep under consideration), etc.):

- (33) a. *Chùm mi taic riut an-cómhnaidh.*
 keep.PST 1SG support to_2SG always
 ‘I always lent support to you.’
 b. keep: [do’(1SG,∅)] CAUSE [have’(1SG,*taic*)]
↑
support: do’(1SG,[support’(1SG,2SG)])
- (34) a. *Cùmaidh sinn thu air chuimhne.*
 keep.FUT 1PL 2SG on memory
 ‘We will keep you in mind.’

b. keep: [do'(1PL,∅)] CAUSE [be-at'(cuimhne, 2SG)]

↑
remember: remember'(1PL,2SG)

A summary of the thematic structure of the light verbs is included in Table 2. We can see that some of the semantic configurations of the predicates that appear as light verbs in LVCs are the same or very similar – especially if the third argument is omitted with the verbs *thoir* ‘give’, *cuir* ‘put’, and *leig* ‘let’ – which suggests that some of these verbs could be replaced by others with the same or similar semantic properties without altering the meaning of the LVC (e.g. *gabh/ faigh comhairle* ‘take advice’ (lit. take/ get advice), *thoir/ dean ionnsaigh air* ‘make an attack on’ (lit. give/ do attack on), *dèan/ leig mùin* ‘urinate’ (lit. do/ let urination), *tarraing/ leig osna* ‘sigh’ (lit. draw/ let sigh), *dèan/ tarraing dealbh de* ‘take a picture of’ (lit. do/ draw picture of), *thig/ rach am feabhas* ‘get better/ improve’ (lit. come/ go the goodness), *thoir/ dèan/ gabh greim air* ‘take hold of’ (lit. give/ do/ take grasp on), *gabh/ dèan norrag* ‘take a nap’ (lit. take/ do nap), *gabh/ thig stròc* ‘suffer a stroke’ (lit. take/ come stroke), etc.). Furthermore, the fact that not only eventive nouns but also some light verbs share many semantic properties appears to show that LVCs are able to express the same or a very similar meaning with a different structure (e.g. *gabh beachd air* (lit. take opinion on) = *thoir sùil air* (lit. give look on) ‘take a look at’, *gabh cùram ri* (lit. take care to) = *thoir aire air* (lit. give attention on) ‘take care of’, *thoir togail cridhe do* (lit. give raising heart to) = *cuir a chridhe ri* (lit. put the heart to) ‘cheer up’, *thoir*

Tab. 2: Semantic properties of light verbs.

Light verb	Thematic roles	Aktionsart class
<i>gabh</i> ‘take’	agent/ recipient + theme/ referent	Causative accomplishment
<i>thoir</i> ‘give’	agent + theme + recipient	Causative accomplishment
<i>dèan</i> ‘do/ make’	agent + patient/ theme	Causative accomplishment
<i>cuir</i> ‘put’	agent + theme + goal	Causative accomplishment
<i>faigh</i> ‘get’	agent/ recipient + theme/ referent	Causative accomplishment
<i>thig</i> ‘come’	1) agent + goal	Activity/ active
accomplishment	2) patient/ experiencer	Accomplishment
<i>rach</i> ‘go’	1) agent + goal	Activity/ active accomplishment
	2) patient/ experiencer	Accomplishment
<i>leig</i> ‘let’	agent + theme	Causative accomplishment
<i>tarraing</i> ‘draw’	agent + theme (+ source)	Causative accomplishment
<i>buail</i> ‘hit’	1) agent + patient	Causative accomplishment
	2) agent + theme + goal	Causative accomplishment
<i>cùm</i> ‘keep’	1) theme + referent	Causative state
	2) agent + theme + goal	Causative state

feart air (lit. give notice on) = *cuir uidhreachd air* (lit. put attention on) ‘pay attention to’, *dèan stad* (lit. do stop) = *leig d’anail* (lit. let your breath) ‘take a break’, *thig air aghaidh le* (lit. come on face with) = *rach cuide ri* (lit. go along with) ‘get on with’, *thoir taic do* (lit. give support to) = *dèan frideam air* (lit. do sufficiency on) ‘give support to’, *thoir cuireadh do* (lit. give invitation to) = *tarraing cuireadh gu* (lit. draw invitation to) ‘invite’, etc.

Finally, the opposite seems to occur when the same eventive noun is combined with two light verbs with different semantic properties, which means that the same event is understood but with a special emphasis on a different participant, namely agent or theme/ recipient, as we can see in LVCs using *thoir* ‘give’ and *faigh* ‘get’ (e.g. *thoir taic do* ‘give support to’ vs. *faigh taic* (lit. get support) ‘receive support’, *thoir ranuns air* ‘give a telling-off to’ (lit. give telling-off on) vs. *faigh ranuns* ‘get a telling-off’, *thoir cead do* ‘give permission to’ vs. *faigh cead* ‘get permission’, etc.).

This evidence appears to demonstrate that the light verb is not totally devoid of meaning and that it contributes to the overall understanding of the event expressed by the complex predicate, especially because the choice of a particular light verb can modify the meaning of the construction. However, the light verb does not contribute its own separate domain of predication. Rather, light verbs should be seen as contributing to the argument structure of the complex predicate in such a way that the thematic grid of the eventive noun contains roles which are generally compatible with the semantic roles of the light verb, hence, as they are very similar but not necessarily identical, the two argument structures seem to merge together to express the event denoted by the complex predicate.

The evidence given above indicates that a LVC formation is clearly compositional, although, at least in Scottish Gaelic, it is not a regular process, as, in some cases, the selection of the light verb seems somewhat arbitrary. These two positions could be reconciled by arguing that there are different types of LVCs, some with a higher degree of compositionality than others and are therefore more restrictive as to the choice of light verb. As discussed above, it is also possible to identify some groups of LVC in which the same light verb can be combined with several nouns that share part of the same meaning, and the same noun can be combined with more than one light verb that could adapt to the meaning denoted by the noun.

Finally, the evidence that light verbs contribute to the construction semantically also suggests that light verbs are closely related to their corresponding main verb in the lexicon, as is noted by (Butt, 2003, 16; Butt, 2010, 71–74. We might therefore assume only one lexical entry, which tends to give rise to the interpretation of the verb as a main verb or as a light verb depending on the context.

3.2 The representation of LVCs

The second part of this section aims to provide a functional characterization of Scottish Gaelic LVCs within the RRG framework. So far, LVCs have not received a lot of attention in this linguistic model possibly due to their dual lexical-syntactic nature; consequently, some examples of LVCs – especially those that are strongly lexicalized – appear to resist a standard analysis of clausal syntax. However, given its strong typological orientation, the RRG theory may offer a valuable insight for the analysis and representation of this complex predicate type. While it seems clear that LVCs should be considered as syntactically formed complex predicates resulting from a merged logical structure, given that they have such a heterogeneous nature, it seems logical to assume that not all LVCs can have the same syntactic structure, mainly because their light verbs show a higher or lower degree of grammaticalization, and the nominal element has more of the properties belonging to either a complement or a nucleus of the construction. Thus, this section will explore different possibilities for the analysis and representation of LVCs.

RRG bases its study and analysis of complex sentences on two related notions, that is, nexus relations and juncture types (Van Valin, 2005, 183–188, Bentley et al., 2023, 68–73). The first concept refers to the different syntactic relations between the units in a complex construction, namely coordination, cosubordination, and subordination. These three syntactic linkage relations characterize the syntactic relationship between the units in such a way that coordination involves the joining of two or more units of the same syntactic status and, with independent operators, cosubordination entails the combination of two or more units of the same status but sharing operators, and subordination involves the structural dependency of one unit on another (peripheral subordination) or the embedding of one unit within another (daughter subordination). The second concept corresponds to the nature of the units being linked, that is, nuclear, core, clausal, and sentential. Finally, the combination of nexus relations and juncture types leads to a number of nexus-juncture or linkage types, which will be applied to the analysis and representation of LVCs in Scottish Gaelic.

The first option available to enable us to analyze and represent LVCs is to understand them as a regular verb-noun combination, that is, a simple sentence containing a full lexical verb functioning as the only predicate and its complement(s). In this sense, the light verb is then not or hardly delexicalized and keeps all, or most of, its semantic content. Consequently, the nominal element can be considered to function as a direct core argument of the light verb. This option is only correct if the light verb – for example *thoir* ‘give’ in this example – conveys the prototypical meaning

of the verb,⁹ which involves the transference of an entity to a recipient, and the nominal element is considered to be its object, but it is then difficult to explain why the interpretation of the eventuality depends solely on the verb (Fig. 1).

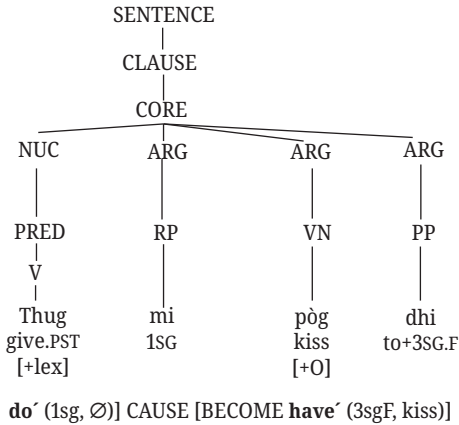


Fig. 1: Representation of an LVC as a free verb-noun combination.

The second option involves a light verb that has lost most of its semantic content so that it functions as a nucleus – that is, the grammatical head of the construction – but is almost unable to predicate; hence the primary predicate of the sentence is the nominal element, in this example *pòg* ‘kiss’, as it provides the semantic core of the LVC. This analysis of an LVC as an instance of the nuclear subordinate linkage type also matches the semantic information in the logical structure, but the problem is to understand in what sense the verbal nucleus is structurally subordinate to the nominal element functioning as the predicate (cf. Figure 2).

Another possibility would be to consider an LVC as an instance of nuclear co-subordination whereby two predication nuclei, namely a slightly desemanticized light verb and a nominal element, which may lack some prototypical object properties, share nuclear operators such as aspect and nuclear negation and merge their argument structures to form a complex predicate, which could also be expressed by a single verb akin to the eventive noun, in this case *pòg* ‘kiss’. This analysis would match the semantic information in the logical structure, which presupposes that the action denoted by the predicate ‘kiss’ requires two arguments that correspond to a first person agent and a third person theme (cf. Figure 3).

9 It should be noted here that it is possible to replace *thoir* ‘give’ with a lexical verb like *caith* ‘cast/throw’ in this context without altering the meaning (e.g. *caith pòg air* ‘give a kiss to’).

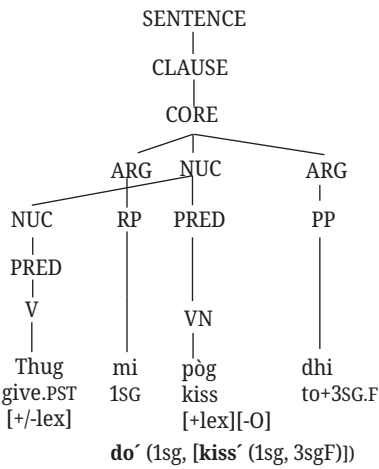


Fig. 2: Representation of an LVC as nuclear subordination.

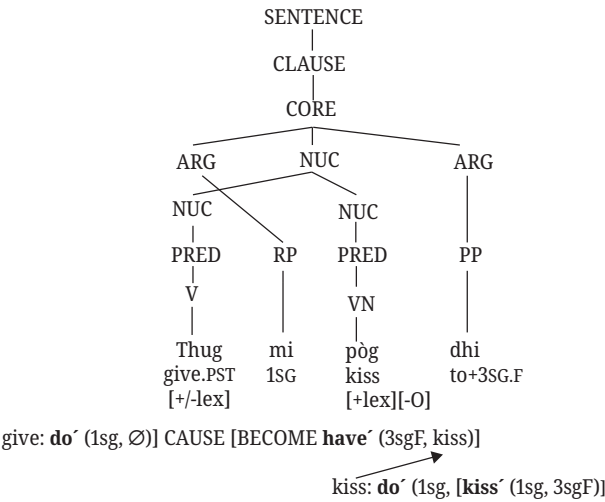


Fig. 3: Representation of an LVC as nuclear cosubordination.

The main problem with this analysis, as pointed out by Fleischhauer (2021, 36), is that in cosubordination “units of equivalent size are joined together in a coordination-like relation, but share some grammatical category” (Van Valin, 2005, 187) and, as the more lexical element in Scottish Gaelic appears to be a noun phrase, rather than a nucleus since it may sometimes be accompanied by a determiner, be pronominalized and accept adjectival modification, this would mean that the two predicating units

that combine to form a single complex nucleus are not symmetrical. However, the term ‘size’ may be understood to refer to the level of juncture, rather than to the difference between a word and a phrase, and, given that in this construction two nuclei combine to form a single complex nucleus – and all of the arguments of the component predicates are pooled to form a single set of core arguments for the resulting complex nucleus –, two units of the same level would be combining and this would represent an unmarked or symmetrical linkage (Van Valin, 2005, 191, 198).

In summary, depending on the semantic properties of the light verb and its relation with the deverbal noun, we might assume that different types of LVCs exist, which could obviously lead to different representations. On the one hand, following Fleischhauer (2021),¹⁰ the first option, which corresponds to a regular predicate-argument construction, could be an adequate way to represent LVCs if we assume the existence of a mismatch between syntactic and semantic composition in these constructions, as the light verb is the syntactic head of the construction but, though being lexically defective, it also contributes to the predication content, and the nominal element is the semantic head contributing the major part of the meaning but is an argument of the verb without being its object. On the other hand, in line with other studies (Nolan, 2014; Saeddi, 2016; Staudinger, 2018), the third option could show an effective way of explaining the behavior of most Scottish Gaelic LVCs, more in particular of the resolution of argument sharing within complex predication, as the argument structure of the complex predicate does not appear to be directly licensed by the noun or the verb alone; rather, it generally results from the combination of the semantics of the light verb and the eventive noun and follows from the co-composition or merging of the logical structures for the two elements.

Thus, for example, from this perspective, when the meaning denoted by a simple verb like *pòg* ‘kiss’ is expressed through an LVC, it is necessary to find a light verb that can fit into the syntactic and semantic properties of the lexical verb, which is frequently realized by an eventive noun in the LVC. Firstly, unless both predicates allow for the omission of one of its arguments syntactically, there should be a correspondence between the number of participants required by the light verb and those of the lexical verb. Thus, given that the lexical verb is now realized as a deverbal noun that conforms with the structural properties of the logical structure of the light verb and becomes one of its arguments – generally the one with the unpaired thematic role – only a three-place predicate such as *thoir* ‘give’ or *leig* ‘let’, but not other predicates like *dèan* ‘do/ make’ or *rach* ‘go’ (with these predicates the logical

¹⁰ An important difference between the representation of LVCs shown in 1 and that proposed by Fleischhauer is that, according to this author, the status of the nominal as the main predication element is not indicated in the syntactic structure (Fleischhauer, 2021, 52).

object of ‘kiss’ should be realized as an adjunct), can be chosen as the appropriate light verb for this specific event. Secondly, out of all three-place predicates, only a predicate with an identical distribution of thematic roles can be chosen as light verbs. This is the reason why a light verb like *thoir* ‘give’, which needs a recipient argument, takes precedence over others like *cuir* ‘put’ or *tarraing* ‘draw’, which require a locative argument.¹¹

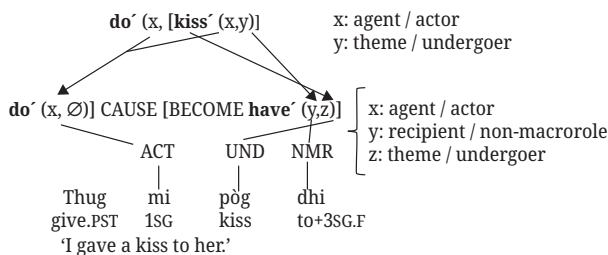


Fig. 4: Co-composition of the logical structure of the complex predicate.

Furthermore, the merging of the logical structures of the light verb and the nominal predicate into the logical structure of the causative accomplishment represented by the event denoted by the complex predicate confirms that it respects the Completeness Constraint (Van Valin, 2005, 129–130), which governs the linking between the syntactic and semantic information by guaranteeing the same number of arguments in the sentence as well as in the logical structure of the predicate.¹²

Finally, in view of this analysis, it seems logical to assume that the co-composition or merging of the logical structures of the two predication elements takes place lexically rather syntactically. If this account of Scottish Gaelic LVCs is within the domain of nuclear cosubordination, then it must be assumed the two argument structures of the two component logical structures are pooled to form the composite arguments of the structure of the resulting logical structure, which maps into a single core and, consequently, into a monoclausal syntactic structure. This means that the formation of LVCs changes the logical structure and Aktionsarten properties of the primary event – denoted by *pòg* ‘kiss’ – and affects the argument structure of the predicate and the actor and undergoer assignment – the second macrorole argument of *pòg* ‘kiss’ becomes a non-macrorole argument of *thoir* ‘give’ and the

¹¹ The second argument of a predicate like ‘kiss’ appears to be more semantically similar to a recipient than to a locative.

¹² This reflects the unmarked or default macrorole assignments for Scottish Gaelic whereby the leftmost argument, *mi* ‘I’, is the actor, and the rightmost argument, *pòg* ‘kiss’, is the undergoer.

second macrorole of the latter corresponds to the deverbal noun expressing the primary event (Van Valin and LaPolla, 1997, 389–392, Van Valin, 2005, 158–160).

In summary, the argument structure of an LVC is resolved pre-syntactically in the lexicon by fusing the logical structures of the light verb and the nominal predicate in a principled manner and, although there seem to be different options for their analysis of their representation, which could depend on the existence of different types of LVCs, the most accurate proposal appears to be the construction displaying nuclear cosubordination.

4 Conclusion

After an initial discussion of complex predicates in Scottish Gaelic, which reveals the absence of SVCs and the great productivity shown by AVCs, this paper offers an analysis of LVCs that demonstrates their great heterogeneity with regard to both the semantic properties of the light verb – a different degree of desemanticization or verb lightness – and the syntactic behavior of the noun denoting an eventuality – a different degree of non-referentiality and objecthood – even within LVCs that use the same light verb. This diversity explains the difficulty in defining and establishing cross-linguistic properties of LVCs, such as the type of information expressed by the light verb and the syntactic status of its collocational partner. This seems to suggest that there could be more than one type of LVC and that therefore an analysis and representation of this construction should be carried out by taking into account the distinctive properties of each type. However, said process, owing to its extension and complexity, requires a study of greater length.

Even with this lack of homogeneity, it also seems clear that, despite being a semantically bleached version of a main verb, the light verb is not totally devoid of semantic content, although the main predication content is provided by the nominal element. This is because, although its meaning is not necessarily transparent and is consequently hard to characterize, it specifies information about the aktionsart and the manner of the event by giving more prominence to certain participants (agent, patient, recipient, etc.) as well as bringing out some nuances of meaning like causation and volition, for example, and serves to structure and/or modulate the event structure of the complex predicate, as is reflected in its influence on valence or argument structure. We might therefore conclude that the formation of the logical structure of the entire complex predicate arises from the interaction of the semantic properties of the argument structures of the component logical structures of the light verb and of the nominal predicate in such a way that, for the merging of the two argument structures, the thematic roles of the light verb and the eventive noun

must be compatible and the linking between the syntactic and semantic information must conform with the Completeness Constraint. In conclusion, the combination of the light verb and the nominal predicate in an LVC behaves like a syntactic and semantic unit that may be represented in different ways, depending on the specific configuration of each type of LVC, although the most logical option appears to involve analyzing it as an instance of nuclear cosubordination. Understanding an LVC as an instance of this linkage type accurately reflects the correlation between the syntactic and semantic properties of the construction, as is reflected in the linking algorithm that maps semantics into syntax. In this view, an LVC would be seen as an instance of a lexical, rather than a syntactic, phenomenon, hence it is formed pre-syntactically in the lexicon, as the merging of the argument structure of the verbal and the nominal predicate affects the complex predicate's aktionsart class and its associated composite logical structure. In connection with the idea of grammaticalization, it seems logical to think of LVCs – rather than light verbs – as different types of lexicalized units in a continuum, which differ with respect to whether they form an inseparable unity and whether they show idiomaticity.

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